

Marquette cools off Purdue at home, 76-58

Written by Sean Murawski // SM Sports

Purdue is no stranger to a great college atmosphere. It was just last week they took advantage of their own great arena to defeat then-#2 Alabama at home. Last night, Marquette flipped the script in Milwaukee's raucous Fiserv Forum, defeating Matt Painter's Boilermakers 76-58.

Kam Jones' triple double (17 pts, 10 ast, 13 rebs) led Marquette in a win that seemed inevitable after halftime. Marquette was cooking on all cylinders, and it wasn't just Jones who led the way. Their leading scorer was actually Stevie Mitchell, who scored 21 points and grabbed 4 steals in his typical dominant defensive performance. Ben Gold (11 pts, 5 rebs) and Chase Ross (12 pts) both reached double figures, while David Joplin nabbed 9 points.

For Purdue, it was a tale of two games compared to their dynamic win over Alabama last week. Braden Smith (11 pts, 9 ast, 3-5 3pt) and Fletcher Loyer (13 pts) were their typical selves in the backcourt, despite some stifling defense from Marquette. Last week's star Trey Kaufman-Renn dropped 16 points with 8 rebounds, going 7-10 from the field. Purdue got some help off the bench (8 points each from Caleb Furst and Camden Heide), but they didn't have enough in the tank to take down a Marquette team operating at full tilt.

Kam Jones' campaign for National Player of the Year made quite a stately jump last night. While he is capable of being a pure, elite scorer, it is also refreshing to see him take the reins as a dynamic playmaker. His triple double— only the third in Marquette history, and the first since Dwyane Wade's in the 2003 NCAA tournament— is a sign that he can produce in many different ways, at a level above most in the country.

The real key was also Marquette's aforementioned defensive presence, which forced 15 turnovers that turned into 18 points. Stevie Mitchell's 4 steals highlight the defensive stat sheet, and Shaka Smart's Golden Eagles truly did not let Purdue's athletic and feisty guards get much space. Braden Smith, who at one point was forced into 5 consecutive through the legs moves just to create space for a pass to Fletcher Loyer, just didn't have as much freedom to make his own shot. Trey Kaufman-Renn played well

again, but Purdue lost pretty much every battle to Marquette. They shot only 66% from the charity stripe, and only got 8 points off of 6 forced turnovers. Marquette also ran for 19 fast break points, with Purdue mustering just 4.

Purdue's identity this year has obviously changed without Zach Edey, and their guard play has taken a jump. However, Marquette's high line on Smith and Loyer forced them into some tricky situations. Just the sheer quality of Smith and Loyer gave them some leeway to get what they were looking for at points during this game, particularly in the pick and roll. They were also able to kick out to beyond the arc frequently, although they didn't connect as often as they would like (6-18). When they were stifled in the backcourt, they didn't have their main man Edey to get an automatic bucket. Kaufman-Renn certainly had a decent night, and seems to be their go-to man outside of Smith. However, they struggled last night with Marquette's defensive attack. Space was a big issue, and Marquette took advantage of their loose passes and tricky dribbles.

Overall, Marquette looks stronger than we may have thought. They, too, lost a major piece to the league in guard Tyler Kolek. Everyone knew Kam Jones was a great player, but he is definitely opening eyeballs as a nationwide star. Purdue will likely not be totally disappointed in the loss— on the road, in a tough environment, against one of the country's most consistent programs since the turn of the decade. Matt Painter's team is a well-oiled machine, and Braden Smith should still be the X factor for a team that is finding a new identity in the post-Edey era.

Marquette will take a great resumé win this early in the season, and Purdue will look to bounce back ahead of what looks to be a deeper-than-expected Big Ten slate. Two great programs battled it out in Milwaukee last night, and they will do it again at Mackey Arena next season. More of this, please.

Purdue's next game: vs. Marshall, Saturday 11/23, 12 pm EST, B1G+

Marquette's next game: vs. Georgia, Saturday 11/23, 11 am EST

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