

Redbirds spread the red of success

DEREK NOVACEK

General Assignment Writer

The 2008-2009 Illinois State men's basketball team started off hot compiling a 14-0 record to start off the season. However, since then the Redbirds have come down to earth a bit but still have a solid record of 22-6 and 11-5 in the MVC. They currently sit in third place behind Creighton (23-6) and Northern Iowa (18-10).

So far this season the Redbirds have had several key wins in Missouri Valley Conference play that includes an 86-64 drubbing of Creighton, close wins over reigning MVC champion Drake University, and the always tricky Southern Illinois. The Redbirds' latest important victory came over in state rival the Bradley. After losing the first War on 74 in Peoria 52-56, the Redbirds got revenge in Normal with a 69-65 victory.

ISU's four losses have all been on the road in MVC action and all have been within six points or less. The four teams they have lost to are Bradley, Indiana State, Wichita State, and Northern Iowa.

ISU runs a fast-paced offense that is ran by guards Osiris Eldridge, Champ Oguchi, Emmanuel Holloway, and Lloyd Phillips. Oguchi leads the Redbirds in scoring.

"ISU's key to success is their outside shooting. If Eldridge, Holloway, and Oguchi



The Redbirds are playing on the offensive during their game against Indiana State

Derek Novacek

are shooting well ISU is very tough to beat," said senior Kevin Stocks. "They all shot well against Creighton and they blew them out."

The success of the Redbirds has been noticed the students and staff at Bloomington High School.

"I really enjoy going to ISU games because my kids really enjoy going," said principal Mr. Moore. "They're having a good season and we are basketball fans. It's good entertainment, despite the fact that I'm also a Saluki fan."

"I like to go to the games because ISU is an exciting team and the tickets are cheap," said Stocks.

Many felt that the Redbirds deserved to go to the NCAA tournament last season, but they were not one of the 64 teams that were selected each. ISU ended up going to the NIT where they made the second round after beating Utah State and then losing to the Dayton.

"I think for ISU to make the NCAA tournament this year they will have to win the conference tournament in March in St. Louis, MO," said Mr. Moore.

"Because of their four [five] conference losses, it will be tough to make the NCAA Tournament unless they win the MVC Tournament in March, and even if they do they will be a low seed," said Stocks. "However, they could make a solid run in the NIT which they will certainly be in."

Raiders basketball team approaches the off-season

REID GOLOWSKI

Writer

With the season two thirds of the way over, the Raider's are looking to end on a high note and finish the remaining seven games strong.

"We've had a few games that didn't go our way but we want to finish the remaining games we have strong and let what happens happen," said senior guard Bobby Nickrent

As of Friday February 20th the Raiders are 10-13. They began the first week of February with two intercity losses to Normal West and Normal Community. Followed by a close loss to Bartlett at Bartlett. Then the Raiders bounced back and beat Urbana 57-41.

"It was nice to have a game like Urbana because it nice to beat up on a team like we did to Urbana," said junior Kyndell Smith

The Raiders will finish off the regular season against Decatur MacArthur, who beat the Raiders at home in a close game back in January.

"We have a few games to go before Decatur but we want to make sure it doesn't happen again, we are all focused on the games in front of us right now but when it comes time to play we won't forget what happened," said junior forward James Wimp

At weeks end Bloomington was in fourth place in the Big 12 Conference standings with a 6-5 record behind Champaign Centennial, Normal Community, and Decatur MacArthur.

The Raiders may also have to function without their leading scorer D'Mitri Riggs who suffered a broken toe and it anticipated to miss 4-6 weeks. But Riggs isn't so sure if a broken toe will keep him off the court.

"I don't think I will let this affect me, I will just wrap it and play through it, I want to finish the season strong," said Riggs

After the regular season ends the Raiders will then begin conference play starting with regionals.

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