

Mountaineers Ground Eagles in Overtime

Written by Ryan Bower
Friday, 08 February 2013 07:10

Appalachian State University men's basketball overcame a double-digit halftime deficit to pick its second overtime win of the season against Southern Conference rival Georgia Southern on Thursday at Hanner Fieldhouse. The Mountaineers (10-12,

6-5 SoCon) were able to overcome a quick start by the Eagles (10-14, 4-7) to snap a three-game road losing streak and remain in the thick of the race for the SoCon North Division title.

Appalachian started things off on a high note when Jay Canty took a pass from Mike Neal and threw down a thunderous dunk on the squad's first possession, but GSU responded with a bucket of its own to tie the game early.

Eric Ferguson would put the Eagles ahead for the first time (5-4) when he connected from beyond the arc with 17:27 left in the half. App State regained the lead when Nathan Healy nailed a layup on the ensuing Mountaineer possession, but the Eagles reeled off a 7-0 run, capped off by Ferguson's fastbreak dunk, to take a 12-6 lead with 15:34 remaining in the period. Georgia Southern would continue to take advantage of its momentum as it extended its lead to as many as 11 points (28-17) on a three-pointer from Cleon Roberts with just over seven minutes left on the clock. Appalachian State was able to close the gap to just six points (28-22) when Tevin Baskin nailed a short jumper at the 5:06 mark of the first half, but the Eagles were able to end the half on a 9-5 run and take a 37-27 lead into the locker room.

The Mountaineers started out strong in the second half, scoring the first five points of the final period to cut the Eagles' lead to 37-32 in the opening two minutes, but back-to-back buckets by Ferguson pushed Georgia Southern's lead back to nine points (41-32) with 17:35 left to play. Tab Hamilton pulled the Apps within three points (44-41) when he connected from long range with just over 16 minutes left to play, but GSU rattled off two quick buckets to push the lead back to 48-41. Appalachian was able to close the gap to just two points (54-52) when Healy connected on a pair of free throws with 9:24 left to play and tied the contest at 54-54 on Baskin's tip in with 8:39 on the clock.

After Georgia Southern hit one-of-two free throws on the next possession to take a 55-54 lead, the Mountaineers responded when Michael Obacha converted a three-point play to give the Apps a two-point lead (57-55) with just under eight minutes to play.

A back-and-forth battle would ensue over the final five minutes of play after Healy's three-pointer at the 4:57 mark put the Mountaineers up by three points (62-59) and sparked a 12-3 run that saw the Apps jump out to a 69-62 lead with 2:40 on the clock.

Georgia Southern would not go quietly, however, as it reeled off six-straight points to make it a one-point contest (69-68) with just over a minute to play and, with only 30 seconds on the clock, cut a three-point deficit to just one point (73-72) on C.J. Reed's layup.

The Eagles were forced to foul with just 15.5 seconds remaining and Neal stepped to the line, but missed a pair of free throws to give Georgia Southern one final chance as Marvin Baynham stepped to the line following a foul and connected on the first of two free throws to send the game to overtime.

After trading buckets on each team's first two possessions, the Eagles were able to gain the advantage when Ferguson hit a three-pointer to give GSU an 80-77 lead with 3:22 left. The

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Mountaineers were able to close the gap to 86-85 on a pair of free throws by Healy with 48.6 seconds remaining.

A defensive stop with just 27 seconds left would give the Apps a chance to take the lead and the squad responded as Canty drew a foul with 18.7 seconds remaining and nailed a pair of free throws to give Appalachian an 87-86 lead. Healy and Jamaal Trice would seal the win by going 4-of-4 from the charity stripe in the final 10 seconds to give the Apps a 91-86 win.

Healy led all players with a career-high tying 24 points and 11 rebounds while Hamilton poured in 16 and Canty finished with 15 to go along with eight boards. Neal scored 13 points and ripped down a career-best nine boards. Baskin chipped in with 12 points and five rebounds.

The Mountaineers return to action when they travel to SoCon leader Davidson at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday.

GAME NOTES: Appalachian State improved to 24-17 all-time against the Eagles... the Mountaineers snapped a two-game losing streak at Hanner Fieldhouse to move to 8-9 all-time when facing GSU in Statesboro... Healy scored 20 or more points for the seventh time this season... Appalachian had at least four players score 10 or more points for the 11th time this season... the contest also marked the second time this season that five players scored in double figures... the Apps' win over the Eagles marked the second-straight time it has swept a two-game season series from Georgia Southern... Thursday's game marked the first time since 2009-10 that the Mountaineers played two overtime games in the same season and the first time since 2002-03 that it picked up two overtime victories in one year.

ASU 91, GEORGIA SOUTHERN 86 (OT)

Score by periods 1st 2nd OT Total

Appalachian State 27 46 18 - 91

Georgia Southern 37 36 13 - 86

ASU: OBACHA 5 (4 ASSISTS), HEALY 24 (11 REBOUNDS), CANTY 15 (8 REBOUNDS),

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HAMILTON 16, NEAL 13 (9 REBOUNDS), BASKIN 12, TRICE 6. FG: 29-56, 3FG: 4-13, FT: 29-43. 43 REBOUNDS, 10 ASSISTS, 15 TURNOVERS.
THREE-POINTERS: HEALY 2, HAMILTON, NEALY.

GSU: MIKE 4, FERGUSON 23 (8 REBOUNDS), ROBERTS 17, REED 19 (5 ASSISTS), BAYNHAM 11 (8 REBOUNDS), BUSSEY 2, HOLMES 4, BASKERVILLE 6. FG: 33-72, 3FG: 5-19, FT: 15-28. 37 REBOUNDS, 12 ASSISTS, 12 TURNOVERS.
THREE-POINTERS: FERGUSON, ROBERTS, BASKERVILLE.

Photo Courtesy: Tab Hamilton, ASU Athletics