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Jake Curtis

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Cardinal face Wichita State and loud crowd

Jake Curtis, Chronicle Staff Writer
Monday, March 23, 2009

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(03-22) 21:29 PDT -- Stanford can claim its season lasted longer than Cal's, but the Cardinal's season will end too if it cannot handle the hostile crowd it will face in tonight's second-round College Basketball Invitational game at Wichita State.

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The Cardinal blew by Boise State before a crowd of about 1,000 at Maples Pavilion in the first round. It will be considerably louder tonight as about 8,500 Wichita State fans will give the Shockers a distinct advantage.

Wichita State (17-16) has won nine straight home games, including victories over regular-season Missouri Valley Conference champion Creighton and MVC tournament champ Northern Iowa.

The Cardinal (19-13) collected their only Pac-10 road win when they beat Arizona State in their next-to-last regular-season game.

"We thought we actually played very well on the road, but we're such a result-oriented business and we couldn't quite complete them," Stanford coach Johnny Dawkins said.

The Cardinal lost three of their conference road games by a single point, and they played well for the first 15 minutes of their game at Cal, building a 22-point lead before falling apart and losing 82-75.

If Stanford wins tonight, it would play in the semifinals Wednesday, although the opponent and site would not be immediately known because the CBI re-seeds the four remaining teams.

To get to the semifinal, the Cardinal have to beat a Wichita State team that was 8-10 in the Missouri Valley Conference but played its best basketball at the end of the season. The Shockers are 11-4 since losing six straight games midway through the season.

Wichita State relies on balanced scoring and depth, both of which were evident in its 84-73 first-round victory over Buffalo, when the Shockers shot 60 percent from the field.

The Cardinal will be without backup center Will Paul, who will miss any remaining games with a knee injury, and reserve center Elliott Bullock, who has a back injury.

Stanford men today

Who: Stanford (19-13) vs. Wichita State (17-16)

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