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(Neb)-Lady Huskers Blow By Boilermakers

By: John Axtell Posted at: 01/31/2019 11:57 PM

By NU Athletic Communications

West Lafayette, Ind. - Hannah Whitish erupted for a season-high 28 points to go along with a career-high 12 assists for her first career double-double as Nebraska rolled to an 84-64 women's basketball win over Purdue at Mackey Arena on Thursday night.

Freshman Ashtyn Veerbeek just missed a double-double of her own by tying her career high with 14 points while adding nine rebounds, and fellow freshman Sam Haiby pitched in 13 points, including a career-high-tying three three-pointers. Nicea Eliely gave Nebraska four players in double figures with 12 points, including 10 in the first 22 minutes, as Nebraska erupted for a Big Ten season-best 84 points.

Nebraska improved to 5-5 in the Big Ten with its third conference road win, while the Huskers moved to 10-11 overall. The Boilermakers slipped to 15-8 overall and 6-4 in the league.

The Huskers were firing on all cylinders for most of the night, hitting a Big Ten season-best 49.3 percent from the field, including 40.7 percent (11-27) from three-point range. NU also knocked down 7-of-8 free throws (.875) and completely dominated the boards for 40 minutes, 41-25. The Huskers also won the turnover war, 11-10, despite full-court pressure for most of the night from the Boilermakers.

Nebraska used a 14-2 surge over the final 4:11 of the third quarter to turn the screws on the Boilermakers. Whitish, who scored 10 points in a huge third quarter for the Huskers, rested for the final 2:20 of the quarter, and Haiby took center stage. Haiby scored the final five points of the quarter for the Big Red including a half-court runner as time expired to send the Huskers to the final period with a 62-43 lead.

Purdue scored the first three points of the fourth quarter on a three from Karissa McLaughlin, but the Boilers were never able to get closer than 15 points the rest of the way. McLaughlin finished with 13 points and three three-pointers, while fellow guard Dominique Oden led Purdue with 18 points and a pair of threes. Ae'Rianna Harris managed 15 points and a team-high eight rebounds, but the rest of the Boilers combined for just 18 points.

Purdue hit 41.1 percent (23-56) of its shots, including 38.9 percent (7-18) of its threes, while going 11-for-14 (.786) at the line.

Leigha Brown, Nebraska's freshman from Auburn, Indiana, played well off the bench with seven points, three rebounds and two assists, while going 3-for-5 from the floor. Maddie Simon added four points, while Grace Mitchell contributed two points, four rebounds and a steal, as Nebraska's bench poured in 40 points in the game.

While the bench was huge, outscoring Purdue's bench 40-14, Whitish pumped in her 28 points on 8-of-12 shooting, including 6-of-10 threes. She was also 6-for-6 at the line, while adding five rebounds and three steals to her 12 assists.

Verbeek was nearly as efficient, going 7-for-12 from the floor, while Haiby went 5-for-7, including 3-of-4 from

three-point range. She also dished out three assists. Eliely went 5-for-8, including 2-for-4 from three-point range, while adding four rebounds, two assists and a steal.

Nebraska opened the game with its best defensive quarter of conference play by holding Purdue to just 6 points in the first 10 minutes to take an 18-6 lead to the second period. It marked the third straight game the Huskers held their opponent to single digits in the first period.

The Huskers continued to surge early in the second quarter, pushing the margin to 18 points at 27-9 after a transition layup from Nicea Eliely with 7:09 left in the half.

But the Big Red went cold and Purdue caught fire over the next six minutes. The Boilermakers got two three-pointers off the bench from little-used Lyndsey Whilby and got two more threes from starting guard McLaughlin, while Harris added five points inside, slashing NU's lead to 31-28 with 1:25 left in the half.

Nebraska used five straight points, including the fourth three of the half from Whitish, to push its lead back to 36-28 at the half. Whitish finished the half with 12 points and six assists, while knocking down 4-of-6 threes. Veerbeek was big off the bench with six points and seven rebounds, including a pair of offensive boards on Nebraska's final two possessions of the half that led to points for the Huskers.

Nebraska hit 15-of-33 shots in the half, including 6-of-16 threes, but did not shoot a first-half free throw. The Big Red dominated the first-half glass, 25-15, but lost the turnover battle in the opening 20 minutes, 5-4. The Huskers outscored Purdue in second-chance points, 9-5, and outscored the Boilermakers in points off turnovers, 5-2.

The Huskers held Purdue to 11-of-31 shooting in the half, but the Boilers did bury 4-of-10 threes, including 4-of-6 in the second quarter. Purdue was 2-for-4 at the free throw line in the half.

Nebraska returns home to Pinnacle Bank Arena on Sunday, as the Huskers play host to Indiana. Tip-off between the Big Red and the Hoosiers is set for 2 p.m., with tickets available now at Huskers.com.