POINT PARK WOMEN'S BASKETBALL GAME NOTES JAN. 23-24, 2015

(RV) Point Park University Pioneers (17-2, 4-1 KIAC)
Friday, Jan. 23 – Point Park at Brescia (Ky.) (7-11, 1-4 KIAC), 5 p.m. CT
Saturday, Jan. 24 – Point Park at Midway (Ky.) (8-9, 4-1 KIAC), 2 p.m. ET

This Weekend: The Pioneers are on a two-game, weekend road trip in KIAC play where they will visit Brescia (Ky.) on Friday at 7 p.m. CT and Midway (Ky.) on Saturday at 2 p.m. ET. The Pioneers have won six games in a row and four straight KIAC games to run their record to 17-2 overall and 4-1 KIAC. Point Park leads the KIAC North Division and will take on a couple of KIAC South Division foes this weekend.

Last Game: Won, 70-54, at Home vs. Cincinnati Christian Jan. 20. The Pioneers were up 10-0 early on an 42-26 at the half. Point Park used pressure defense to run the lead to as big as 54-32 before notching the double-digit win. Kelly Johnson had 22 points, Kayla Kiriu added 18 and Celina DiPietro sparked the bench with 13 points and three 3-pointers, all three of which came in the first half.

NAIA DII Top 25: The Pioneers, winners of 13 of their last 14 games, still find themselves on the outside looking in on the national rankings as this week’s NAIA DII Top 25 Poll had them remaining in the ‘others receiving votes’ section at No. 26 overall in the poll that came out Jan. 20. Point Park moved up two spots from being No. 28 last week, although it had been nationally ranked the previous three weeks before that.

On The Road: Point Park has suffered both of its losses on the road this year but still has a great road record of 9-2. The Pioneers are a perfect 7-0 at home and are 1-0 on neutral courts. Both of the Pioneers’ losses this year have come as part of a two-day road trip. The Pioneers lost at Davis & Elkins on the second day of a back-to-back situation in which they had a double-overtime win over Pitt-Johnstown the night before. Point Park lost at Asbury on the first leg of a trip.

Defensively Speaking: Point Park has revved up its defense the last few weeks. The Pioneers have held five of their last six opponents and four straight under 60 points. Since losing to Davis & Elkins, 81-69, on Nov. 15, Point Park has allowed just two opponents to score as many as 70 points. The Pioneers are 13-1 since then.

More Defense: The Pioneers have the top defense in the KIAC as they lead the conference in scoring defense (64.4 ppg), field-goal defense (366), 3-point field-goal defense (229), turnover margin (+7.9) and steals per game (13.3). The defense also holds up as one of the tops in the country as it is in the Top 10 of NAIA DII in turnover margin (4th), 3-point field-goal defense (4th), steals per game (13.3) and total steals (253).

Offensive Firepower: The Pioneers are also strong on offense with a scoring average of 82.6 ppg that ranks eighth in NAIA DII and second in the KIAC behind IU East (86.5 ppg). The scoring margin of 18.2 ppg ranks 11th in the nation in first in the KIAC. Point Park has just two healthy double-digit scorers – G Kelly Johnson (15.9 ppg) and G/F Ja’Nia McPhatter (10.6) – but it gets scoring from a variety of options with seven players averaging 4.1 and 8.8 ppg.

Head Coach: Tony Grenek is in his fourth year at Point Park and is 94-21 (.817) in his time with the Pioneers entering this weekend. He is a two-time conference Coach of the Year and has led the Pioneers to three straight conference tournament and regular season championship as well as three straight NAIA DII national tournament appearances.

20-Wins: The Pioneers have their sights set on another 20-win season. Point Park had never won 20 games in a season until it won 25 in 2011-12. Point Park also won 25 games in 2012-13 and put up a team-record 29 wins in 2013-14.

Wins Leaders since ’13-14: Point Park remains as the fourth-winningest NAIA DII program since the start of last year. Point Park is 46-7 (.867) since then trailing only No. 2 Davenport (Mich.) (53-2), No. 7 St. Francis (Ind.) (53-6) and No. 1 Morningside (Iowa) (51-7) for most wins and best winning percentage since 2013-14.
Series vs. Brescia (Ky.): Point Park is 5-0 all-time versus Brescia, including a 98-78 home playoff win over the Bearcats last year. The Pioneers swept the season series last year winning 91-62 at home then 78-66 on the road. Point Park won both meetings in 2012-13, the year for Point Park in the KIAC, 77-72 on the road and at home, 86-54.

Scouting Brescia (Ky.): The Bearcats are 7-11 overall and 1-4 KIAC. The overall record in brought down with a tough, non-conference schedule that includes many NAIA DI and NCAA DII opponents. But the Bearcats have still just won 1 of 5 conference games. The lone KIAC win was a big one, an 80-72 upset of No. 21 Asbury (Ky.) on Jan. 13. Brescia has is coming off of losses at Midway (Ky.) (90-78) and at IU East (112-93). Brescia ranks 25th in the country with 75.4 ppg, and the scoring punch in provided by three guards in double digits: Julie Whitfill (19.9 ppg, 45 3pt FGs), Darrian McNary (13.8 ppg) and Sydney Taylor (12.7 ppg). Brescia shoots 36 percent from the floor, gives up 44 percent, is being out-rebounded by 8.4 per game and averages 18.5 turnovers.

Series vs. Midway (Ky.): Point Park is 4-0 versus Midway since joining the KIAC in 2012-13. Point Park won last year on the road, 67-63, and at home, 81-48. The 2012-13 meetings went to Point Park, 53-47 at home then 86-43 on the road.

Scouting Midway (Ky.): The Eagles are an upstart team in the KIAC South as its 4-1 KIAC record is second in the division and just a half game behind IU Southeast (5-1 KIAC) for the divisional lead. Midway started out just 3-8 versus a tough, non-conference schedule. Since then, the Eagles have won 5 of 6 games, which includes a 4-1 KIAC record in that time. Midway owns an upset of Top 25 Asbury as part of its KIAC wins and is coming off a 111-106 win over IU East on Thursday night.