

sports

Superhero Monroe

Monroe Scores Putback for the Win

FOX PARKER
Broadside Correspondent

The men's basketball team (18-8, 11-5) is 13-0 at home after they defeated the Drexel University Dragons 49-48 in a fiercely physical game on Wednesday at the Patriot Center before a surprisingly small crowd of 5,579.

Down 48-47, senior forward Darryl Monroe grabbed a missed shot and banked the ball off the glass with 7.5 seconds remaining. Drexel (14-11, 10-6) had an opportunity to win the game, but forward Leon Spencer had his shot roll off the rim as time expired.

"The guards did a good job of sharing the ball and attacking [the basket]," said Monroe of the Patriots' last possession, "I [saw] the ball go up and I just tried to get the rebound and put it back in [the basket]."

Monroe finished the game with nine rebounds and 15 points on a meager 5-of-12 shooting.

Looking to avenge their one-point loss to the Patriots earlier this season, Drexel started the game with an intensity the Patriots did not match.

From the opening tip, Drexel challenged the Patriots' shooters and played physical defense in the paint. As a result, the Patriots missed their first seven shots, forcing them into an early 7-0 deficit. The Patriots finally got their first points 5:21 into the game when senior guard John Vaughan made a 3-point.

On defense, the Patriots did not fare much better as they were frequently out of position and lethargic. The Dragons muscled their way to 58 percent shooting from the field in the first nine minutes.

"I thought I was going to be going to a basketball game and ended up going to a kind of wrestling match," said Mason coach Jim Larranaga. "I told the team beforehand, that this was not necessarily going to be a finesse game—it's going to be a street fight."

Toward the end of the first half, the Patriots acclimated themselves to the pace and physicality of the game and began to dig into Drexel's lead. Freshman forward Mike Morrison was the catalyst, scoring six of his eight hard-earned points in the first half, to make the score 24-19 Drexel.

"From the start, we came out sluggish," said Vaughan. "[But] once we were able to pick up our intensity we were able to get back in the game."

Spurred on by Morrison's aggressive play in the lane and a renewed sense of defensive focus, the Patriots caught up to the Dragons and went into the half tied at 24.



Louis Birdsong takes a shot during Mason's win versus Drexel.

After Drexel controlled the lead for 19 of the first 20 minutes, there were 13 lead changes in the second half.

The Patriots' first lead of the game came three minutes into the second half when junior forward Louis Birdsong made his third 3-pointer of the season to put the Patriots up 29-26. But much like their first meeting, Drexel would not stop fighting.

The Dragons led 48-45 with 1:02 remaining when Monroe, a 57 percent free throw shooter, was fouled and went to the line to shoot a pair of free throws. He made them both.

With 36 seconds remaining, senior guard Dre Smith fouled Drexel's Spencer, forcing him to shoot a 1-and-1. The relatively sparse Patriot Center crowd reached a resounding 95 decibels on the arena's sound meter as Spencer set up to shoot. His shot banged off the front iron and Monroe collected the rebound.

On the Patriots' next and final possession, Monroe gathered Smith's missed layup and scored the game's final points.


Mason's leading scorers were not as effective in the

team's win. Vaughan had seven points and eight rebounds while sophomore guard Cam Long recorded six points and two assists. Both guards shot a combined 4-of-15 from the field.

Defensively, Mason was able to make up for their poor offensive performance. The team forced 16 turnovers from the Dragons. Drexel shot only 35 percent from the field. Monroe had four steals and Birdsong had four blocks.

Drexel was led by forward Evan Neisler, who scored 14 points on 4-of-5 shooting. Neisler also had 11 rebounds before fouling out with 43 seconds left. Guard Scott Rodgers added 12 points for the Dragons.

Mason's win over Drexel boosts the Patriots' conference record to 11-5 and puts them in a tie with Northeastern University for second place in the Colonial Athletic Association standings. More importantly, the victory means that Mason is one win away from securing a first round by in the CAA tournament.



Broadside's Fan of the Week
Sean Gagnon

What makes you Mason's biggest men's basketball fan?

"I went to watch us play ECU on five minutes notice, and I get to the game two hours before the doors open."

PHOTO BY COURTNEY ERLANDI, PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER



George Mason University will host the CAA Conference Championships this weekend.

The Final Lap

Mason Looking to Make a Big Splash

RYAN DEMPSEY
Staff Writer

This weekend, George Mason University will host the CAA Conference Championships for men's and women's swimming and diving. The Patriots will look to capitalize with their home presence in the pool.

The Patriots ended their season with both the men's and women's swimming and diving teams beating George Washington University, recording 18 event victories.

Mason is seeded first in the women's 200-yard medley relay. The Lady Patriots are also seeded first in the 400-yard medley relay, which currently holds the CAA top performance record. For women's individual events, be on the lookout for junior Caitlin Impink, senior Mary Beth Cheslock, freshman Nicole Harmon and freshman sensation Ashley Danner.

Impink, Cheslock, Harmon and Danner represented Mason at the 2008 USA Swimming Short Course National

Championships. At the national tournament, Impink swam in the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 1:50.20, breaking her own school record.

Seeded second at the conference tournament, Harmon also looks to capture first in the 100-yard backstroke.

"The highlight of the season for me was winning the 100-yard backstroke at the Patriot invitational meet, not because I won, but because I qualified for Nationals and took a second off of my time."

When it comes to records, Danner seems to turn just about everything into gold. This season she has been named CAA Female Swimmer of the Week four times, and was named 18-and-under national champion for the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 1:00.55, setting a new school and conference record. Going into the conference championships, Danner is the top seed for the 200-yard individual medley, 400 yard individual medley, 100-yard breaststroke and 200-yard

breaststroke, for all of which she holds a school and CAA record.

"I just take swimming one day at a time and swim as hard as I can," said Danner.

For the men, freshman Preston Wolter will look to take individual honors in multiple events. Wolter was the only male swimmer representing Mason at Nationals last December. There, he finished 14th in the 1,650-yard freestyle with a time of 15:24.26. Wolter is seeded first in the 500-yard freestyle, 400-yard individual medley and the 1650-yard freestyle.

"The best moment of the season for me was at Nationals, swimming the 1,650, finishing 14th overall and dropping 23 seconds [off of my time] from two weekends before when I dropped 6 seconds that weekend [off of my time]," stated Wolter.

In addition, freshman diver Derrick Butts is seeded first in the 3-meter dive.

You can catch all of the action live Feb. 25-28 in the Aquatic and Fitness Center.

Trip'd Up At Home

Mason Falls to Juniata in Four Sets

FERNANDA FERREIRA
Broadside Correspondent

The George Mason University men's volleyball team lost their first home conference game against the Juniata College Eagles last Thursday at the Field House. The 14th-ranked Patriots fall to 5-3 overall and 1-1 in conference games and the Eagles improve to 6-3, 3-2.

The last time the Patriots had a home match was nearly a month ago. The Patriots won three of four on the road.

Despite missing out on four match point opportunities, Juniata won the points that mattered most. Two players of Juniata blocked senior opposite hitter Kyle Gramit's shot as the Eagles wrapped up the first set with a 34-32 victory.

The Patriots responded after their close first set loss by leading the entire second set. Mason had a comfortable advantage of four points throughout the set. Blocking was a key factor in their victory. Junior outside hitter Ben Nichols and senior middle blocker Brandon McLaughlin contributed 11 block assists of 15.5 total team blocks against 7.5 by Juniata.

Despite their solid blocking, the Patriots were not able to put away the Eagles easily in the second set. Juniata closed within one point at 28-27. But Mason was able to sideout and inch their way past the Eagles 30-28 in the second set.

Sophomore setter Brandon Joyner and freshman middle blocker Lance Rogers started the third set for the Patriots as the team was looking to change the starting line. However, Juniata was on top of their game as they were stepping up their defense, chasing after balls and showing an effective attack on offense. After a kill by Eagles main outside hitter Zach Wanner, Mason head coach Fred Chao asked for a timeout to try to bring the Patriots together. It was too late in that set as



Junior libero Luke Maloney spikes the ball during Mason's four set loss to Juniata College.

Juniata won the third set 30-20. The Eagles recorded a .500 shooting percentage.

Junior setter Ryan Kwiatkowski returned to the starting line for the Patriots in the fourth set. The Patriots started strong, led by Rogers' blocks and McLaughlin's kills. Mason kept playing hard, but it was not good enough as the Eagles had the lead for the entire fourth set.

Juniata had match point after a kill by Wanner, but Mason did not back down. The Patriots stepped up their game with a kill by Nichols from Kwiatkowski. After a good swing by McLaughlin, followed by an attack error by the Eagles, the Patriots cut a four-point deficit to just one at 29-28. Juniata called a timeout to quiet Mason's rally. A kill by Evan Halteman concluded the match.

Three Patriots recorded double-digit kills. Gramit led Mason with 17, followed by Nichols' 16 and McLaughlin's 11. However, Gramit committed seven of the team's 16 service

errors. Sophomore libero Eric Lucas led the Patriots with 12 digs.

"We know we are a better team. We just had an off day," said Gramit. "When our pass and serve game was on, we had brilliant moments. But when it didn't happen, it was tough to recover."

Wanner led all players with 30 kills and added five digs. Anthony Damiano had a game-high 15 digs for the Eagles.

The Patriots lost their second consecutive match after winning the previous four.

Chao pointed out that the Patriots did not keep the same game level throughout the match.

"The team was inconsistent," said Chao. "We have been battling to pass through some injuries that compromise the starting line."

The team looks to overcome those injuries and come back stronger in next weekend's home matches against St. Francis University and Rutgers-Newark.

Snap Shot



Freshman Mendbagana Tovuujev attempts a pin against Liberty's Aaron Kelley in the 174 weight class match. Unfortunately, his win was not enough to give Mason the win. As Liberty won 23-19 in last Tuesdays meet, Mason dropped to 5-9-1. This marked the final wrestling meet for the Patriots at the Field House for the 2009 season.

Top 10 Games of the Week

Predictions of the Top NCAA Basketball Games Happening this Week.

Picks compiled by Brian Chan, Sports Editor and Ryan Dempsey, Staff Writer

Number	Teams	Brian’s Pick	Ryan’s Pick
10	Florida State vs. Boston College	Boston College	Florida State
9	Kentucky vs. South Carolina	South Carolina	South Carolina
8	Duke vs. Maryland	Maryland	Duke
7	Florida vs. LSU	LSU	LSU
6	Missouri vs. Kansas	Kansas	Kansas
5	Michigan State vs. Illinois	Illinois	Michigan State
4	Kansas vs. Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma
3	Memphis vs. UAB	UAB	Memphis
2	Louisville vs. Marquette	Marquette	Marquette
1	Connecticut vs. Marquette	Connecticut	Marquette

The Winning Reci-Pease

Freshmen Trio Leads Mason to Saturday’s Sweep

BRIAN CHAN
Sports Editor

Freshman third baseman Rachael Davies became the first Patriot to hit a home run at the newly opened George Mason Field as the Patriots (3-4) swept the Youngstown State Penguins (0-2) in Saturday’s doubleheader.

Junior pitcher Becky Anderson entered the game with a 0.84 ERA. Anderson (2-2) allowed three runs on six hits while striking out seven batters in her fourth complete game this season. She allowed only one hit in the last three innings.

Davies and freshman shortstop Tori Dudley each went 2-for-3. Davies also drove in a run and recorded a stolen base. Jordan Ingalls (0-1), the losing pitcher in the first game, went

3-for-3 with a home run for the Penguins.

After being shut out by Ingalls in the first three innings, the Patriots put together a four-run fourth inning, allowing them to hold on to win.

Freshman pitcher Brianne Pease (1-2) took the mound in the second game, striking out three of the first four batters she faced. Due to the run-rule in collegiate softball, Pease pitched a five-inning complete game and struck out five batters while allowing an unearned run.

“This game boosted our confidence from our past games. As far as the one run, it’s all about the defense behind me. The five strikeouts are because I know the defense behind me will be able to pick up anything,” said Pease.

Davies put Mason ahead

with a two-out solo shot off pitcher Erin Schindler (0-1) to center field in the first inning.

“It was a beautiful pitch,” said Davies.

Pease and Dudley each had two-run singles in the second inning as the Patriots extended the lead to 6-0.

Mason led 8-0 with two outs in the top of the fourth inning, but the Penguins had the bases loaded. The Patriots nearly recorded the last out when they had catcher Amanda Palmore in a rundown between second and third base, but an errant throw from Davies got away from freshman catcher Morgan Davis as third baseman Allyse Ledford scored the Penguins’ first run.

The Patriots scored two more runs in the fifth inning and prevented the Penguins from extending the game.

Davies, Dudley and Pease were among the six Patriots with two hits. Davies recorded three more RBIs in the second game, and Dudley and Pease had two RBIs apiece. Davies raised her batting average from .313 to .409, and Dudley’s 4-for-5 performance improved her average to .381.

The Patriots are closing in on a .500 record with the two wins on Saturday. After winning their season opener, they fell in their last four games in the UCF Early Bird tournament, including their 2-1 loss to the Bradley Braves in extra innings.

“Confidence is going to be our biggest big deal. We’re good and we know we’re good, but we’re going to have play like that,” said Dudley.

Mason hosts the Patriot Classic next week.



Brianne Pease pitches during the Patriots game versus Youngstown State University on Saturday, Feb. 21.

Who’s Hot and Who’s Not

Teams on the Move for an NCAA Tournament Berth

BRIAN CHAN
Sports Editor

RYAN DEMPSEY
Staff Writer

Virginia Tech Hokies

The Virginia Tech Hokies are the only team to knock off the Wake Forest Demon Deacons in Winston Salem this season. Even though they were able to defeat the top team in the nation at the time, the Hokies are currently in a position where they have to fight for a spot in the NCAA Tournament. Several of their close losses could determine whether or not they receive the at-large bid. In a game against the Clemson Tigers, the Hokies relinquished their 61-46 lead in the second half as the Tigers rallied to win 86-82 in Blacksburg. Virginia Tech is known for their highly competitive program. Five of their eight losses have been by no more than four points. Senior guard/forward A.D. Vassallo is one of the leaders on the team, averaging 18.5 points and 6.2 rebounds per game. Sophomore guard Malcolm Delaney is averaging 18.3 PPG, fifth-best in the ACC. Delaney scored a career-high 37 points against the Tigers with six 3-pointers. With Vassallo and Delaney in the backcourt, the Hokies have an additional solid inside presence in sophomore forward

Jeff Allen. Allen is averaging 14.5 PPG and 8.8 RPG, and has six double-doubles this season. One of his best performances came against the Longwood Lancers, where he recorded 19 points, 21 rebounds and three blocks. The Hokies will be in the spotlight as they look to avenge their blowout loss to the Duke Blue Devils earlier this year.

Ryan: Out
Brian: Out

Kentucky Wildcats

Junior guard Jodie Meeks never scored more than 21 points in a game during his first two seasons. This season, Meeks exceeded the 30-point mark seven times. Meeks’ 25.4 PPG average ranks fourth among Division I players. After losing their first two games to start off this season, the Kentucky Wildcats (19-8, 8-4) responded by winning 16 of their next 18 games. Meeks broke the school record with 54 points against the Tennessee Volunteers in a battle between the Southeastern Conference juggernauts. He also made 10 3-pointers in their 90-72 win over the Volunteers. Sophomore forward Patrick Patterson is making a name of himself in the SEC. Patterson is averaging 17.9 PPG, 9 RPG, and also has two blocks per game. He has 10 double-doubles and is shooting 64.7 percent from the field. In the Wildcats’ 102-58 win over the Tennessee State

Tigers, Patterson scored 33 points on 15-of-17 shooting and grabbed 11 rebounds. Despite not being ranked in the Top 25, the Wildcats’ formidable two may be one of the nation’s top duos. Last season, Kentucky earned the at-large bid as the 11th-seed in the NCAA Tournament, but fell to the Marquette Golden Eagles in the first round 74-66 despite a 35-point performance from then-senior Joe Crawford.

Ryan: In
Brian: Out

UAB Blazers

The Alabama-Birmingham Blazers (19-8, 9-3) are making a late run as they are riding a six-game winning streak. The Blazers led off the 2009 season with four wins before falling to the nationally-ranked Oklahoma Sooners. The Blazers played a relatively difficult schedule despite losing to several non-conference opponents. Among them, they lost 83-77 to the Boston College Eagles and 72-68 to the Butler Bulldogs, in which the Blazers gave up their halftime lead. Since Mike Davis took over as head coach in 2007, the Blazers have been dominant at home with a 24-1 record. They have yet to lose at home this season. The Blazers are led by their three seniors. Guard/forward Robert Vaden, who transferred from Indiana, leads the team with 18.2 PPG

and 16 blocks. Vaden played for Davis at Indiana from 2005-2006. Sharpshooting guard Paul Delaney III has 16.7 PPG and 4.4 RPG. Forward Lawrence Kinnard is a major provider for the team with 15.1 PPG and 9.2 RPG. The Blazers will host the Memphis Tigers on Thursday as they look to rebound from last season’s 79-78 loss to their Conference USA rival. Winning nine of their last 10 may make them a strong candidate as the high-powered UAB offense hopes to extend their season in March.

Ryan: In
Brian: In

Miami Hurricanes

This past weekend, the Miami Hurricanes continued to fight for an at-large bid to the Big Dance this March. Miami successfully took down Boston College on Saturday 69-58. During the game, Miami tied its season high hitting 11 3-pointers shooting 55 percent from beyond the arc. Although the Hurricanes have a 5-8 conference record, their overall record is a decent 16-10. Six of their 10 losses have been within five points, one of which ended in a close overtime game. Miami has had quality wins this season against the Kentucky, Wake Forest, and twice against Boston

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Martial Arts at Mason

Man “O” War Event Draws in a Crowd at Mason

JOHN PORTER
Broadside Correspondent

History was made when 6,248 fans attended UWC Man O’ War to witness the first Mixed Martial Arts title fight in the nation’s capital. Some of D.C.’s finest celebrities were in attendance as well: Washington Capital players Alex Ovechkin and Donald Brashear attended the event, as well as Chris Cooley of the Washington Redskins.

Fans were treated to nine action-packed bouts featuring top local and national fighters. Hometown favorite Kris McCray, fighting out of Gold Medal Grappling, increased his record to 2-0 by dominating Mannie Okorie from the get go, and sealing the deal with rear naked choke that forced Okorie to tap out in the second round.

History was also made when Iman Achhal and Felice “Lil Bulldog” Herrig stepped into the cage for the first professional woman’s MMA bout in the nation’s capital. Herrig, fighting out of Chicago, Ill., trains with former UFC champion Matt Hughes and EliteXC fighter Robbie Lawler. Herrig, a national Muay Thai champion, had a tough opponent in Iman Acchal, who was making her professional MMA debut.

Acchal, fighting out of Capital Jiu-jitsu in Alexandria, Va., came to the United States from her native country Morocco to escape an arranged marriage and has found solace in combat martial arts. She suffered from an eye that was swollen shut due to fierce strikes early in the fight. Acchal was able to pull through, stuff Herrig’s Muay Thai and score takedowns that would gain her a split decision victory over Herrig.

Another local favorite, Ron Stallings faced a tough opponent in former Green Bay Packers running back Herbert Whisper “Gorilla” Goodman. Fans found out why Goodman got the name Gorilla when he started the



PHOTO BY | JOHN PORTER

Kris McCray connects with a hard left to Manny Okorie’s chin moments before forcing him to tap out with a rear naked choke.

fight, slamming Stallings into the fence, almost sending him over the top and out the cage. As the fight progressed, Stallings found his pace and began dominating Goodman with strong punches, knees and kicks. When Goodman took the fight to the ground, Stallings was able to rely on his Jiu-jitsu to keep Goodman from landing good shots. 20 seconds before the end of the second round, Stallings connected with a knee to the former NFL player’s head, sidelining him for the night.

In another notable fight, former Tap Out show veteran, John “The Magician” Dodson faced two time National Muay Thai champion and World Muay Thai Championship finalist, Jose Villarisco.

The two fighters exchanged strong blows and displayed great grappling. Villarisco’s Muay Thai and a failed armed bar were not enough for Dodson. Dodson, who trains under Gregg Jackson in Albuquerque, N.M., had a few tricks in his bag such that his high flying kicks to the

head and great takedowns took the fight by unanimous decision.

In the co-main event of the evening, International Fight League veteran Jamal “The Suit” Patterson faced Antwain “The Juggernaut” Britt. As a veteran of The Ultimate Fighter show, Britt had no answer for Patterson’s Jiu-jitsu in a fight that lasted only a couple of minutes. Patterson, a black belt in Brazilian Jiu-jitsu under Renzo Gracie, came out and quickly got to business. Patterson quickly recovered from a couple of failed takedown attempts to finally get Britt to the mat and finish him off with a guillotine choke.

The main event of the evening, the first MMA title fight in the history was not without its flaws. Former WEC veteran Chase Beebe was under contract to fight Mike “The Hulk” Easton, but failed to catch his flight to D.C. and ended up being a no-show. UWC and the Virginia’s sanctioning body are seeking to impose a penalty against Beebe. Beebe also has a

three-fight contract with Japanese promotion Dream and is scheduled to fight two weeks from now in Japan.

On extremely short notice, Justin Robbins, a member of Matt Hughes’ H.I.T. squad out of Springfield, Ill., took the fight against Easton. According to Robbins, he was constantly training and was prepared for the fight. Robbins, stating he was going to get in the ring and fight like he was in first grade again, certainly got schooled.

Although Robbins was able to hold his own ground against Easton’s powerful strikes, he learned his lesson while on the ground. Easton finished the fight in excellent fashion, forcing Robbins to tap out in the third round of the the five-round title fight with a guillotine choke.

Once again, D.C. fans were treated to top level fights from the best MMA promotion in the Mid-Atlantic. The UWC will return to the Patriot Center on April 25 for UWC—Capital Punishment.

NCAA Basketball

Bubble Watch

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College. In addition, Miami nearly defeated powerhouse teams Duke and North Carolina. The Hurricanes will have to win out the remainder of the season and win at least one round in the ACC tournament. Otherwise, they will settle for an NIT bid. Miami currently leads the nation in rebounding with an average of 46 per game and averages just less than 75 points per game. The Hurricanes have played the 20th hardest schedule in the league, and with three games left in the season could make a big impact on the selection committee’s mind. Miami is led by senior guard Jack McClinton who averages 20 points per game, the 28th best currently in Division I basketball. Miami will play Florida State on Tuesday, followed by North Carolina State and will end their season at home against Georgia Tech.

Ryan: Out
Brian: In

Notre Dame Fighting Irish

The Notre Dame Fighting Irish punished Providence last Saturday to show the world that they should be a contender in the NCAA tournament winning 103-84. The Irish started the season 12-3 before dropping seven straight. They have won three of their last four, including the 90-57 win over Louisville. With the 10th hardest schedule in Division I, Notre Dame has taken out Indiana, Texas, South Dakota, and Georgetown: all contenders for a bid to the Big Dance. Major losses for the Irish this season include games against UNC, Ohio State, Louisville, Syracuse, Connecticut, Marquette, Pittsburgh, UCLA and West Virginia. With four games left in the regular season, the Irish still have tough games against Connecticut and Villanova. If Notre Dame can pull off these

two wins, they will definitely get an at-large berth to the NCAA tournament. Notable stats for the Irish include being the top team in turnover percentage, averaging just over 78 points per game, and fifth in the nation in 3-point field goal percentage, shooting 40.1 percent from long distance. What seems most amazing about Notre Dame is not the stats, but the balance of scoring from the starters. Four of their starters are averaging more than 10 points a game. Junior forward Luke Harangody is sixth in the nation in points per game averaging 24.4, and senior guard Ryan Ayers scored 28 points and was 7-of-11 from beyond the arc in their win against Providence. If the Irish can get hot on offense for the remainder of the season, they could be a Cinderella story waiting to happen.

Ryan: In
Brian: Out

Maryland Terrapins

On Saturday, the Terrapins took on UNC at home and won in overtime 88-85. Maryland currently holds a 6-6 conference record and 17-9 overall, which puts them in the middle of the ACC standings. With junior guard Greivis Vasquez leading the team, Maryland is a constant threat on both sides of the ball. In their win against the Tar Heels, Vasquez recorded a triple-double. Maryland has an impressive resume in the win column including wins against Michigan, Michigan State, Vermont, Miami (FL) and UNC. With the 37th toughest strength of schedule, Maryland looks to finish their season playing Duke, NC State, Wake Forest and Virginia. Maryland will have to beat Duke and Wake Forest and advance deep into the ACC tournament to get an at-large bid to the NCAA tournament.

Ryan: Out
Brian: In

Favre-well Again

Favre Retires for the Second Time in Two Years

CHRIS DEMARCO
Broadside Correspondent

Legendary quarterback Brett Favre said goodbye to his NFL playing days yet again. This time, there was not a big hoop-la surrounding it, like there had been the previous year when he first retired.

Fans remember the constant ESPN coverage of Favre’s career in retrospect. They remember the teary final news conference he gave when he announced he was done. People thought how awkward it was going to be to watch the Green Bay Packers play with someone named Rodgers under center, instead of Favre. But with that awkwardness, there came doubt he would stay retired.

The Packers essentially told the future Hall of Famer that his services were not needed once he contemplated a return. In the end, fans had the privilege to see Favre play one last time, but with the New York Jets. It created an

awkward scene among sports fans.

Seeing Favre play with the Jets was comparable to seeing quarterbacks Johnny Unitas and Joe Montana playing for the San Diego Chargers and Kansas City Chiefs, respectively, or even seeing basketball superstar Michael Jordan suiting up for the Washington Wizards. Each of these players were in situations similar to Favre’s. Their previous teams had all thought they were done and had moved onto younger players.

Favre brought a different type of personality to the game. He seemed to be one of those players that no matter how much pain he was in, would constantly go out and try to have fun while playing the game he loved. He always played with a smile and always jumped up and down following a key touchdown. That was the type of player he was. He was with the Packers from 1992 to the 2007 season.

Favre completed 5,720 passes in 9,280 attempts for

approximately 65,000 passing yards. He also stands alone at the top with 464 touchdowns, 22 of which came from last season. Favre recorded five 4,000-yard seasons in his 18-year career. In 1995, he threw for 4,413 yards with 38 touchdowns and 13 interceptions. His 99.5 passer rating was the highest in his career. Last season with the Jets, he recorded 22 touchdowns and 22 interceptions for 3,472 yards and an 81.0 passer rating. Even though the Jets improved with his presence, he was not able to help the team reach the playoffs in their late season collapse.

Favre would pick apart solid defenses numerous times over the years, which frustrated fans but they also knew that this player was one of the greatest quarterbacks of all-time. Fans all around respect him as a player, for he is simply one of the greatest to ever play.

This time, fans believe that he is calling it quits for real, and a lot of “experts” are having trouble placing him in the top 10

greatest quarterbacks of all time, which is somewhat hard to believe considering everything he has accomplished. Breaking Dan Marino’s record for touchdown passes was one of the countless memories that will go down in football history.

It was Favre who helped the Packers defeat the Patriots in Super Bowl XXXI, their franchise’s first title since Super Bowl II. Fans distinctly remember when he went out on Monday Night Football a day after he lost his dad and produced one of the greatest performances of all-time. He has two MVP awards and he has the greatest consecutive game streak. Favre competed against other quarterbacks like Aikman, Young and Elway, and he might not have the rings to compare, but he has the records, the awards and his one ring.

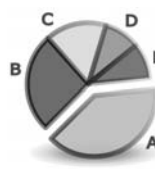
After nearly two decades, fans will have a hard time not being able to see number 4 running onto the field for one last time.

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