

Lady Penguins win; Coach DiGregorio hits the 300 mark

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Saturday night at Beeghly Center could not have gone any better for Head Coach Ed DiGregorio. DiGregorio notched his 300th career victory at YSU, but more importantly, he got a complete effort from his team.

The Lady Penguins defeated rival Valparaiso Crusaders 74-59.

DiGregorio said, "It's great to get 300, but tonight's performance means a lot more to me."

Lately the Lady Penguins had not been playing a full 40 minutes of basketball, but that all came to an end.

Valpo got off to a quick 10-5 lead early on, but Nikki Pope, senior, and Alyson Vogrin, senior, sparked a 14-2 run early in the first half to put the Penguins up by seven. Vogrin dominated in the paint with a double-double, tossing in 21 points and was crashing the boards pulling down 11 rebounds.

Monica Vicarel, junior, went for 16 along with four assists and two steals. It was still a close contest at halftime, with the Pens up 36-30.

The teams traded hoops and for the first few minutes of the second half Vicarel hit fire.

Vicarel rattled off seven straight points, giving the Penguins a 12-point lead.

Vicarel's hot hand proved to be the turning point in the game.

Marlous Nieuwveen was the only bright spot for Valpo; she

had a game-high 24 points and snagged 15 rebounds.

Once the game was over, the big story was DiGregorio's 300th win.

He said, "I've had a great run and great kids in the process. I just went along for the ride."

He hit the 300 mark before, as a high school basketball coach. He referred to it as "patty cake ball."

Vicarel said, "He is the dean of women's basketball. This is a great win for him and this area."

DiGregorio hopes his squad will use this momentum and build on it.

"If you get kids ready to play mentally, they'll be ready to play physically. The mental part of the game is the most important," said DiGregorio.

Vogrin said, "We came together as a team. We felt we had to without Jen [Lyden]. She is our senior leader. We have been at a halt these last three games. It's nice to get this win at home."

The Penguins improved their record to 9-14 overall and 5-7 in Mid-Continent Conference standings.

The Crusaders fell to 6-17, 3-8. The Penguins shot 47 percent from the field and 31 percent from behind the arc but were out-rebounded by 43-36.

However, they out-shot Valpo from the line by 14 percent, and the defense forced 19 turnovers.

The Lady Penguins' next game is Saturday at UMKC.