

Mountaineers Come Up Short at Samford

Written by Ryan Bower

Sunday, 20 January 2013 10:13

Appalachian State University men's basketball was unable to overcome the hot shooting of a Samford squad that continued to roll as it dropped a 72-68 decision to its Southern Conference opponent on Saturday at the Pete Hanna

Center. The Mountaineers (7-10, 3-3 SoCon) dropped their first road contest to the Bulldogs (7-12, 5-1) in four years and fell to 0-2 on its two-game roadtrip over the weekend while Samford won its fourth-straight to remain atop the SoCon North.

Both squads treated fans to an exciting and competitive first half as each shot better than 53.0 percent from the floor, including a combined 9-of-16 from beyond the arc as the first half featured four ties and four lead changes.

Samford jumped out to a quick 12-4 lead, but Appalachian countered with an 11-2 run to grab a 15-14 lead less than eight minutes into the contest. Back-to-back threes from Tab Hamilton and Mike Neal pulled the Mountaineers within two (12-10) before another Hamilton connection from deep and a layup from Jay Canty gave the Apps their first lead at the 12:32 mark.

The Bulldogs responded with six of the next eight points to regain the lead momentarily before Neal nailed another long range shot to make it 20-20 with 10:34 left on the clock. Both squads would trade blows throughout the next several minutes before Samford was able to gain some separation by grabbing a 37-32 lead at the 3:56 mark, but the Mountaineers responded with another three and a pair of free throws to tie the game just 30 seconds later.

A pair of buckets, including a fastbreak dunk from Tim Williams, gave the Bulldogs a 46-41 edge at the break as the two squads combined to shoot 35-of-56 (58.9 percent) through the first 20 minutes of action.

Appalachian came out strong in the second half as Hamilton and Nathan Healy connected on a pair of three-pointers to give the Mountaineers a 47-46 lead with 18:57 left to play. The Bulldogs battled back to grab a 56-50 lead thanks to a 10-3 run over the next three minutes, but two quick buckets by the Apps made it 56-55 and forced a Samford timeout with just over 13 minutes left to play.

Samford would maintain its slim lead over the next six minutes before putting some separation between itself and the Mountaineers with a quick 6-0 run that made it 65-58 with 6:14 left to play.

Appalachian was able to cut the deficit to just two points (67-65) when Healy connected from beyond the arc with 2:38 remaining, but a crucial three-point play from Williams gave the Bulldogs a 70-65 lead one minute later and Samford held on for the win.

Canty led the Mountaineers with 19 points while Hamilton poured in 16 and Healy and Neal each finished with 11. Michael Obacha grabbed a season-high 13 rebounds. Samford was paced by 20 points from Clide Geffard, Jr. while Raijon Kelly added 15 and dished out seven assists. The Bulldogs shot 54.5 percent (30-of-55) from the floor while the Mountaineers connected on 48.0 percent (24-of-50) of their shots.

Appalachian State returns to action when it plays host to Georgia Southern at 7 p.m. on Thursday at the Holmes Center in the first of two home games next weekend.

GAME NOTES: Appalachian State dropped to 5-4 all-time against Samford... the loss snapped a string of three-straight wins for the Mountaineers at the Hanna Center... Saturday's game

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marked the fifth-straight game in the series decided by nine points or less... the game marked the the fourth-straight game that Appalachian had at least four players in double figures.

SAMFORD 72, ASU 68

Score by periods □ 1st □ 2nd □ Total

Appalachian State 41 27 - 68

Samford 46 26 - 72

ASU: OBACHA 5 (13 REBOUNDS), HEALY 11, CANTY 19 (8 REBOUNDS, 3 ASSISTS), HAMILTON 16, NEAL 11, BASKIN 6. FG: 24-50, 3FG: 9-19, FT: 11-18. 34 REBOUNDS, 9 ASSISTS, 14 TURNOVERS.

THREE-POINTERS: HAMILTON 4, NEAL 2, HEALY 2, CANTY.

SAMFORD: GEFFRARD 20 (5 REBOUNDS), WILLIAMS 13 (5 REBOUNDS), MILLER 5, KELLY 15 (7 ASSISTS), HAYMAN 14, HOOD 5. FG: 30-55, 3FG: 7-15, FT: 5-10. 27 REBOUNDS, 17 ASSISTS, 9 TURNOVERS.

THREE-POINTERS: GEFFRARD 4, MILLER, KELLY, HOOD.

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Photo Courtesy; Tab Hamilton, ASU Athletics