POINT PARK MEN’S BASKETBALL GAME NOTES – Feb. 14 at IU Kokomo

Point Park Pioneers (13-10, 5-5 KIAC) at IU Kokomo (8-18, 2-8 KIAC)
Saturday, Feb. 14, 2015 at 7 p.m. ET (Kokomo, Ind.) / ON-AIR: Point Park Sports Network

Tonight’s Matchup: Point Park (13-10, 5-5 KIAC) visits IU Kokomo, which took a record of 8-18 overall, 2-8 KIAC into its Friday night home game versus Carlow (7 p.m.). The Pioneers play their final road game of the regular season versus the Cougars, who lost at Point Park, 107-93, on Jan. 10. Point Park is battling to stay in second place in the KIAC North Division and earn a first-round home playoff game if it can do just that. IU Kokomo entered Friday with a two-game lead on Carlow for the final playoff spot and two games behind Rio Grande for third place. With a big weekend, the Cougars could get within range of third place in the division.

Last Game: Won, 79-68, at home versus Rio Grande Feb. 10. The Pioneers built double-digit leads in both halves and coasted to victory after leading 57-40 with 11 minutes to go. The win gave Point Park the upper hand over Rio Grande in determining second place in the KIAC North. Yandell Denis had a career-high 22, of which 15 came in the first half. T.J. Lanier had 18 points, Jerah’mey Williams had 13 point and 8 assists and Alan Heter had 13 points and 9 boards. Final starter Barry Smith posted 11 points, 8 rebounds, 3 blocks.

Playoff Picture: With the KIAC North Division already clinched by No. 23 IU East (21-7, 9-2 KIAC), Point Park is left to battle for second place. The Pioneers lead third-place Rio Grande (17-10, 4-6 KIAC) by 1.0 game with three to play for each team. But with the 2-0 season sweep versus the RedStorm, Point Park has a virtual lead of 2.0 games. The Pioneers can lock up second place and a first-round playoff home game with at least two wins in its final three games. One victory will clinch second place if it is accompanied by a loss by Rio Grande. That scenario could play out as soon as Saturday night if Rio Grande loses at home to IU East Saturday at 4 p.m. and Point Park wins at IU Kokomo.

Final Exam: IU Kokomo is the final road exam for the Pioneers this regular season. The Pioneers are 2-4 in KIAC road games, which includes a 1-4 mark in KIAC road games played outside of Pittsburgh. Point Park won at nearby Carlow, a Pittsburgh school. The Pioneers other conference road win was the improbable comeback at Rio Grande Jan. 7. That leaves Point Park 0-4 in its other KIAC road contests with losses at Asbury (94-71), at Alice Lloyd (72-63), at Brescia (79-60) and at No. 22 IU East (84-81 ot).

Home Cooking: If Point Park were to be home for the KIAC Tournament, if only for the first round, it would be a welcome sight. The Pioneers are 7-3 at home this year, which includes a 3-1 KIAC home mark. The only conference home loss was to IU Southeast. Conversely, Point Park is 4-7 on the road this season. Playoff road games have not been kind for the Pioneers as they have lost their last four postseason games, all four of which have been first-round games on the road (L, Cedarville; L, Wilberforce; L, CCU; L, IUS).

Team Stats Rankings: Point Park is in the Top 25 of eight statistical categories of the NAIA Division II. The Pioneers rank 6th in scoring offense (87.7 ppg), 12th in steals per game (9.3 spg), 12th in 3-point FG made per game (8.8), 14th in rebounding (39.9 rpg), 14th in turnover margin (+3.5), 19th in offensive rebounds (13.0 rpg), 23rd in assist-to-turnover ratio (+1.2) and 25th in total steals (215).

Individual Stats Rankings: Jerah’mey Williams ranks 5th in the nation in assists per game (6.7), 6th in total assists (154) and 19th in points per game (20.1 ppg). Barry Smith ranks 8th in offensive rebounds (3.6 rpg), 11th in total rebounds (9.3 rpg), 14th in steals (2.3 spg) and 28th in blocks (1.4 bpg). Alan Heter ranks 14th in the nation in offensive rebounds (3.4 rpg) and 33rd in FG percentage (.543).

80 or Bust: Eighty points has been a key figure for the Pioneers as they are 10-3 when scoring 80 or more points and 3-7 when scoring less than 80 points. In regulation games, Point Park is 10-2 when scoring 80 or more. The three wins with less than 80 points were versus Cincinnati Christian on Dec. 6 (75-71) and Jan. 20 (78-76) and versus Rio Grande on Feb. 10 (79-68).

Low Turnovers: The Pioneers have taken great care of the ball the last three weeks as they have had less than 10 turnovers in five of their last six games beginning Jan. 20 versus CCU. The lone game above 10 was at IU East, where 12 turnovers proved too many.

Gotta Make Shots: The Pioneers’ style relies on converting at a high rate from the field. The Pioneers are 11-2 when shooting 45 percent or better from the field. Conversely, they are 2-8 when shooting less than 45 percent from the field.
Point Man: Point guard Jerahme Williams has been at the head of the Pioneers' sixth-ranked offense with 20.4 ppg, 6.7 apg and 43-percent shooting from 3-point range. The most consistent performer for the Pioneers, he has reached double figures in scoring all 23 games and has scored 20 or more points in 14 of 23 games.

Lanier Lately: Junior guard/forward T.J. Lanier has come alive the second half of the season. In the 13 games since Dec. 4, he is averaging 16.6 ppg and shooting 55 percent from the field. He has started the final 12 games in that 13-game stretch.

Denis Does It: Junior guard Yandell Denis turned in his best game of season in Tuesday's win at Rio Grande. He had a career-high 22 points, 15 of which came in the first half. He also dished out four assists and made three treys, and all that was in the first half as well.

Offensive Rebounds: A big part of the Pioneers' offense has come through offensive rebounding. With the inside tandem Barry Smith ranking 8th in the country and Alan Heter 14th in offensive rebounding, the Pioneers have a great duo on the offensive glass.

Allen Ailing: Freshman shooting guard Sai'did Allen started at Carlow and scored 15 points with four made 3-pointers. But he has been limited since with an ankle injury that kept him out of the IU East game and limited to six minutes and no points versus Rio Grande.

Head Coach: Bob Rager is in his 26th year as head coach at his alma mater. He has a career record of 361-351 at Point Park, and he is the all-time wins leader at the school. Rager has led the Pioneers to three trips to the NAIA national tournament, including a trip to the NAIA DI Final Four in 1996-97.

Series vs. IU Kokomo: Point Park is 2-1 all-time versus IU Kokomo, which had its first-ever year of men's basketball in 2013-14. The Pioneers won at home earlier this year, 107-93, a game that had a 30-point margin until the starters left with five minutes left. The home team has won every game in the series with Point Park winning 69-65 at home and losing 116-106 on the road last year.

Scouting IU Kokomo: The Cougars have a lot to play for and can put themselves within reach of third place in the KIAC North with a big weekend. If they beat Carlow at home Friday night (7 pm), a win over Point Park coupled with a loss by Rio Grande at IU East earlier in the day can put IU Kokomo within a half game of the RedStorm for third place. The Cougars beat KIAC South leader Brescia, 70-58, at home Feb. 3. Although they lost to IU East on Feb. 5, they've had eight days before their games this weekend.

Guard Nick Teeter is second in the KIAC with 77 made 3-pointers and has a team high 15.2 ppg. Micah Pier is a 6-9 center averaging 12.3 ppg, and guard Jared Lawrence gives the Cougars a third double-digit scorer with 11.5 ppg and 33 treys. Jerome Campbell, a 6-0 guard, is the leading rebounder at 5.2 rpg to go along with 9.3 ppg.

The Cougars allow opponents to shoot 45 percent from the field, which is 8th of 10 teams in the KIAC. In scoring defense, the Cougars are fourth in the league at 74.25 ppg. Offensively, IU Kokomo ranks 9th in the KIAC in both scoring offense (70.8 ppg) and field-goal percentage (.425).

KIAC Standings (as of games played Feb. 11)

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<th>KIAC North Division</th>
<th>KIAC</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Streak</th>
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<tr>
<td>23 IU East</td>
<td>8-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Point Park</td>
<td>5-5</td>
<td>13-10</td>
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<tr>
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<th>KIAC South Division</th>
<th>KIAC</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>8-2</td>
<td>16-8</td>
<td>W2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asbury (Ky.)</td>
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<td>L1</td>
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<td>IU Southeast</td>
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This Week in the KIAC

Sun., Feb. 8
No. 22 IU East 84, Point Park 81 (OT)

Tue., Feb. 10
Point Park 79, Rio Grande 68
Brescia (Ky.) 76, IU Southeast 66
Cincinnati Christian 78, Alice Lloyd (Ky.) 66

Fri., Feb. 13
Carlow at IU Kokomo, 7 p.m.

Sat., Feb. 14
Asbury (Ky.) at IU Southeast, 2 p.m.
Brescia (Ky.) at Alice Lloyd (Ky.), 3 p.m.
No. 22 IU East at Rio Grande, 4 p.m.
Point Park at IU Kokomo, 7 p.m.