

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



DAVID SHEPPARD-BRICK/the Justice

Kwame Graves-Fulgham '08

■ The point guard set Brandeis' career assist mark last Friday, notching a career-high of 14 against Lasell College.

Even though guard Kwame Graves-Fulgham '08 was held scoreless in the second half of last Friday night's 80-59 win over Lasell College in the first round of the NCAA tournament, he still made his presence felt offensively.

Graves-Fulgham dished out assists on nine of Brandeis' 15 field goals and finished with 14 assists overall, representing half of the Judges' 28 on the night and breaking the school's career assist record previously held by Stanley House '89 in the process. The 14 assists also represent a career-high for Graves-Fulgham.

"[Lasell's] tough pressure allowed me to move more in the paint and kick it out, and I guess it just opened up lanes for people," Graves-Fulgham said.

His highlight play came with 10 minutes left in regulation against Lasell. The 5-foot-10-inch Graves-Fulgham went head-to-head with 6-foot-9-inch Lasers' senior forward Jose Guitian for a loose ball, and despite the 11-inch disadvantage in height, Graves-Fulgham made the steal

and quickly fired a pass to guard Florian Rexhepi '08 for an uncontested layup that gave Brandeis a 62-47 lead.

"Often times [Graves-Fulgham is] a guy that gets overlooked. How can you overlook a guy who just broke the school record in assists?" head coach Brian Meehan asked reporters after the game. "He's quiet about [his performance], he's unselfish... and he just does his job."

Graves-Fulgham characterizes himself as a pass-first player, and as a result, he paced the team with 111 assists, good for 4.1 per game. In fact, Graves-Fulgham recorded just 17 more shot attempts than assists this season. He also leads the team with 42 steals and logs the second-most minutes per game with 28.1.

"[I'm trying to] push the ball up [the court] every time and look for open shooters," Graves-Fulgham said. "Everyone stepped up [Friday night]; everyone was hitting their shots."

—Jeffrey Pickette

NCAA TOURNAMENT STORY

Tufts' dream season continues into the NCAA Tournament Sweet 16

By SAPNA BANSIL
TUFTS DAILY (TUFTS U.)

The best season in the history of the Tufts University women's basketball team just got a whole lot sweeter.

Behind a suffocating effort on the defensive end, the No. 18 Jumbos trounced host Mount St. Mary University 54-38 last Saturday night in Newburgh, N.Y. to advance to the Sweet 16 of the Division III NCAA Tournament. The win followed Tufts' 71-68 win over Wheaton College in the tournament opener Friday and continued the Jumbos' program-best season, which now stands at 25-3.

"I was a little bit speechless afterward," Tufts coach Carla Berube said following Saturday's victory. "It was the best defensive basketball we've played all season, from top to bottom, from player A to player Z. I am just proud of our effort, proud of the way we came out, the way we sustained our composure, our intensity and our energy for the entire game. It was a fun game to coach and to be a part of."

Defense ruled the day in a game where no player from either side reached double figures in scoring. Mount St. Mary's entered the contest with one of the nation's best defenses, having held its opponents to a Division III-best 29.9 percent from the field.

But Tufts beat the Blue Knights at their own game, limiting them to just 12 first-half points. Mount St. Mary finished with 38 points on the night, a whopping 33.5 fewer than its season average.

"We watched them play the night before, and we knew that they are a very good offensive team," sophomore guard Vanessa Miller said. "But we pressured the ball great—we were talking, and we communicated well. It was all the things we've been talking about the entire season coming together."

While the Jumbos stifled the Blue Knights' assault, they had trouble getting their own offensive game going, setting up a defensive stalemate through the first 18 minutes of the game.

With two minutes remaining in the first half, both teams had combined for just 26 points. But a three-point play from senior co-captain Jenna Gomez ignited a 6-0 Tufts run that closed the half and sent the team into the locker room with a 20-12 lead.

The Jumbos sustained that momentum into the second half. A Gomez jumper with 16 minutes, 3 seconds remaining put the Tufts lead in double digits, and a crucial three-pointer by junior guard Stacy Filocco 2:35 later put the game out of reach.

As a whole, Tufts was far more efficient offensively in the second half, shooting 46.2 percent from the floor compared to 25.0 percent in the first.

"I think the key was that we calmed down," Miller said. "In the first half, there were a lot of nerves because of the atmosphere of playing in the NCAA Tournament. I think people were very jumpy—we had eight turnovers at the half. We were playing hard, but there's not a lot you can do to fight nerves. But after that run we put together heading into halftime, we knew we had the momentum, and it just carried over."

One week after being held scoreless in the team's New England Small College Athletic Conference title game loss to Amherst College March 2, the Jumbos' bench bounced back in a big way, tallying 19 points, including 13 in the second half. Miller led the way, tying for a game-high with nine points while also chipping in four rebounds and two assists.

Filocco put together one of her best performances of the season, contributing six big points in eight minutes.

The across-the-board production was a welcome sign for Tufts, which had grown increasingly reliant on senior co-captain and NESCAC Player of the Year Khalilah Ummah over the last month.

Coming into the game, Ummah had been the team's leading scorer in six of its previous seven contests and was virtually the lone source of offensive production in the loss to Amherst.

Against Mount St. Mary's, however, nine different Jumbos contributed points, and four were within one field goal of reaching double figures.

"I think lately we've been relying too much on [Ummah]," Berube said. "She did a great job today, but the balanced scoring was great to see. I'm proud of the contributions from everyone: [Filocco] off the bench, [Miller] off the bench. And I'm really pleased with the way [Gomez] bounced back from last weekend. So it was nice how we spread the ball around so well."

"We're all happy with this particular win because it really felt like a great team win," Miller added. "Everybody contributed, and everybody fit their roles perfectly. We know that we're a very deep team and that on any given day, we have many different players who can contribute a bunch of points. Today, everybody really did their part."

The victory came on the heels of a far less convincing showing Friday night, when regional foe Wheaton threatened Tufts with a quick exit from its first-ever NCAA Tournament appearance. The Lyons, whom the Jumbos dispatched 61-36 Jan. 22, put up a much stronger fight this time around, thanks in part to near-flawless shooting from the free-throw line, where they converted on 17 of their 20 attempts.

Trailing by as many as 14 in the second half, Wheaton whittled the deficit down to four with 1:18 left to play. On Tufts' next trip down the floor, however, junior forward Katie Tausanovitch grabbed a pair of potentially game-saving offensive rebounds before notching a put-back layup that gave the Jumbos a six-point advantage.

Miller and freshman point guard Colleen Hart then iced the victory with three free throws in the final 30 seconds.

"I did think that the Wheaton that played us at their place during the year wasn't really Wheaton," Berube said. "They're a tough team. They made plays, they hit shots, and they showed a toughness about them when they were down in the second half."

"But we found a way to fight back when we needed to by hitting some big free throws down the stretch and making some big plays," she added.

The weekend's wins earned the Jumbos a Sweet Sixteen showdown against No. 5 University of Mary Washington, the first top-10 opponent Tufts has met this season.

Judging numbers

15 -point deficit erased by the women's basketball team in its 74-71 opening round victory of the NCAA tournament against the University of Southern Maine in Union, N.J. last Friday. The Judges trailed 61-46 with 9 minutes, 3 seconds left in the game before rallying.

19 points scored by women's basketball guard Jamie Capra '08 in her final collegiate game, a 95-61 second round NCAA Tournament loss to Kean University in Union, N.J. last Saturday. Capra scored 25 points in the team's first round win against the University of Southern Maine the day before.

0 games dropped by Rachel Romsan '11 in her No. 1 singles tennis match against Smith College first-year Diana Fiunefreddo. She also teamed up with Colleen Donnelly '08 in the No. 1 doubles position for an 8-2 victory. The women's team went 8-1 against Smith last Sunday.

10 points earned by jumper Bessie Bianco '08 for her first-place finish in the women's high jump event at the University Athletic Association Championships held at Case Western University last Saturday. Bianco leaped 1.61 meters to get the victory.

8 field goals converted by guard Florian Rexhepi '08 in the men's basketball team's 80-59 win over Lasell College in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament. Rexhepi tallied 19 points, including 11 straight for the Judges in a six-minute span late in the second half to put the game out of reach.

75 -second period in which men's basketball forward Rich Magee '10 tallied four points, two steals and one block against Bowdoin University in the team's 68-53 second round NCAA Tournament win last Saturday.

UPCOMING GAME OF THE WEEK

MBALL at No. 7 Plattsburgh State

The Judges continue their NCAA Tournament run Friday at 8:15 p.m.

If one goes by the D3hoops.com national rankings, then the men's basketball team's regional semifinal game at No. 7 State University of New York at Plattsburgh seems unfair. After all, the Judges are ranked No. 5 and must still travel to play in Plattsburgh's in just the third round of the tournament.

But such is the nature of Division

III, where the brackets are arranged primarily by regional affiliation. The Judges know this well, as their first-round matchup against Trinity College last year was criticized by the Bantams' head coach.

Brandeis won that game and looks to overcome a similar obstacle when they play Plattsburgh Friday at 8:15 p.m.

TEAM LEADERS

MBball (points per game)

Sharpshooting guard Joe Coppens '08 was named to the all-University Athletic Association first team.

Player	PPG
Joe Coppens	15
Terrell Hollins	13.6
Kevin Olson	11
Andre Roberson	9.5
Stephen Hill	7.6

MBball (rebounds per game)

Forward Terrell Hollins '10 leads the Judges in rebounding in just 24 minutes per game.

Player	RPG
Terrell Hollins	5.9
Stephen Hill	5.1
Joe Coppens	5.1
Kwame Graves-Fulgham	3.4
Kevin Olson	2.7

WBball (points per game)

After a slow start, Jaime Capra '08 was named the University Athletic Association co-Player of the Year.

Player	PPG
Jaime Capra	15.2
Lauren Orlando	11.1
Jessica Chapin	10.2
Cassidy Dadaos	5.6
Amber Strodthoff	4.6

WBball (rebounds per game)

Guard Jaime Capra '08 has increased her rebounding average from last season.

Player	RPG
Jaime Capra	6.6
Jessica Chapin	4.3
Amber Strodthoff	4.3
Cassidy Dadaos	4
Lauren Orlando	3.9

UAA STANDINGS

Men's Basketball

	UAA Conference		Overall		
	W	L	W	L	Pct.
Chicago	11	3	18	8	.692
JUDGES	10	4	22	5	.815
Washington	10	4	21	6	.778
Rochester	9	5	22	5	.815
Carnegie Mellon	6	8	19	9	.679
New York	6	8	16	11	.593
Emory	3	11	10	15	.400
Case	1	13	8	17	.320

Women's Basketball

	UAA Conference		Overall		
	W	L	W	L	Pct.
Chicago	11	3	22	5	.815
Rochester	10	4	22	5	.815
Washington	10	4	19	8	.704
JUDGES	9	5	19	8	.704
Emory	7	7	14	11	.560
Case	6	8	13	12	.520
New York	3	11	14	11	.560
Carnegie Mellon	0	14	7	18	.280