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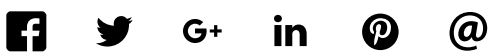
FEATURED

Cowgirls earn big win, halt losing skid

By Jordan Bishop jbishop@stwnewspress.com 15 hrs ago



Jordan Bishop/Stillwater News Press
Oklahoma State freshman center Kassidy De Lapp gets set to shoot a 3-pointer against Kansas on Saturday inside Gallagher-Iba Arena.



On a team notorious for slow starts, Kassidy De Lapp decided to change the status quo Saturday.

The freshman center kept pace with her opponent for the first few minutes, giving her teammates enough time to get in a groove. Her weathering of the storm was enough for Oklahoma State to earn a big lead.

The Cowgirls used the quick start to quickly put pressure on Kansas and coasted in a 72-52 win inside Gallagher-Iba Arena to snap a four-game losing streak.

Vivian Gray, the Cowgirls' workhorse for most of the season and especially through the losing skid, said De Lapp's play throughout the game was a huge reason the team was able to get the win.

"She is doing a really good job, especially being out there as a freshman and going against a lot of people who have a lot of experience," Gray said. "I am really proud of how she played today and she finished well and we needed that and she needed that."

De Lapp, a 6-foot-3 native of El Dorado Hills, California, scored a career-high 10 points to go with six rebounds for OSU. Cowgirl coach Jim Littell said that her skill set, not just scoring and rebounding, but also passing and good floor awareness, will make her a great player for the program for years to come.

"I want her to have all facets to her game where she could go down and be a banger on the block, step out and shoot the 3," Littell said. "She has that intermediate game to take a rip and go through to the rim. You have seen glimpse of all of that and she is going to continue to get better and something we can build on."

Littell even said De Lapp has a chance to surpass former Cowgirl star Kaylee Jensen, who was a great scorer, but Littell thinks his freshman could be even better because of De Lapp's passing.

"Kaylee has been really good over the past few years, but we never had anyone you could throw it inside to and kick it out or you could enter and facilitate the offense through her," Littell said. "I think (De Lapp) has a really bright future on what she is doing."

With the third scorer to go with Gray and a rejuvenated Braxtin Miller, the Cowgirls (14-12 overall, 5-10 Big 12 Conference) were playing to their potential and shooting lights out.

OSU shot 42 percent and were nearly 50 percent from 3-point range with nine made long-range bombs.

“It is about players hitting shots,” Littell said. “A baseball player gets a couple of hits and you start feeling better about yourself. It is a success-driven sport and we need some of these young kids to start feeling good about themselves and that is how they grow.”

Gray led the Cowgirls with 26 points to go with eight rebounds as Miller backed her up with 16 points and nine rebounds.

The sophomore tandem playing well, along with good minutes from De Lapp, Jaden Hobbs and Maria Castro really opened up the offense, with the Cowgirls tallying 19 assists to the Jayhawks’ five.

“That is what we are trying to ingrain in our kids is you don’t have to have the ball in your hands, you can go screen, or curl, you can get some movement to your game,” Littell said. “Our body movement and ball movement was better today.”

Although the victory over last-place Kansas (12-14, 2-13) won’t do much for RPI, it will help the Cowgirls’ momentum. Should OSU win two of its last three games in Oklahoma, conference champion Baylor and Kansas State, plus a Big 12 Tournament game, it should lock up a spot in the Women’s National Invitation Tournament.

First on tap is the Sooners at 8 p.m. Monday in Norman’s Lloyd Noble Center.

“I think it gives us a boost and some confidence,” Miller said. “We definitely needed that for this next game being as big as it is and meaning as much as it does. We are able to go in with more confidence and a flow and rhythm and a little bit of being able to puff our chest and stand back on our feet and get back up.”

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