

Crusaders Capture Subregional Title With Win Over Duquesne

box score

Valparaiso won its Subregional of the 2K Sports Classic Benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer on Sunday afternoon, finishing the weekend with a perfect 3-0 mark as they trailed for just 14 seconds in an 84-68 victory over Duquesne at the ARC. Junior Ryan Broekhoff (Frankston, Victoria, Australia/Australian Institute of Sport) was named the MVP of the Valparaiso Subregional, while junior Kevin Van Wijk (Hoofddorp, Netherlands/Katholieke Scholengemeenschap Hoofddorp) joined Broekhoff on the All-Tournament Team.

Broekhoff earns the MVP honors after averaging 15.7 points, 9.0 rebounds, 3.0 assists and 1.7 blocks per game over the course of the weekend's three games. On Sunday, the junior posted his second double-double of the weekend, needing just the 19 minutes he played in the first half to reach double figures in both scoring and rebounding. Broekhoff ended the game with 21 points on 7-of-13 shooting, including five 3-pointers, 13 rebounds and six assists.

Meanwhile, Van Wijk, who did not play in Saturday's win, surpassed his career high in scoring for the second straight game, registering 22 points on 6-of-11 shooting from the field and 10-of-15 from the charity stripe. The junior also grabbed nine rebounds, including five on the offensive end. Over the two games he played, Van Wijk averaged 21.5 points and 9.5 rebounds per game, shooting at a .619 clip from the field.

The duo of Broekhoff and Van Wijk were two of the three Crusaders in double figures on Sunday, joined by sophomore Jay Harris (Aurora, Ill./Oswego East). Harris came off the bench to pour in 17 points, knocking down 5-of-6 from the field, including all three of his 3-point efforts. The sophomore also went a perfect 4-of-4 from the foul line, finishing the weekend 18-of-18 on free throws. Junior Matt Kenney (Mooresville, Ind./Mooresville) just missed making it four Valpo players in double digits, tallying nine points, four rebounds, four assists and three steals. Kenney also had primary defensive responsibility on Duquesne's leading scorer, Sean Johnson, and allowed him just 13 points on 4-of-10 shooting.

"I thought that Ryan, Kevin and Matt have all been phenomenal this weekend for us," said Crusader head coach Bryce Drew. "They've really been consistent for us, giving a great effort, and have logged tons of minutes over the first couple weeks."

Valpo got off to a tremendous start on Sunday, jumping out to a 10-0 lead just 4:43 into the game. A triple and two free throws from Broekhoff got the scoring started, and redshirt junior Will Bogan (Boise, Idaho/Vallivue [Ole Miss]) knocked down a triple of his own. A fast-break layup by redshirt junior Erik Buggs (Memphis, Tenn./Mitchell) gave Valpo the early double-digit advantage, forcing a quick Duquesne timeout.

After Duquesne rallied back to within 14-10, the Crusaders rattled off eight straight points, including another 3-pointer from Broekhoff and an old-fashioned 3-point play by Kenney, to enjoy their largest lead of the first half at 22-10. But the Dukes counter-punched with 13 straight points of their own, taking their only lead of the contest at 23-22 with 7:58 to play in the half.

Valpo used a timeout to right the ship, coming out of the stoppage with an inside play to Van Wijk to regain the lead for good. The Crusaders actually scored eight straight points following the timeout, as Harris and Broekhoff both knocked down 3-pointers as well. Valpo finished the first half with six 3-pointers, including four by Broekhoff, and hit 11 free throws in the opening 20 minutes as well to gain a 43-33 halftime advantage.

Duquesne scored on each of its first two baskets of the second half, but six points was as close as the Dukes would get, as Valpo responded with a 9-0 run. Broekhoff started the spurt with his fifth triple of the afternoon, and Van Wijk did the rest, hitting a pair of free throws and then converting a pair of layups to give the Crusaders a 52-37 lead with 16:26 to play. Duquesne would get no closer than 13 points the rest of the way, as Valpo kept pounding the ball inside in the last 20 minutes, going 12-of-16 inside the arc in the second half, as well as 8-of-9 from the foul line.

Duquesne (3-2) was led by 14 points off the bench from Kadeem Pantophlet, who hit all five of his field goal attempts. The Crusaders ended the game shooting 58.3% (28-of-48) compared to the Dukes' 49.1% (26-of-53) clip, while Valpo also knocked down 19 free throws to just seven for Duquesne. In addition, the Crusaders enjoyed a massive 34-17 advantage on the boards and did not allow the Dukes to garner a single second-chance point.

"Obviously, Duquesne is a team that likes to play a very high tempo and paced game, and there's really no safe lead when you're playing a team like that," said Drew. "They also give opponents trouble with their athleticism and quickness, and we really handled it very well today."

Valparaiso (5-1) returns to action following the Thanksgiving holiday on Friday evening, as the Crusaders travel to take on #3/3 Ohio State in Columbus. The game will be broadcast live nationwide on the Big Ten Network, while fans can also listen to the game via the Valpo Sports Radio Network. Links for the live video, as well as live stats, will be available at www.valpoathletics.com.

The Dukes conclude play in the 2K Sports Classic against host Valparaiso on Sunday at 4:30 ET.