

Men's College Basketball

Tillie, Norvell lift No. 15 Zags over No. 25 Creighton

Gonzaga forward Killian Tillie, left, shoots against Creighton guard Mitchell Ballock during the first half of Friday's game in Spokane, Wash.

AP Photo/Young Kwak



Tillie leads with 22 points, Norvell adds 21 points

By NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Killian Tillie scored 22 points and Zach Norvell Jr. added 21 points, all in the second half, as No. 15 Gonzaga came back to beat No. 25 Creighton 91-74 on Friday night.

Silas Melson also scored 21 points and Johnathan Williams added 15 for Gonzaga (7-1).

Marcus Foster had 21 points for Creighton (5-2), which has already beaten No. 20 Northwestern and No. 23 UCLA and lost to

NCAA

#25 Creighton
74

#15 Gonzaga
91

No. 22 Baylor this season. Gonzaga shot better than 62 percent in the second half to erase a 7-point halftime deficit.

Gonzaga went on a 20-4 run to open the second half and built a 57-48 lead. Creighton had five turnovers during the run.

Consecutive 3-pointers by Norvell put Gonzaga up 63-53.

Norvell hit two more 3s to push Gonzaga's lead to 81-71 with less than 5 minutes left. Gonzaga gradually extended the lead. The Zags outscored the Bluejays 54-30 in the second.

The first half was nip and tuck for most of the 20 minutes. Creighton hit four consecutive 3-pointers late in the first to take a 34-29 lead.

Gonzaga made a run, but the Bluejays scored the last five points to take a 44-37 lead. They shot 58 percent in the first half, including 7 of 14 on 3-pointers, before cooling off in the second. Foster had 15 first-half points for Creighton.

The teams, both from Jesuit universities, have not played since 1977 and this is their first meeting in Spokane.

Gonzaga continues to be a hard opponent at home, as the Bulldogs are 183-17 in the McCarthey Athletic Center since it opened in 2004.

BIG PICTURE
Creighton: The Bluejays

were playing their fourth ranked team in five outings. Their schedule appears to get easier going forward, as they have five consecutive home games against unranked opponents. The Bluejays, of the Big East, came in averaging 92.5 points per game, 10th in the nation.

Gonzaga: This figured to be the best non-conference home game on the Bulldogs' schedule. Gonzaga has six players averaging at least 10 points per game. Starting guard Corey Kispert did not play because of an ankle injury.

UP NEXT
Creighton hosts North Dakota on Tuesday.

Gonzaga plays No. 4 Villanova, another Big East team, at Madison Square Garden in the Jimmy V Classic on Tuesday.

College Football

Broncos, Bulldogs face off for second straight week, this time for MWC title

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

Jeff Tedford has already engineered one of the more remarkable turnarounds in college football this season, taking No. 25 Fresno State from one win a season ago to the cusp of a Mountain West Conference title.

No matter the outcome of Saturday's MWC championship game against Boise State, it's been a highly successful first season for Tedford at his alma mater.

"No matter where we were to go, or who we were to play, the goal starting out is to have a chance to win the conference championship," Tedford said. "We have the opportunity right now to go compete for that. We have tremendous respect for Boise State. It's about the game. It's not about all the other things, the where, the what, all of that."

Fair or not, if the Bulldogs (9-3, 7-1 MWC, No. 25 CFP) are to cap their rebound season with the title it will mean besting the Broncos (9-3, 7-1) on their blue turf just a week after beating them in Fresno.

It's a rare and unlikely scheduling quirk that saw the Bulldogs beat the Broncos 28-17 in the regular-season finale and then have to turn around and travel to Boise for the title game. The Broncos ended up hosting by having a higher ranking in the average of four computer rankings even though the Bulldogs are ranked in the AP Top 25, the College Football Playoff and won the head-to-head regular-season meeting.

"It's a new game, it's a different game. I'm fully aware of their tradition there, they're (Boise State) a great football team, and they're very tough at home,"



In this file photo, Fresno State's Jeffrey Allison upends Boise State's running back Alexander Mattison during a Nov. 25, 2017 game in Fresno, Calif.

Tedford said. According to Fresno State, this is just the second time since 1935 that teams have faced off in the regular-season finale and then the conference title game the following week. In 2012, Stanford and UCLA met in the final week of the regular season and again in the conference title game. Stanford won 35-17 in the regular season and 27-24 in the Pac-12 title game.

Fresno State would like to see that scenario repeated. Meanwhile, the Broncos aren't about to apologize for getting an additional home game even if the Bulldogs seem more worthy of hosting.

"The body of work that we have put in this entire season earned us the opportunity to have this game at home, that's the reality," Boise State coach Bryan Harsin said.

Here are other things to watch in Saturday's rematch: **MARVELOUS MARCUS:** One of the biggest reasons for Fresno State's turnaround has been the emergence of transfer quarterback Marcus McMaryion. After starting his career at Oregon State, McMaryion has started the past nine games for the Bulldogs and led them to an 8-1 mark. McMaryion threw for a career-high 332 yards and two touchdowns last week against the Broncos, including an 81-yard strike to KeeSean Johnson in

the fourth quarter after the Broncos had trimmed the lead to 19-17. **GROUND CONTROL:** Boise State saw its streak of having a 1,000-yard rusher extended to nine straight seasons when Alexander Mattison rushed for 63 yards last week, bringing his season total to 1,024. But it was the second straight week that Mattison had been held in check. He had just 42 yards in a victory over Air Force. Mattison is only two games removed from a career-best 242 yards and three touchdowns against Colorado State.

SCORING DEFENSE: While the improvement of the Bulldogs offense has drawn attention, their defense has been equally impressive. Fresno State has allowed more than 21 points to only one conference opponent; UNLV had 26 in the Bulldogs' only conference loss. The Bulldogs shut out New Mexico, held San Diego State to three points and allowed just seven to Wyoming.

BEST OF MOUNTAIN WEST: Boise State linebacker Leighton Vander Esch was named the Mountain West defensive player of the year this week. He was third in the conference with 113 tackles along with three sacks and two interceptions. Vander Esch was the first Boise State defensive player to be honored as conference player of the year since Corey Hall in 2006.

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College Football

Fisher leaves Seminoles for Aggies

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Jimbo Fisher, who coached Florida State to its third national title in 2013 and opened this season with his team ranked in the top five, is leaving to take the same job at Texas A&M.

Fisher told university President John Thrasher on Friday that he was resigning to accept Texas A&M's offer.

"I believe Texas A&M is getting one of the best coaches in college football. We appreciate all he has done for our program and wish him and his family great success moving forward," Thrasher said in a statement that closed days of speculation about Fisher's future.

Fisher leaves Florida State after going 83-23 in eight seasons. Besides the national championship, he also led the Seminoles to three Atlantic Coast Conference titles and four ACC Atlantic Division crowns. He will replace Kevin Sumlin, who was fired last weekend after going 51-26 in six seasons at Texas A&M. The Houston Chronicle reported that Fisher is expected to earn between \$7 million and \$7.5 million over at least five years.

Fisher goes to a program that has lofty hopes amid a drought: Texas A&M last won a conference championship in 1998, when it was in the Big 12. The school's only

national title came in 1939. Texas A&M Chancellor John Sharp said after Thursday's Board of Regents meeting that expectations were "nothing serious. We just want him to win a national championship."

Fisher is just the fourth head coach to leave a school where he has won an AP national championship and go directly to another college job. The last to do it was Johnny Majors, who went from Pittsburgh to Tennessee in 1977.

Florida State (5-6) faces Louisiana-Monroe on Saturday and needs a win to be bowl eligible for a 36th consecutive season. Defensive line coach Odell Haggins will be the interim coach.

The Seminoles were ranked third in the preseason Top 25 but lost quarterback Deondre Francois in the opening loss against Alabama and were 3-6 at one point before winning their last two. Florida State is trying to avoid its first losing season since 1976.

Since winning 33 of 34 games between 2013 and '15, the Seminoles have struggled. They are 19-12 in their last 31 games, including 10-10 in the ACC. It marks the first time since 2011 that the Seminoles have not won 10 or more games or qualified for a New Year's Six bowl game.

Last December, Fisher signed a contract extension through 2024 that made him among the highest-paid coaches in the country. He was making \$5.7 million this season, sixth-highest.

Sumlin had two years remaining on his contract, which calls for a \$10 million buyout to be paid within 60 days of his termination. He led the Aggies to an 11-2 record in his first season in 2012, including 6-2 in the Southeastern Conference which included a win at top-ranked Alabama. Sumlin wasn't able to equal or surpass that the rest of his tenure.

This marks the first time since after the 1975 season that Florida State has had to embark on a coaching search, when it went on to hire Bobby Bowden. Fisher came to Florida State as offensive coordinator in 2007 and was named the head coach in waiting following that season.

Possible candidates could include Oregon's Willie Taggart and Virginia Tech's Justin Fuente. Taggart, who grew up in Bradenton, Florida, went 7-5 in his first season at Oregon. He previously spent four seasons at South Florida where he took a team that was 2-10 in 2013 to 10-2 and a tie for the American Athletic Conference East Division title in 2016.

BRIEFLY

Oregon, Nike reach new apparel sponsorship deal

EUGENE (AP) — The University of Oregon has reached a tentative agreement with Nike that increases sponsorship to \$88 million in cash and gear, according to university documents.

The university's board of trustees will consider approving the 11-year deal next week. The university made the agreement

description public on Thursday, but the full draft contract has not been released, The Register-Guard reported.

Under the new deal, the university would receive \$2 million annually from Nike until 2023. The amount would then increase to \$2.5 million each year until 2028.

The university would also get \$5 million in Nike apparel each year, and it would gradually increase to \$6 million for the 2022-23

school year.

Applied retroactively for the start of this school year, the university would receive a \$3 million signing bonus under the new agreement. Royalties the university gets on some duck-themed Nike merchandise would increase from 12 to 15 percent.

Under the current deal with Nike, the university is receiving a base cash payment of \$600,000 and \$2.4 million in products this school year.

BULLDOGS: Thomas leads team with 12 points

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that momentum as they entered the third quarter and were up by as much as 10 points before Hermiston sophomore Jazlyn Romero hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer to end the third quarter and cut the Bulldogs' deficit to 40-33.

Again Romero proved to be an asset following up her team-leading 12-point performance Wednesday with nine points on Friday. This time around it was junior Jordan Thomas who had a team-high 12 points, and senior Maddy Juul followed with 10 points.

"I'm pretty blessed, and I have told the girls this, that we have the team makeup to make a pretty deep run," Rodriguez said.

The talented core group of girls — and the other two starters, juniors Madison Wilson and Sydney Stefani — were pushing the pace of the game and playing aggressive on both sides of the court. But with Juul nursing a knee injury and Thomas'

presence in the paint putting her in foul trouble, Hermiston looked to its young bench to help with the load. Unfortunately it was too heavy.

"I think what hurt us is when we brought off girls off the bench, they have low confidence right now," Rodriguez said. "So what we just talked about was having that confidence. They are on the team for a reason and when they come in they have to provide, they have to be a positive for us and I think for the most part, most of those girls understand that."

The team's youth showed when Thomas was subbed out after tallying her fourth foul shortly after the third quarter started. The 6-foot 3-inch forward shut Wilsonville down in the low post, and with out Thomas' presence the Wildcats, at times, easily made their way to the basket.

But even with another quick turnaround tomorrow, Rodriguez is confident the girls will continue to

improve. "I'm just happy that we competed and we played hard and that's kind of what I want," he said. "Our philosophy is uptime, we're going to press and we're going to get in the passing lane. While the losing is not ideal, I was actually kind of happy with the way they played."

The Hermiston Holiday Tournament continues with the Bulldogs facing the Lewiston Bengals. The school out of Idaho has already had a few games under its belt, as its season started mid-November.

WHS	4	21	15	15	—	55
HHS	15	8	10	13	—	46

WILSONVILLE — C. Guttridge 10, G. Bishop 9, T. McLarnie 8, J. Classen 8, R. Timm 7, S. Burns 6, E. Scanlon 5.
HERMISTON — J. Thomas 12, M. Juul 10, J. Romero 9, M. Wilson 8, P. Palzinski 4, R. Meyers 2, A. Green 1.
3-pointers — WHS 4, HHS 4. Free throws — WHS 21-29, HHS 9-22. Fouls — WHS 18, HHS 25.

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Hermiston's Maddy Juul shoots the ball guarded by Wilsonville's Jessica Classen in the Bulldogs' 55-46 loss to the Wildcats on Friday in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris