



2019-20

Men's Basketball Game Notes

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2019-20 Schedule and Results

Date	Opponent	Time/Result
Oct. 19	Cedarville (exhibition)	W 85-65
Nov. 5	Toledo <i>ESPN3</i>	W 79-77
Nov. 9	at Saint Louis <i>FOX Sports MW/ESPN+</i>	L 81-70
Nov. 12	at SIUE <i>ESPN+</i>	W 89-76
Nov. 17	North Dakota <i>ESPN3</i>	W 74-60
Nov. 22	vs. Grand Canyon! <i>FloHoops</i>	W 78-74
Nov. 24	vs. Nevada! <i>FloHoops</i>	L 84-59
Nov. 25	Cincinnati! <i>FloHoops</i>	L 81-77(ot)
Nov. 27	Trinity Christian# <i>ESPN3</i>	W 98-71
Nov. 27	at Eastern Michigan <i>ESPN+</i>	L 85-79
Dec. 8	Central Michigan <i>ESPN+</i>	W 77-55
Dec. 16	at Charlotte <i>49ers TV</i>	L 67-57
Dec. 18	at High Point <i>ESPN+</i>	W 87-72
Dec. 21	at Arkansas <i>No Video - WVUR Only</i>	L 72-68
Dec. 30	Loyola* <i>The Valley ESPN+</i>	L 66-63
Jan. 4	at Evansville* <i>The Valley on E+ W</i>	81-79(ot)
Jan. 7	at Southern Illinois* <i>ESPN+</i>	L 63-50
Jan. 11	Drake* <i>ESPN3</i>	W 66-61
Jan. 15	at UNI* <i>ESPN+</i>	L 88-78
Jan. 18	Indiana State* <i>The Valley on ESPN+ W</i>	86-77
Jan. 23	at Missouri State* <i>CBS Sports Network</i>	L 67-60
Jan. 26	Evansville* <i>MVCTV Network</i>	W 67-65
Jan. 29	at Bradley* <i>ESPN+</i>	L 80-69
Feb. 1	Illinois State* <i>ESPN3</i>	W 80-70
Feb. 5	UNI* <i>ESPN+</i>	L 63-51
Feb. 9	at Loyola* <i>ESPN</i>	L 70-68
Feb. 12	Southern Illinois* <i>ESPN+</i>	W 55-38
Feb. 15	at Illinois State* <i>MVCTV Network</i>	W 78-70
Feb. 19	at Drake* <i>ESPN+</i>	L 77-75(ot)
Feb. 22	Bradley* <i>ESPN+</i>	W 90-78
Feb. 25	Missouri State* <i>ESPN+</i>	W 89-74
Feb. 29	at Indiana State* <i>ESPN3</i>	L 71-58
March 5	vs. Evansville% <i>MVCTV Network</i>	W 58-55
March 6	vs. Loyola% <i>MVCTV Network</i>	W 74-73 (ot)
March 7	vs. Missouri State% <i>CBS Sports Network</i>	W 89-82
March 8	vs. Bradley% <i>CBS</i>	L 80-66

All times Central.

Home games in bold and played at Athletics-Recreation Center.

! - Paradise Jam (U.S. Virgin Islands)

- Paradise Jam non-bracketed game

\$ - Mountain West/Missouri Valley Challenge

% - 2020 MVC Tournament (St. Louis)

* - indicates Missouri Valley Conference game

Valparaiso (19-16, 9-9 MVC) Postseason Notebook

2020 MVC Tournament Runner-Up

Highest Regular-Season Finish Since Joining MVC

Highest Overall & Conference Win Totals Since Joining MVC

A Look Back at 2019-20: Just two years removed from finishing in last place and being knocked out in the first round of the Missouri Valley Conference Tournament as a first-year Valley member, head coach Matt Lottich's team did more than hold its own, ascending into a tie for sixth in the league standings before finishing as the conference tournament runner-up. Valpo became the first team in the history of Arch Madness to reach the title game after playing in the opening round.

Arrow Pointed Up

- Valpo made its first conference championship game appearance since 2015, doing so after being picked to finish ninth in the preseason poll.
- Valpo reached the conference title game as only a third-year Missouri Valley Conference member. When Valpo transitioned from the Mid-Continent Conference to the Horizon League prior to the 2007-2008 season, the program didn't reach the conference championship game until Year 5 and followed by winning its first Horizon League Tournament title in Year 6.
- The men's basketball program became the first Valpo team in any sport to reach the Missouri Valley Conference championship game during the department's young tenure in the prestigious league.
- Valpo accepted a postseason tournament invitation for the first time since joining The Valley, agreeing to a CollegeInsider.com Tournament berth before the event was canceled due to the coronavirus.
- The program had its largest win increase from the previous season (four) since jumping from 18 wins in 2013-14 to 28 in 2014-15.
- Valpo finished with a winning record during the nonconference portion of the season for the 10th straight year. In addition, Valpo continued its history of home dominance and hasn't finished with a losing mark at the ARC since 1991-92, extending its streak to 28 seasons. Valpo achieved a double-figure home win total for the ninth time in the last 10 years.

Team Statistical Feats

- Led the Missouri Valley Conference in assists per game at 15.2, the first time Valpo led a conference in that area since pacing the Horizon League in 2011-2012. The 15.2 assists per game was Valpo's highest total since 2010-11 (15.8 apg) and the team's second-highest output over the last 13 seasons. The squad ranked 29th nationally in assists per game and 12th in total assists.
- Averaged 7.7 steals per game to rank second in the MVC and totaled 270

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steals, a number that ranked 18th nationally. The team had its highest steals average since 2010-11 and the second-highest over the last 16 seasons.

- The team averaged 72.3 points per game, second in the MVC. That was the team's second-highest scoring average over the last eight seasons. In addition, the team jumped 5.5 points per game from 2018-19 to 2019-20.

- Valpo made 287 3-pointers, the team's second-most since 2007-08 and the third-most over the last 30 years.

- The team had 922 made field goals, its third most over the last 30 years.

- Valpo committed just 12.7 turnovers per game, the team's lowest total over the last 30 seasons.

Arch Madness Accomplishments

- The Valpo/Loyola quarterfinal was the 18th overtime game in MVC Tournament history and the 20th game decided by a single point. It was the first one-point game in the MVC Tournament since Indiana State's 51-50 victory over Evansville in 2013.

- Valpo's 89 points in the MVC semifinal against Missouri State were the seventh-most in a game in the 30-year history of Arch Madness. It was the highest scoring output in any MVC Tournament contest since Creighton put 99 on Evansville on March 3, 2012.

- Valpo scored 287 points in the MVC Tournament, the third most in the history of the event and the most since Indiana State scored 310 in 1978.

- The team's 138 rebounds were the fourth most in MVC Tournament history and the most since Tulsa had 143 in 1978.

- The 107 made field goals were the third most in MVC Tournament history and the most since Indiana State in 1978.

- The 29 made 3-point field goals tied for the second most in MVC Tournament history (despite going 0-for against Evansville), joining 2009 Illinois State (32) and 1999 Evansville (29).

- The 90 3-point field goal attempts shattered the previous tournament record of 76 (Drake 2008, Illinois State 2009).

- Valpo made 10 3-pointers in the conference championship game, tying for the fourth most in the history of the MVC Final just a few days removed from hitting no 3s in a win over Evansville. Valpo became the first team to make zero 3s in an MVC Tournament Game since Southern Illinois went 0-for-6 on March 5, 1994 vs. Missouri State.

- Valpo's 29 3-point attempts in the MVC final tied for the second most in the history of the title game, joining Illinois State in 2009 (35 vs. UNI 2009) and Illinois State in 2012 (29 vs. Creighton).

- Only one team since 1994 had made 15 or more field goals in the first half of an MVC title game (Drake 16 vs. Illinois State in 2008), and Valpo and Bradley had 15 apiece in the first half of this year's championship game.

- Valpo made seven 3s in the first half of the title game against Bradley, tying the MVC Tournament title game record of seven set

by Southern Illinois on March 7, 1989 vs. Creighton. Valpo set the conference title game record for 3-point attempts in the first half with 16, eclipsing the previous mark of 15 set by Illinois State on March 8, 2009 vs. UNI.

- Ryan Fazekas' 21 3-point attempts in the MVC Tournament tied for the ninth-most in the history of the event.

Comeback Kids

- Valpo came from 18 down to beat Loyola in the 2020 MVC quarterfinal, becoming just the fourth team in the history of the MVC Tournament to climb from 18 or more down to win. It was tied for the second biggest comeback in MVC Tournament history behind Missouri State erasing a 23-point deficit to beat Southern Illinois in 2005. The other two teams to erase 18-point deficits were Bradley in 2019 and UNI in 2015.

- Six times during the season, including four against Valley teams, Valpo came from double figures down to win. There was also one double-figure comeback during the team's preseason tour in Canada.

- Valpo came back to tie or take the lead after trailing by double figures 11 times during the season.

- In the first four years of Matt Lottich's coaching tenure, Valpo has trailed by double figures and won on 15 occasions and led by double figures and lost just once.

- Six times under Lottich, including twice this season, Valpo trailed by double figures and went on to win by double figures.

- Valpo became the second team in the history of the Missouri Valley Conference to erase deficits of 17 points or more twice in one season, joining Creighton from 2007-2008.

Last-Second Shots

- Eron Gordon's go-ahead layup on an assist from John Kiser with three seconds left in overtime in Valpo's 74-73 win over Loyola in the MVC quarterfinal was the 25th time since the start of the 1992-93 season that Valpo has prevailed on a game-winner in the final five seconds.

- It was the second time that occurred during the 2019-20 season, as Javon Freeman-Liberty hit a left-elbow jumper with 3.7 seconds to play in a 79-77 win over Toledo in the Nov. 5 season opener.

- Gordon became the third Valpo player to hit a game-winner in the final five seconds of a conference tournament or postseason tournament game since 1992-93, joining Ryan Broekhoff and Bryce Drew.

Award-Winning Achievements

- Javon Freeman-Liberty and John Kiser were named to the MVC All-Tournament Team, the first Valpo players to receive that honor in The Valley and the first to do so in any conference since Alec Peters was on the 2015-16 Horizon League All-Tournament Team. It was the first time Valpo had multiple players on a conference's



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MVC Standings

(Final)

Team	MVC		Overall	
	W-L	Pct.	W-L	Pct.
UNI	14-4	.778	25-5	.833
Loyola	13-5	.722	21-10	.667
Bradley	11-7	.611	20-11	.646
Indiana State	11-7	.611	18-11	.621
Southern Illinois	10-8	.556	16-15	.516
Missouri State	9-9	.500	15-16	.484
Valparaiso	9-9	.500	16-15	.516
Drake	8-10	.444	18-13	.581
Illinois State	5-13	.278	10-20	.333
Evansville	0-18	.000	9-22	.290

MVC Tournament Schedule

Thursday, March 5

Drake 75, Illinois State 65
Valpo 58, Evansville 55

Friday, March 6

Drake 77, UNI 56
Bradley 64, Southern Illinois 59
Valpo 74, Loyola 73 (ot)
Missouri State 78, Indiana State 51

Saturday, March 7

Bradley 76, Drake 66
Valpo 89, Missouri State 92

Sunday, March 8

Bradley 80, Valpo 66

all-tournament team in the same season since 2014-15 (Peters, E. Victor Nickerson, David Skara).

- Valpo boasted a member of the MVC All-Freshman Team for the second straight season. Donovan Clay made it this year after Javon Freeman-Liberty did so a year ago. Valpo has had a player on either the All-Newcomer Team or the All-Freshman team in every season since joining The Valley.

- Valpo placed someone on the MVC All-Defensive Team in each season since joining The Valley. Tevonn Walker earned a spot on the 2017-18 All-Defensive squad before Freeman-Liberty grabbed a place a year ago. Freeman-Liberty and UNI's Isaiah Brown are the only players to earn MVC All-Defensive Team status in each of the last two seasons.

- This marked the sixth consecutive season Valpo has boasted a player on the all-defensive squad. Vashil Fernandez (2014-2015, 2015-2016) and Walker (2016-17) earned Horizon League all-defensive recognition over the school's last three years in the league before Walker and Freeman-Liberty have continued the string of defensive standouts over the first three years in The Valley.

- Freeman-Liberty became the first Valpo player since joining The Valley to achieve first-team status. He became just the fifth Valpo player over the last 30 years to earn first-team all-conference as a freshman or sophomore, joining Alec Peters (2014-15), Raitis Grafts (2000-01), Lubos Barton (1998-99) and Bryce Drew (1995-96).

- Valpo had at least one first-team all-conference performer in each of the program's last seven seasons in the Horizon League, but Freeman-Liberty's honor ended a two-year drought that coincided with the move to The Valley.

- Mileek McMillan and Javon Freeman-Liberty accounted for 40 percent of the MVC Most-Improved Team. Two of Valpo's five returning players from the previous season were named to the Most-Improved Team, exemplifying the program's progress.

- John Kiser earned MVC All-Bench Team and MVC Scholar-Athlete Second Team.

- Freeman-Liberty was named to the NABC All-District First Team.

Javon Freeman-Liberty's History-Making Season

- Javon Freeman-Liberty ranked 12th nationally in total seals (74), 15th in steals per game (2.24), 18th in total field goals made (227), 27th in total points (628) and 49th in points per game (19.0).

- Freeman-Liberty finished second in the MVC in ppg, sixth in

Media Relations Information

Requests to cover home men's basketball games should be made through Brandon Vickrey, Assistant Director of Athletics for Media Relations, by contacting 219.464.5396 or Brandon.Vickrey@valpo.edu. Credentials and media seating are available at the ARC for working media only. Updated statistics and notes from both schools will be available in the media room.

During the week, all player and coach interview requests should be directed to Brandon Vickrey. Broadcasters planning to attend practice should call ahead to confirm practice time. Gameday interviews prior to the contest are not permitted. Coach Lottich and requested players will be available following the game in the media room.



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rpg (6.1), sixth in apg (3.2), first in spg (2.2), the only player in the conference in the top six in all four categories and one of two (Loyola's Cameron Krutwig) in the top 10 in all four categories.

- His 628 points were the fifth-most in a single season in program history, while his 74 steals shattered Lubos Barton's program record of 63 that had stood since 2001-02. He joined Alec Peters as the only Valpo players since 1970 to score over 620 points in a season.

- He shattered the program's single-season sophomore scoring record and likely would have become the second player in program history (Alec Peters) to reach 1,000 career points by the end of his sophomore season if it weren't for the coronavirus cancelling the CIT as he finished the season with 992 career points.

- His 227 made field goals were the seventh-most in a single season in program history.

- Became the first player to lead the MVC in steals in back-to-back seasons since Bradley's Hersey Hawkins did so in 1986, 1987 and 1988.

- Became the first Valpo player to lead the team in points, rebounds and steals since Ryan Broekhoff did so in 2011-12.

- His 628 points were the eighth-most by a sophomore in the history of the Missouri Valley Conference.

- Had 227 made field goals, the seventh-most in program history and second-most since 1996 behind Dan Oppland's 231 in 2005-06.

- Finished in double figures in 31 out of 33 games, scored 20+ points 15 times and scored 25+ points on eight occasions.

- Has 134 career steals, 11 away from entering Valpo's career Top 10.

- Had two double-doubles including one in the MVC Championship game against Bradley, recording the 34th double-double in the history of the MVC championship game and just the second since 2007, joining Illinois State's Phil Fayne (2018). He became just the ninth player with a 20&10 game in the MVC Final, the first since 2004 and the second over the last two decades. He had the third-highest point total in a double-double (24) in MVC championship game history behind Xavier McDaniel's 34 in 1985 and Gary Wilson's 28 in 1977.

Additional Individual Accomplishments

- Ryan Fazekas finished the season with a 3-point percentage of 49.5, the second-best by a Valpo player in program history and best since 1991-92 (Lance Barker, 52.1%).

- Fazekas set the program record for career 3-point percentage, finishing at 46.1 percent. He usurped Samuel Haanpaa (2006-08), who finished his career at 44.5 percent.

- Ben Krikke finished fifth in the conference and second among freshmen in field-goal percentage at .550.

- Daniel Sackey was fifth in the MVC and second among sophomores at 3.6 assists per game. Valpo account for two of the top six players in the league in assists per game, the only team with two representatives in the Top 10.

- Donovan Clay finished seventh in the MVC in blocked shots per game at 1.0.

- John Kiser was eighth in assist to turnover ratio at 1.8.

Team Single-Game Feats

- On March 6, Valpo's 74-73 overtime win over Loyola snapped a seven-game skid against the Ramblers and was Valpo's first win over its rivals from across the state line since joining the Missouri Valley Conference. Valpo hadn't beaten Loyola since the final matchup when the two schools shared Horizon League affiliation, an 85-76 Valpo win in Chicago on Feb. 19, 2013.

- On Feb. 25, Valpo beat Missouri State 89-74, its first time beating the MVC Preseason Favorite since joining the league.

- On Feb. 22, Valpo converted 18 3-pointers in a 90-78 win over Bradley, coming one shy of a school mark set in 1989 while shattering the Missouri Valley Conference mark for made 3s in a conference contest. Valpo shot 64.3 percent from 3, the program's best against a D1 opponent since 2007. The 18 3s were the most Bradley has allowed in program history.

- On Feb. 12, Valpo beat Southern Illinois by 17 points after losing by 13 in the first meeting between the two teams. That was the first time since joining The Valley that Valpo turned a double-figure loss into a double-figure win, but the program didn't have to wait long for the second time, as an 11-point loss from the first meeting turned into a 12-point win over Bradley on Feb. 22.

- On Feb. 12 vs. Southern Illinois, Valpo won 55-38. The 38 points were the fewest allowed against a Division-I opponent since Jan. 21, 1984, when Valpo edged Green Bay 35-33. The game against the Salukis set the record for the fewest points Valpo has allowed since the advent of the shot clock in 1985-86. Valpo held Southern Illinois to 23.6 percent shooting, the best field-goal percentage defense in an MVC game since Creighton held Indiana State to 23.3 percent in 2007.

- On Jan. 4, Valpo won 81-79 in overtime at Evansville, its first win there since 1969, snapping a 22-game skid when visiting the Purple Aces.

#SCTop10

- Daniel Sackey's buzzer-beater to upstage Canadian powerhouse Carleton on Aug. 8 during the team's foreign tour was No. 9 on the SportsCenter's Top 10 that evening.

- Javon Freeman-Liberty checked in at No. 5 on the Jan. 7 SportsCenter Top 10 thanks to a poster dunk in a game at Southern Illinois.

- In the three seasons since joining The Valley, Valpo has been featured on SportsCenter's Top 10 plays on seven occasions spanning five sports including three times in men's basketball.