

## **Wildcats Take Season Opener, 73-64**

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[box score](#)

**TUCSON, Ariz. (AP)** - Kyle Fogg scored 16 points, Jesse Perry had a double-double and No. 16 Arizona pulled away in the second half to open the season with a 73-64 victory over Valparaiso on Monday night.

Arizona had some jittery moments in the first half before running away behind its defense in the second. The Wildcats held Valparaiso without a field goal during an opening 16-3 run, with Jordin Mayes scoring eight points to put Arizona up 15.

Perry finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds, while freshman Nick Johnson had 14 points and six assists for the Wildcats.

Valparaiso got off to a solid start in coach Bryce Drew's debut before fading against Arizona's pressure. Kevin Van Wijk and Ryan Broekhoff had 18 points each for the Crusaders, who have lost 34 straight games against Top 25 teams since Drew beat Mississippi with a buzzer beater in the 1998 NCAA tournament.

Arizona completed a quick turnaround last season, coming within a few seconds of reaching the Final Four after missing the NCAA tournament for the first time in a quarter century the year before.

The start of this season will be about filling holes and gaining experience.

Pac-10 player of the year Derrick Williams left for the NBA after his sophomore season and point guard Lamont Jones transferred to be closer to his family, leaving Arizona without 40 percent of its scoring from last season.

Swingman Kevin Parrom also is out, likely until early December, after being shot in the hand and knee while visiting family in the offseason.

The Wildcats still have plenty of experience because coach Sean Miller used a deep rotation last season, but they will have to rely heavily on their four heralded freshmen.

The mix didn't work too well in Arizona's two exhibition games; the Wildcats lost to Seattle-Pacific and didn't exactly light it up in a win over Humboldt State.

Arizona got off to a rough start against Valparaiso, turning it over three times while missing its first three shots - all by freshman Josiah Turner on difficult drives to the basket.

Leading by just two at halftime after playing so-so at both ends, the Wildcats quickly went up 15 by forcing Valparaiso into turnovers and difficult shots. Valparaiso had 12 of its 18 turnovers in the second half and shot 5 of 20 from 3-point range overall.

Whatever growing pains Arizona might be going through, it was still going to be a tough start for Valparaiso in its first season under Drew.

The former Crusaders star continued a family tradition by taking over for his father Homer, who re-retired after replacing his other son, Scott, in 2003.

The new Drew gets a team that will have to rely a lot on newcomers and inexperienced players after losing 60 percent of its scoring and 40 percent of its rebounding. The Crusaders have just nine scholarship players and Drew also is dealing with bigger issues - his father and mother, Janet, were both diagnosed with cancer recently.

Valparaiso didn't seem intimidated at all playing at the McKale Center with all those NCAA tournament banners hanging from the rafters.

The Crusaders patiently ran their offense and forced the Wildcats into some difficult shots to hang close in the first half, trailing just 32-30 behind Van Wijk's nine points and five rebounds.

Valparaiso had no answer when Arizona turned up the defensive pressure to open the second half, missing its first eight shots while turning it over nine times. The Crusaders had just three free throws in the half until Matt Kenney scored on a drive with 11 1/2 minutes left to cut Arizona's lead to 48-35.

Valparaiso made a run in the closing minutes, but it was too late by then.