Written by Ryan Bower
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Appalachian State University men's basketball jumped out to a 23-point lead less than nine minutes into the game and cruised to an 86-54 season-opening win over Montreat on Friday night at the Holmes Center. Appalachian (1-0) outscored

Montreat (1-2), 26-3, over a 4:55 span early in the ballgame to take a commanding 28-5 lead with 11:21 still to go in the first half. The Mountaineers expanded the advantage to as many as 28 points in the opening period and led by as much as 40 in the second half.
"Before the game, we talked out coming out and setting the tone," said ASU coach Jason Capel. "It's all about getting better every time we step on the court. And I thought we did that in the first half. Our older guys really set the tone."
After struggling to pull ahead of Carson-Newman in an exhibition on Monday night, the Mountaineers left no doubt as to who was the superior team on Friday. App State took the early lead thanks to a barrage of three pointers from sophomore Tab Hamilton, who knocked down all six of his in the first half.
The Mountaineers limited Montreat to just 37.0 percent (10-for-27) from the floor through the first 20 minutes while converting 42.1 percent (16-of-38) of their own shots in the first half, including 7-of-15 from long range.
In the second half, Appalachian saw its lead cut to 21 points (48-27) in the opening minutes, but found its footing again and eventually pushed the lead to 40 points (82-42) with less than four minutes to play.
Hamilton led the way with 18 points on 6-of-10 shooting from three-point range while freshman Frank Eaves came off the bench to score 16 in his collegiate debut. Senior Nathan Healy made 5-of-6 shots from the field to round out three Mountaineers in double-figures with 12 points.
"Coach talked about execution before the game," Eaves said. "To leave everything on the floor, and to be relentless for 40 minutes."
Sophomore transfer Jay Canty led all players with 12 rebounds and freshman point guard Chris Burgess dished out a game-high six assists to help pace Appalachian State's fourth-straight season-opening victory.
"No bones about it, I think Jay Canty is going to be one of the best players in the Southern Conference," Capel said. "He can do so many things. On an off night, he has 12 rebounds, he has deflections, he has a couple of steals, he's a multi-faceted player, he's an athletic player. We haven't had a player like him that can be a menace on the defensive endk, and score on the offensive end above the rim.
"He's shaking off the rust, and his confidence is growing every day. I'm pleased to have him."
As a team, Appalachian shot 43.7 percent (31-for-71) from the floor and converted 15-of-19 free throws while holding Montreat to just 38.2 percent (21-for-55) shooting on the night. The Apps grabbed 48 rebounds, 20 on the offensive end, to the Cavaliers' 31.
The Mountaineers forced 26 turnovers and notched 18 steals, including a game-high five from junior Tevin Baskin, while committing 18 turnovers of its own.
"I thought we did a good job defensively, " Capel said. "We caused a lot of turnovers and deflections that led to a lot of transition baskets. But I wasn't pleased that we let up a bit in the second half. We relaxed and let up a bit. We're not a good enough team to do that. We have to

play hard for 40 minutes, no matter who were playing and how many points were up. We have to compete, execute, and play hard for 40 minutes every night out."
Appalachian returns to action on Tuesday when it hosts High Point. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m. at the Holmes Center.
GAME NOTES: The Mountaineers improved to 11-2 in home openers since moving to the Holmes Center in 2000... the Apps have won five-straight home openers dating back to the 2008-09 campaign... Hamilton fell one three-pointer shy of the single-game top-10 in Appalachian State history... Eaves' 16 points were the most for a Mountaineer freshman in their collegiate debut since Kellen Brand scored 19 against North Greenville on Nov. 13, 2006.

ASU 86, MONTREAT 54

Score by periods	**1st**	**2nd**	**Total**
Montreat College	23	31	54
Appalachian State	48	38	86

MONTREAT: McVAY 2, ADAMS 15 (9 REBOUNDS), ASHFORD 11, MAXWELL 9, TURNER 6, PERRY-SMITH 1, HAWKINS 3, SYMONETTE 7. FG: 21-55, 3FG: 3-11, FT: 9-15. 31 REBOUNDS, 4 ASSISTS, 26 TURNOVERS.

ASU: HEALEY 12 (4 REBOUNDS), HAMILTON 18, TRICE 2, CANTY 8 (12 REBOUNDS), BASKIN 8, OBACHA 9 (7 REBOUNDS), BURGESS 1 (6 ASSISTS), GILBERT 8, SPAGNOLO

4 (6 REBOUNDS), EAVES 16. FG: 31-71, 3FG: 9-27, FT: 15-19. 48 REBOUNDS, 15 ASSISTS, 18 TURNOVERS.

Photo Courtesy: Tab Hamilton, ASU Athletics