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Home Run: First 4 Basketball Games In Pavilion

SPU Faces Tough Foes In Vitamilk Tip-Off Classic Fri. & Sat.

Now they count. Seattle Pacific University will begin the men's basketball season with the first four games in Brougham Pavilion, yet winning this weekend's Vitamilk Tip-Off Classic is far from a sure thing. The Falcons, coming off a 24-5 record and with a new coach at the helm for the first time in 12 years, host Minnesota-Duluth (19-11 last season) Friday night (Nov. 22) and then longtime rival Central Washington (16-10 last season) Saturday (Nov. 23). The home stand continues Monday (Nov. 25) with Warner Pacific (4-0), followed by Seattle University Nov. 30. All five December dates are on the road.

All we need is a Hiro. Officially, this weekend marks the beginning of a new era for SPU. **Jeff Hironaka**, the quiet, unassuming man behind the scenes of so many successes the past 11 years, is now the head coach of one of the top programs in NCAA Division II. He inherits a program which has strung together four consecutive 20-win seasons and five straight NCAA tournament appearances. Hironaka succeeded **Ken Bone** last spring following Bone's move to the University of Washington. With Hironaka on the staff, the Falcons won 236 of 323 games, earned five outright or shared conference championships and qualified for NCAA tournament berths eight of the past nine years. Hironaka also is only the second Japanese-American head coach of a four-year program.

Feast or famine. Creampuffs apparently are not part of the Falcons' diet. Hironaka has set the table with some formidable foes, especially in the first nine games. Included in the pre-Christmas mix are two fellow playoff teams (Minnesota-Duluth and Missouri Western) from 2002, the first Division I opponent (Nevada) in five years and teams who averaged 16 victories apiece last season. While the pavilion record over the last three years is 38-5, that includes three straight opening-night losses—a jinx Hironaka aims to halt. Following the home stand, Great Northwest Athletic Conference play begins Dec. 5 at Central Washington. SPU was picked to finish fourth in the GNAC preseason poll.

Yuey and the news. As an assistant, Hironaka's responsibility was the defense but he apparently knows the offensive end just as well, if two preseason exhibitions were any indication. The Falcons pushed the ball at every opportunity, totaling 225 points in a couple lopsided wins against former collegians. There is no secret who is the focal point of the offense either. **Yusef Aziz** (Sr., 6-4, Seattle, Wa./Foster-Highline CC), the GNAC newcomer of the year and team scoring leader (16.2) as a junior, is the go-to guy. Aziz appeared even more explosive during the exhibitions, scoring a combined 58 points while hitting 22-39 shots from the field. Hironaka says the approach to this season will resemble that of 1999, when **Jeff McBroom** was the designated scorer, to the tune of a record 24.3 points per game.

Pass the roles. Aziz is sure to attract lots of defensive attention, which could translate to open looks for others. Point guard **Maurice Cato** (Sr., 6-0, Fairfield, Ca.) was the No. 2 option in the preseason and stroked 5-10 treys and totaled 30 points. Forward **Jesse Keely** (Sr., 6-7, Fircrest, Wa./Bellarmine) played with greater confidence and hit 12-15 shots while guards **Jordan Lee** (So., 6-0, University Place, Wa./Life Christian) and **Tony Binetti** (Fr., 6-1, Enumclaw, Wa./Enumclaw) combined for 22 points and 12 assists off the bench in the first exhibition. Another freshman, redshirt forward **Jeff Knudson** (Fr., 6-7, Mukilteo, Wa./Kamiak), may prove to be a wildcard. Knudson led all players with seven preseason three-pointers. Better yet, those bombs weren't forced (only 11 attempts) and he was usually well behind the 19-foot-9 arc.

A big difference. It's been nearly 10 years since SPU boasted an inside force such as transfer center **Jason Chivers** (So., 6-8, Palmdale, Ca./Highland-

2002-03 MEN'S BASKETBALL

SPU Quick Facts

2001-02 Final Record—24-5
Final Ranking—No. 9, NCAA Div. II
Coach—Jeff Hironaka, 1st year
Coach's Career Record—0-0

This Week

2002 Vitamilk Tip-Off Classic
Nov. 22-23, 2002

Fri., Nov. 22

5 p.m.—NW Nazarene v Central Wash.

7 p.m.—SPU v Minnesota-Duluth
Brougham Pavilion, Seattle, Wa.

Sat., Nov. 23

5 p.m.—NW Nazarene v Minnesota-Duluth

7 p.m.—SPU v Central Washington
Brougham Pavilion, Seattle, Wa.

Mon., Nov. 25, 7 p.m.

vs. Warner Pacific (4-0)

Brougham Pavilion, Seattle, Wa.

Preseason Results

at SPU 108, Northwest All-Stars 77
at SPU 117, The Son's Blue Angels 96

Streaks & Such

SPU is bidding for its fifth consecutive 20-win season and sixth straight trip to the NCAA tournament in 2002-03

Stat de jour

The Falcons have lost their last three season-opening games, all at home

GNAC Preseason Poll

1. Humboldt State (9)
2. Western Washington
3. Central Washington (1)
4. Seattle Pacific
5. Alaska Anchorage
6. Seattle University
7. Western Oregon
8. Saint Martin's
9. Northwest Nazarene
10. Alaska Fairbanks

Note: First-place votes in parentheses

L.A. Trade Tech). The long arms and soft hands of Chivers latched on to 24 rebounds in 29 minutes of preseason play and, primarily as a result of his prowess on the offensive boards (he had 11), Chivers scored 22 points (11-16 FGs). He will face a good test on opening night against Jason Schneeweis, Minnesota-Duluth's star post.

West Coast offense. For the most part, Seattle Pacific teams of the past 12 years have distinguished themselves by playing some of the toughest defense in the West, if not the nation. Hironaka's first team may take a temporary detour, emphasizing scoring. As evidenced by the ease in which they surpassed 100 points in each of the preseason outings, the Falcons should have little trouble finding the hoop. They shot 54 percent in each game, 43 percent on three-pointers, and trimmed the turnovers from 22 to 11 in the second outing. In the Bone Era, opponents rarely shot better than 45 percent and generally scored in the low 70s. Beginning this year, the latter number may move upward, if only because the ball will travel faster. Hironaka has his team running, looking for the trey and other scoring opportunities in transition.

Put-backs. It's uncertain whether Hironaka will start Lee or **Adam Harris** (Sr., 6-1, Fox Island, Wa./Gig Harbor) in the backcourt. Each did better when coming off the bench in preseason. Harris had 10 points last week while Lee scored 11 in the opener...SPU moved the ball, totaling 62 assists. Cato led the way with 12 while Binetti had 11...Although Knudson was the more prolific scorer, **Gene Woodard** (Sr., 6-4, Edmonds, Wa./O'Dea) was the first forward off the bench. Woodard had four crisp assists in the first game and six rebounds and six points in the second...The NCAA denied an appeal to declare **Dustin Bremerman** (Fr., 6-4, Yakima, Wa./Eisenhower) eligible. Bremerman must sit out this season because he took a full-time load of 12 credits during one of his quarters at Yakima Valley Community College last year. Joining Bremerman as redshirts are **Jordan Beede** (Fr., 6-1, Bellingham, Wa./Squalicum) and **Tim Gabelein** (Fr., 6-6, Langley, Wa./South Whidbey).

Opponent & series notes. Minnesota-Duluth lost three starters from the 19-11 team which fell to eventual NCAA champion Metro State (Co.) in the first round of the playoffs. However, the Bulldogs bring back their top scorer (14.4) and rebounder (9.8) in Schneeweis, and add two All-America junior college transfers. This is the first meeting between the two teams...Central Washington, which opens vs. Northwest Nazarene Friday, has two starters back from a 16-10 squad. The Wildcats were picked third in the GNAC preseason poll and will be back in the pavilion for the season finale Mar. 8. The Falcons have prevailed in five of the last six meetings yet trail the series, 58-33...Northwest Nazarene, 10-18 last season, has a new head coach in Ed Weidenbach...Warner Pacific won its first four games, averaging 90.5 points. The Knights lead the series 3-2 but the teams have not met since the 1985-86 season.

Tickets, please. Reserved tickets for all SPU home games are priced \$7 and \$6. General admission is \$5 with youth, students and senior citizens \$3 with proper identification. Groups or teams can qualify for discounts by calling (206) 281-2085 in advance.

2002-03 Men's Basketball Roster

No.	Name	Pos	Hgt	Yr	Exp	Hometown (High School/Last Coll.)
1	Jordan Lee	G	6-2	So	1V	Tacoma, Wa. (Life Christian)
3	Maurice Cato	G	6-0	Sr	1V	Fairfield, Ca (Fairfield/Skyline)
4	Mike Bushmaker	F	6-7	Fr	RS	Yakima, Wa (Eisenhower)
10	Adam Harris	G	6-0	Sr	3V	Fox Island, Wa. (Gig Harbor)
11	Tony Binetti	G	6-1	Fr	HS	Enumclaw, Wa. (Enumclaw)
15	Jeff Knudson	F	6-7	Fr	RS	Mukilteo, Wa (Kamiak)
20	Jordan Beede	G	6-1	Fr	HS	Bellingham, Wa. (Squalicum)
21	Yusef Aziz	F	6-4	Sr	1V	Seattle, Wa (Foster/Highline)
22	Jesse Keely	F/C	6-7	Sr	2V	Fircrest, Wa. (Bellarmine/Portland)
23	Tim Gabelein	F	6-6	Fr	HS	Langley, Wa. (South Whidbey)
30	Gene Woodard	F	6-4	Sr	3V	Edmonds, Wa. (O'Dea)
32	Dustin Bremerman	F	6-4	Fr	HS	Yakima, Wa. (Eisenhower)
34	Jason Chivers	C	6-8	So	TR	Palmdale, Ca. (Highland/LA Trade)
40	Daniel Sandrin	F	6-7	Sr	2V	Bothell, Wa. (Bothell/Portland)
50	Chris Cohen	C	6-8	Jr	2V	Saint Helens, Or. (Saint Helens)

Head Coach: Jeff Hironaka

Assistant Coaches: Keith Cooper, George Parker, Rich King, Michael Johnson

2002-03 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time
Nov. 8	NW ALL-STARS (Ex.)	W, 108-77
Nov. 15	BLUE ANGELS (Ex.)	W, 117-96
Nov. 22-23	VITAMILK TIP-OFF CLASSIC	
Nov. 22	NW Nazarene v Central Wash.	5:00
	SPU v MINN. DULUTH	7:00
Nov. 23	NNU Nazarene v Minn. Duluth	5:00
	SPU v CENTRAL WASH.	7:00
Nov. 25	WARNER PACIFIC	7:00
Nov. 30	SEATTLE UNIVERSITY	2:00
Dec. 5	at Central Washington*	7:00
Dec. 7	at Saint Martin's*	7:00
Dec. 16-17	River City Shootout (at San Antonio)	
Dec. 16	SPU v Missouri Western	3:00
Dec. 17	Seattle Pacific v Pittsburg State	3:00
Dec. 19	at Nevada	7:05
Jan. 3-4	OAK HARBOR FREIGHTLINES CL.	
Jan. 3	Seattle Univ. v Rocky Mountain	5:00
	SPU v UC SANTA CRUZ	7:00
Jan. 4	Seattle Univ. v UC Santa Cruz	2:00
	SPU v ROCKY MOUNTAIN	7:00
Jan. 11	WESTERN WASHINGTON*	7:00
Jan. 16	ALASKA ANCHORAGE*	7:00
Jan. 18	ALASKA FAIRBANKS*	7:00
Jan. 23	at Western Oregon*	7:00
Jan. 25	at Humboldt State*	7:00
Jan. 30	SEATTLE UNIVERSITY*	7:30
Feb. 1	NORTHWEST NAZARENE*	3:30
Feb. 8	at Western Washington*	7:00
Feb. 13	at Alaska Fairbanks*	8:00
Feb. 15	at Alaska Anchorage*	9:05
Feb. 20	HUMBOLDT STATE*	7:30
Feb. 22	WESTERN OREGON*	7:00
Feb. 27	at Northwest Nazarene*	6:00
Mar. 1	at Seattle University*	7:00
Mar. 6	SAINT MARTIN'S*	7:30
Mar. 8	CENTRAL WASHINGTON*	7:00
Mar. 15-18	NCAA West Regional	
Mar. 28-31	NCAA Elite Eight (at Lakeland, Fl.)	

*Great Northwest Athletic Conference games
All times are Pacific

2001-02 Season Leaders

Scoring

√Yusef Aziz	16.2
Nick Johnson	13.9
Eric Sandrin	10.9
Brannon Stone	10.6
√Maurice Cato	10.4

Rebounds

Brannon Stone	6.4
√Yusef Aziz	6.0
Eric Sandrin	5.7

Assists

Brannon Stone	4.7
√Maurice Cato	2.8

Steals

√Yusef Aziz	1.69
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Blocked Shots

Brannon Stone	1.45
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Field Goal Percentage

√Yusef Aziz	.548
Nick Johnson	.538

Three Point Percentage

Nick Johnson	(26-65) .400
√Maurice Cato	(51-141) .362

Free Throw Percentage

Nick Johnson	(90-101) .891
√Maurice Cato	(66-79) .835

√ returning player