

Crusaders Handle IU Kokomo, 79-48

[box score](#)

VALPARAISO, IND. - Valparaiso jumped out to a 30-8 lead less than 10 minutes into Saturday night's game against IU Kokomo and cruised from there, eventually earning a 79-48 victory in the Crusaders' second game of the Valparaiso Subregional of the 2K Sports Classic Benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer.

With a number of regulars resting, some other Crusaders got the chance to shine in the spotlight Saturday evening. Redshirt sophomore Hrvoje Vucic (Split, Croatia/Faust Vrancic) and senior walk-on Nick Shelton (Frankenmuth, Mich./Frankenmuth) both made their first career starts on Saturday. Vucic played 27 minutes, scoring six points and grabbing a career-high 15 rebounds, the Crusaders' highest total since Michael Rogers pulled down 15 boards against Wright State on Jan. 10, 2009. Meanwhile, Shelton, who had never played more than six minutes in a single game prior to this year, saw 23 minutes of action and contributed a rebound and an assist.

Meanwhile, a trio of Crusader guards off the bench contributed to the easy victory as well. Redshirt sophomore Tommy Kurth (Osceola, Ind./Penn) set a new career high with eight points and didn't commit a turnover in a team-high 30 minutes of play. Redshirt junior Will Bogan (Boise, Idaho/Vallivue [Ole Miss]) drained four 3-pointers to register 12 points, while sophomore Jay Harris (Aurora, Ill./Oswego East) was a perfect 6-of-6 from the foul line en route to eight points and also handed out five assists without committing a turnover.

But a couple of walk-ons who entered off the bench might have been the most improbable of all the stories on Saturday night. Freshman guard Griffyn Carpenter (Bourbon, Ind./Triton), who officially joined the Crusaders' active roster prior to Friday's contest against Akron, played 22 minutes off the bench, posting five points, five rebounds and four assists. Meanwhile, senior forward Nathan Stegelmann (Goshen, Ind.), who didn't officially join the active roster until just hours before tipoff, played 24 minutes and was one of four Crusaders in double figures, going 5-of-9 from the floor en route to 11 points. Stegelmann also grabbed six rebounds, including four on the offensive glass, and tallied a Valpo season-high four blocked shots.

A few Crusader regulars got limited minutes on Saturday evening. Junior Kevin Van Wijk (Hoofddorp, Netherlands/Katholieke Scholengemeenschap Hoofddorp) did not play at all, while junior Matt Kenney (Mooresville, Ind./Mooresville) played just nine minutes, posting 10 points on perfect 4-of-4 shooting.

Junior Ryan Broekhoff (Frankston, Victoria, Australia/Australian Institute of Sport) remained in the starting lineup as well, but played just 10 minutes. Broekhoff still ended the game as Valpo's leading scorer, tallying 13 points. Meanwhile, redshirt junior Erik Buggs (Memphis, Tenn./Mitchell) saw limited action as well, playing just 13 minutes, scoring six points and grabbing five rebounds.

Valpo shot just 40.6% (26-of-64) from the floor Saturday evening, but did great work at the foul line, going 20-of-25 from the charity stripe. The Crusaders out-rebounded the Cougars 51-38 and turned the ball over just eight times. Anthony Graves and Brandon Larrick led IU Kokomo (1-5) with 10 points apiece, with the former also handing out five assists.

Valparaiso (4-1) closes out action at the subregional on Sunday afternoon against Duquesne at 3:30 p.m. As always, all the action can be heard live on the Valpo Sports Radio Network and seen online via the Horizon League Network. Links for the live video and audio, as well as live stats, will also be available through www.valpoathletics.com, which will also feature a live interactive chat as part of the 'Valpo Gameday' page.

