

ASU Comes Up Short at South Carolina

Written by Ryan Bower

Thursday, 20 December 2012 08:29

Appalachian State University men's basketball was able to erase an early first-half deficit, but could not complete the comeback in a 74-69 loss to South Carolina on Wednesday at Colonial Life Arena.

The Mountaineers (2-8) trailed the Gamecocks (7-3) by as many as 11 points (29-18) with 6:02 to play in the first period before reeling off a 17-5 run over the next five minutes to take a 35-34 lead on Jay Canty's layup with 28 seconds to go.

South Carolina would nail a three-pointer with just seven ticks on the clock to take a 37-35 lead into the locker room at the half. Appalachian's late first-half run was fueled by Tevin Baskin, who scored seven of his 16 points during that stretch.

Despite going 0-for-6 from long range in the first half, the Mountaineers were able to keep pace thanks to strong free-throw shooting as they connected on all seven first-half attempts from the charity stripe. App State was also able to keep it close as it forced the Gamecocks into nine turnovers through the first 20 minutes, which it converted in 14 points.

The Mountaineers would carry their momentum into the second half as Mike Neal nailed a layup and a three-pointer to give the Apps a 40-37 lead with 18:25 left to play.

After clinging to a slim lead for the next minute and a half, App State would again fall behind when South Carolina connected on back-to-back buckets to grab a 43-42 lead and extended its lead to 50-45 and force a Mountaineer timeout with 13:24 remaining in the contest.

The Apps were able to chip away at the deficit to tie the score at 58-58 with just 4:54 left to play, but the Gamecocks used a late 9-0 run to jump back in front.

Canty would make it interesting in the closing seconds after his tip-in made it a two-point game (71-69) with 19 seconds to play, but South Carolina connected on three of their final four foul shots to seal the win.

Baskin, Canty and Neal each scored 16 points on the night while Canty and Nathan Healy tied for the team-lead with eight rebounds. Neal grabbed seven boards and dished out seven assists and Baskin tallied four blocks.

South Carolina was paced by Lakeem Jackson's team-best 16 points while Mindaugas Kacinas (12) and Brenton Williams (11) also scored in double figures. The Mountaineers outrebounded the Gamecocks by a 40-37 tally but shot just 36.5 percent (23-of-63) while South Carolina connected on 45.9 percent (28-of-61) of its shots.'

The Apps put together another strong performance at the free throw line, nailing 19-of-22 shots (86.4 percent) while South Carolina hit just 13-of-19. Appalachian State committed 17 turnovers and dished out 12 assists while the Gamecocks also had 17 turnovers and 18 assists.

App State returns to action at home on Saturday when it faces Presbyterian at 2 p.m.

GAME NOTES: Appalachian fell to 0-4 all-time against South Carolina and 2-24 against teams from the SEC... Tab Hamilton's miss on the back end of a pair of free throws at 10:30 in the second half snapped a streak of 27-consecutive makes at the charity stripe for the Mountaineers... the squad nailed each of its last 17 attempts at UMKC on Sunday and connected on its first 10 on Wednesday... the Mountaineers finished with a 26-13 edge in points off turnovers, a 13-8 edge in second-chance points and a 12-7 advantage on the fast break...

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South Carolina outscored Appalachian 36-32 in the paint.

SOUTH CAROLINA 74, ASU 69

Score by Periods 1st 2nd Total

Appalachian State	35	34	- 69
South Carolina	37	37	- 74

ASU: OBACHA 2, HEALY 7 (8 REBOUNDS), CANTY 16 (8 REBOUNDS), HAMILTON 5, NEAL 16 (7 REBOUNDS, 7 ASSISTS), BASKIN 16 (4 BLOCKED SHOTS), TRICE 7. FG: 23-63, 3FG: 4-14, FT: 19-22. 40 REBOUNDS, 12 ASSISTS, 17 TURNOVERS.
THREE-POINTERS: HEALY 2, NEAL, BASKIN.

USC: KACINAS 12 (12 REBOUNDS, 3 BLOCKED SHOTS), JACKSON 16 (7 REBOUNDS), SLAWSON 9, PAGE 7, SMITH 5 (9 ASSISTS), WILLIAMS 11, RICHARDSON 2, CHATKEVICIUS 2, ELLINGTON 8, CARRERA 2. FG: 28-61, 3FG: 5-15, FT: 13-19. 37 REBOUNDS, 18 ASSISTS, 17 TURNOVERS.
THREE-POINTERS: WILLIAMS 2, ELLINGTON 2, SLAWSON.

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Photo Courtesy: Mike Neal, ASU Athletics