

Oglethorpe University

Stormy Petrels

MENS BASKETBALL NEWSLETTER

Volume 6

December 2008

Issue 3

A Note From Coach Ponder

*We had a busy start to the season, with six games in two weeks. We are off to a good start and currently have a record of 5-1, with several incredibly exciting finishes. Below is a re-cap of our start, as well as some details of how we spent our free time in the historical city of Philadelphia. Also, our conference schedule gets under way this weekend, and as luck would have it, we open up with the pre-season #1 and #2 teams. Our student-athlete leadership council has designated this Friday night as a "blackout" game, so we hope you will **come out in force to support us and wear black**. Both of these games are **HUGE**, so we really hope to have that "sixth man" with some great crowd support on Friday and Sunday.*

OU Off to Best Start Since 1998

The Oglethorpe Stormy Petrels are off to their best start since the 1998-99 season, posting a 5-1 record in the first two weeks of the season. They have done it in thrilling fashion, having won or tied three games on their final possession of regulation. The season got off to an amazing start with one of the more thrilling games the Dorrough faithful have seen in years. Battling cross-town rival Emory University in the season opener for both teams, the game had an amazing 15 lead changes in the 1st half alone, with neither team ever leading by more than three points. Emory hit a shot at the halftime buzzer to take a 42-41 lead into the intermission. The 2nd half was back and forth as well, but Emory was able to build a six point lead with three minutes to play. The Petrels defense was able to hold the Eagles without a field goal and just one free throw over the last three minutes as they cut the deficit to just two points. Sophomore Joe Kennedy was fouled going to the hole and calmly sank two free throws with two seconds left to send the game to overtime, where the Petrels took control and won by the score of 89-81.

The Petrels then headed to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to face Haverford and Swarthmore, and the drama continued up north. Playing with sophomore Todd Ward in foul trouble most of the game, the Petrels defense kept them in the game and with five seconds remaining and the score tied, the Petrels inbounded from sideout. Sophomore Wade Weldon's shot fell short, but sophomore Alex Richey grabbed the rebound and stuck it in as the buzzer sounded to pull out the dramatic win. The following day the Petrels cruised to a win over Swarthmore to run their record to 3-0.

The re-match at Emory was once again a close one, with the Eagles pulling out an 89-83 win on their home floor. The Petrels managed to shoot just 12-23 from the free throw line in the loss, as well as being outrebounded 44-34. After a couple of days off for Thanksgiving, the Petrels looked to rebound as they hosted the Georgia Basketball Coaches Association Thanksgiving Classic. First up was Maryville College, one of the top teams in the south and the nation year in and year out. They were the top team receiving votes outside of the top 25 coming into the game. The first half was back and forth, with the Scots taking a 38-34 lead into the half. The Scots came out firing in the second half, and extended their lead to 14 points with 13 minutes to play. The Petrels didn't quit, however, and began to battle back, tying the game with five minutes to play with a 17-3 run. It was back and forth from there, and the Petrels once again found themselves in a tie game with the ball in their possession and 12 seconds to play. They got the ball into Ward's hands, and he nailed a fall-away jumper from 16 feet with one second remaining to hand the Petrels a huge 77-75 win. The following day, the Petrels handled LaGrange College by the score of 90-71.
(Continued on next page)



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After six games, all five starters are averaging at least 12 ppg. Junior David Allison leads at 19.3, followed by Ward's 16.8, Weldon's 13.8, Kennedy's 12.8, and Richey's 12.3. Junior Eddie Buckley is filling the 6th man role and chipping in 5.7. Ward leads the team in rebounding with 9.8 per game, with Weldon pulling down 7.7 per game. The Petrels are once again leading the conference in scoring by a wide margin, averaging 83.5 ppg.

Conference Play Opens Vs. Pre-Season #1 and #2

Conference play opens this weekend with an extremely tough slate, as the Petrels square off vs. the pre-season #1 and #2 teams in the SCAC. On Friday night at 6pm, they host pre-season #1 DePauw University, led by pre-season All-American guard Mike Moore. Last year, the Petrels defeated the Tigers in two extremely close games, a two point win at DePauw and a double-overtime win on Pinholster court. On Sunday at noon, the Petrels will host pre-season #2 Centre College (currently ranked #23 by D3hoops), who are led by pre-season All-American Danny Noll and senior T.C. Thomason. Last year the Colonels defeated the Petrels 80-68 in Kentucky and pulled out a 65-59 win in Atlanta.



Team Finds Time to Explore Philly

Besides winning both games at the Swarthmore/Haverford Equinox Classic, the Oglethorpe men's basketball players had a chance to explore some of Philadelphia's most famous sites. On Saturday night, after grabbing a quick bite to eat after their win over Swarthmore, the team attended the University of Pennsylvania vs. Monmouth game at the famed Palestra. The Palestra, opened in 1927, is known as the "Cathedral of College Basketball" and has hosted more college basketball games, more college basketball teams, and more NCAA tournament games than any venue in the world. A two million dollar "Hall of Fame" display was finished in 2001, and has photos, plaques, and memorabilia of all the great teams, players, and coaches that have performed in the venue.

On Sunday morning, the team drove down to South Philly to stand in line outside at "Pat's King of Steaks" for the famous and original Philly Cheesesteak. While really good, the 32 degree weather (not including wind-chill) kept the guys from standing in line for a 2nd cheesesteak.

The next stop was Independence National Park, located right in downtown Philly, where numerous historical sights are located. Some of the sights that team members explored and saw were the famous Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Old City Hall, and the Independence Park visitors center, while some players took an historic carriage ride through the district.

***A reminder to Stormy Petrel fans that all home games are in live radio broadcast.**

***Listen to the "Coaches Show" every Tuesday at 11:30am.**