Written by MIke Kelly
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On a snowy afternoon in Boone, the Appalachian State men's basketball team put together a convincing effort in the second half and ran away from Georgia Southern 79-51 at the Holmes Center in a Southern Conference game.

A 20-2 run in the second half broke the game open for ASU (7-7 overall; 3-1 in the SoCon North). The Mountaineers have won three in a row. Omar Carter, Donald Sims, and Jeremy Booth combined for 61 points in the win.

"This is big confidence booster for us," said Carter, who turned in a game-high 25 points in the win. "Any time you can win at home in conference it's huge. They ran at us pretty good in the first half and gave us some problems, but once we went into a (2-3) zone, it turned the game in our favor. This is not a very good shooting team."

ASU led 40-31 at halftime, and the Eagles (4-13; 0-4) got within four at 42-38 to start the second half. The Mountaineers stretched their lead to ten at 59-49 with eight minutes left, and then the zone defense turned the trick allowing ASU to pull away.

"I was thinking about going to a zone defense in the first half, but I felt we weren't rebounding that well," said ASU coach Jason Capel. "Finally though, we got into a groove in the second half and switched to the zone. This team can score the basketball, but our defensive intensity must get better with each and every game. Our goal is to win the conference championship and make the NCAA's."

Sims finished with 19 points; Booth had 17, and Carter was 5-8 from the three-point line. ASU outrebounded the Eagles 43-29. Andre Williamson had seven boards, Nathan Healy had eight points, five rebounds, and two assists. Petey Hausley had five rebounds. Ben Drayton led the Eagles with 16 points.

The Mountaineers shot 46% from the floor for the gamem and 45% in the second half. Defensively, they held the Eagles to just 20 points in the second half. The win leaves ASU just one-half game behind Chattanooga for first place in the North Division.

"This win gets us ready for Thursday night (when winless UNC-Greensboro comes to town)," Carter said. "We have a couple of tough games coming up and this win gives us a lot of confidence for those games."

ASU entertains UNCG Thursday night, then travels to Western Carolina next Saturday. Our coverage begins at 6:15 pm Thursday night on AM, 1450 WATA.

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GEORGIA SOUTHERN	31	20	- 51
APPALACHIAN STATE	40	39	- 79

GEORGIA SOUTHERN: SPENCER 15, BAYNHAM 2, DRAYTON 16, HEWITT 5, JAMES 5, BUSSEY 2, BASKERVILLE 6. FG: 20-51, 3FG: 2-12, FT: 9-13. REBOUNDS - 29, TURNOVERS - 18.

ASU: WILLIAMSON 3, HAUSLEY 6, SIMS 19, CARTER 25, WOODS 1, HEALY 8, BOOTH 17. FG: 30-64, 3FG: 9-25, FT: 10-18. REBOUNDS - 43, TURNOVERS - 17.