

Idaho set for duel with Boise State

Vandals continue in-state rivalry tonight

Michael-Shawn Dugar/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

Idaho guard Connor Hill, center, puts up a shot under pressure from South Dakota State's Zach Horstman, left, and Reed Tellinghuisen in the first half Monday at Memorial Gymnasium.

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By Michael-Shawn Dugar, Daily News staff writer | [0 comments](#)

The Vandals take the court tonight for an event that, as of late, has been one-sided, both on the scoreboard and by location.

Idaho (2-1) will face Boise State at 6 p.m. at CenturyLink Arena with the hopes of snapping a five-game losing streak against the Broncos (3-1). The meeting also marks the fourth-straight time the two teams will meet at a neutral location, which isn't exactly ideal for the Vandals coach Don Verlin.

"Is that game important? Yeah, I just wish it was played differently," Verlin said during his weekly press conference last Tuesday. "I wish they would come up here and play every once in awhile and that doesn't seem to be something that is going to happen in the near future."

Verlin believes the "fairest" way to continue what he deemed a necessary annual game would be to play it on a three-game rotation with a home-and-home format in addition to playing at CenturyLink Arena in Boise.

"The people I feel sorry for in this are the northern Vandals who come and watch us play all the time but never get to see Boise State, who is obviously their rival," Verlin said Monday. "I am happy for the southern Vandals who come out in full force; they are always out when we come down to play. I'm happy we get to play a good, marquee game down there; I think it's good for both schools and good for basketball in general."

At this point Verlin and Boise State coach Leon Rice - with whom Verlin has a strong relationship, spanning more than 20 years - haven't discussed any future plans for the location of the matchup, though Verlin admitted those talks may be futile.

"I think that decision is made above both Leon and I," Verlin said.

The Vandals, coming off a sloppy start to their two-game road trip, have a tough task ahead of them tonight, facing a team they haven't defeated since a 79-55 road victory in 2010. Verlin had high praise for Rice's group Monday, which is currently led by Anthony Drmic, who holds team-highs in both points (17.3) and rebounds (5.3) through the first four games of the season.

"Drmic is really hard to guard, he's always moving, he's an excellent 3-point shooter, he's really smart and he's tall for his position compared to the guys we're used to playing against," Verlin said. "It looks like they are a little better defensively than they have been in the past. They're still obviously very powerful offensively and we have our hands full."

Idaho will enter tonight's game well rested after a four-day hiatus since Thursday's loss at Northern Illinois, capping off a trio of games in six days to start the season. Verlin immediately gave his team two days off after the road trip before practicing two days straight in hopes of keeping his guys fresh for tonight.

While guards Mike Scott and Sekou Wiggs - the two leading scorers - continue to be a solid backcourt for the Vandals, the shooting woes persist for third starting guard, Connor Hill. After going 2-for-2 with five points to being the game against NIU, Hill went 1-for-12 and is now shooting just 22 percent from field and 21 percent from 3-point range.

Verlin has yet to express concern for Hill's shooting, instead he harped on the need to set better screens and do a better job of "getting him the ball where he needs to get it." When asked if he has had a talk with Idaho's all-time 3-point leader, Verlin kept it short and sweet.

"I told him when he's open, shoot it," Verlin said, "that was my conversation with him."

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