

Lancers rally from 18 points down at half to within two scores but fall in Division 1 debut:

Idaho State: 26-21-14-11=72 (1-0 Overall)

California Baptist University: 13-16-17-11=57 (0-1 Overall)

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Riverside,CA-

California Baptist University women's basketball team embarked on their Division 1 journey Wednesday evening against an Idaho State team which recorded 21 wins a season ago. Trailing by double digits for much of the game the Lancers used a 15-3 run and whittled a 18 point halftime deficit to 6 points with 4:57 left in the third quarter but fell 72-57 in their season opener.

With 6:58 to go in the first quarter California Baptist University found themselves trailing 8-2 as head coach Jarrod Olson called an early timeout with hopes of settling his team. Four different players scored for the Bengals in that initial push while a Britney Thomas field goal with 8:57 left was the Lancers only scoring. Idaho State's lead reached 10-4 with 5:53 left in the first quarter off a layup from Saylair Grandon. Then a Callie Bourne jumper made it 21-11 Bengals with 2:07 left in the quarter. With 62 seconds to play in the opening period a Caitlyn Harper layup closed the Lancer deficit to 21-13. Idaho State closed with 5 points in the final 46 seconds on a three pointer from Estefania Ors and Grandon layup to make their lead 26-13 after a quarter.

A Georgia Dale three pointer from the left wing brought California Baptist University to within a manageable 32-20 deficit with 8:00 minutes left till intermission. Then Madison Hinrichs three pointer made the Bengals lead 40-24 with only 5:54 remaining till half. Delaney Moore's three pointer with a minute and twenty seconds left rounded out scoring and gave Idaho State a 47-29 lead with twenty minutes gone. At half the Lancers were two of fifteen from three point range (12-37 total for 32.4%) while Idaho State was at 52% (17-33) for the night including 4-6 from deep.

Sometimes it just takes a lone three pointer going down to get things going for a team from outside and that's exactly what happened for the Lancers. A 15-3 run sparked by the Lancers three point shooters brought CBU to within six points at 50-44 with 4:57 left in the third quarter Blaysen Varnadoe's four point play from the top of the key concluded the run. Lexy Ram had two three pointers during that stretch while Olaeta had a connection from deep and a layup in that run. After a timeout called by Idaho State coach Seton Sobolewski the Bengals responded with a 10-2 run covering 2:34 of game action which returned the Lancers deficit to fourteen points at 60-46 with 2:23 left in quarter three. California Baptist University's only points were two free throws from Delacy Brown during that run. Kenyon had three straight layups while Moore and Grandon each added a two point field goal. The Lancers recorded three steals (Emma

Merriggoli, Delacy Brown and Georgia Dale) over a span of twenty-eight seconds with 1:48 left but could not get closer as California Baptist University came up empty on each trip (turnover, missed 3 pointer, missed layup). After thirty minutes of play the Lancers trailed 61-46.

In the fourth quarter CBU could not make a dent into Idaho State's lead as the lead fluctuated between 17 and 13 points before eventually settling at a final margin of 15 points (72-57).

Lancers head coach Jarrod Olson said of his team's offensive struggles in the first half "They were just scoring and making us take the ball out of our net which took away a lot of transition opportunities for us."

He went on and remarked "There were a lot of small details that kept layering on each other that we were struggling with. We scrimmaged UNLV last week and played significantly better than what you saw so it was a shock to start so poorly. I think we came in with a little confidence but it was nice to see them rally and get that back in the second half. We've got a lot of work to do but we'll get there. My big thing is that we show a little growth each time out."

Britney Thomas (JR/F) had an impressive Lancers debut with a double double of 19 points & 13 rebounds and chatted with us afterwards:

When I asked about what her biggest takeaway was from Wednesday's opener the junior remarked "I learned that me and my team have a lot to work on but we can definitely keep up with teams at this level."

I also asked her about what she worked on in the offseason in making the move to CBU and Thomas said "I had to work on my hook shot because there will be players at this level who will be taller than me along with being more aggressive and my defensive skills in the post."

Also taking a couple of minutes with us was Ane Oleata (SO/G). When I asked her about the 15-3 run and how good it felt to see a couple of perimeter shots go down after being held to two of fifteen at half the sophomore remarked "It definitely felt good because our team had more energy and our defense provided energy to our offense for that run."

Next I asked her about what the gameday routine was like and if it felt any different being a D1 member versus D2? She remarked "Yeah, a little different and more exciting for me. The teams we're going to be playing are more athletic, taller, and aggressive so we just have to keep working to get to that level. We need to come out with more energy at the beginning of the game but we'll get there."

California Baptist University begins a two game stretch on Friday against Big West teams with a road trip to Long Beach State. They'll be back in the Events Center on Tuesday against Cal State Fullerton.

Leading Performers: California Baptist University

Britney Thomas>>19 Points on 8-13 shooting & 13 Rebounds

Ane Olaeta>>13 Points on 5-16 shooting (2-6 3 pt FG's) & 4 Assists

Leading Performers: Idaho State University

Estefania Ors>>19 points on 7-12 shooting (3-4 3 pt FG's)

Grace Kenyon>>15 points on 7-11 shooting, 9 Rebounds, 6 Assists

Saylair Grandon>>14 points on 4-13 shooting & 9 Rebounds