

Late Rally Dooms Mountaineers at Elon

Written by Ryan Bower

Friday, 15 February 2013 05:57

Appalachian State University men's basketball missed out on a chance to take one more step towards a Southern Conference North Division crown in a 61-58 loss at Elon on Thursday at Alumni Gym.

The Mountaineers (11-14, 7-7 SoCon) were able to build a seven-point lead (21-14) midway through the first half, but could not overcome a late surge in both the first and second halves by the Phoenix (17-8, 10-3) which picked up its ninth win in its last 10 games.

After trading jabs over the first seven minutes of play, Appalachian was able to go ahead by two (12-10) on a Mike Neal layup with 13:17 left in the first half.

Ryley Beaumont brought the Phoenix back within one point (15-14) just two minutes later, but the Mountaineers reeled off a quick 6-0 run that included four points by Nathan Healy to take their largest lead of the half at 21-14 with 7:47 on the clock.

Elon would come to life after that by scoring five-straight points to pull back within two (21-19) before Tevin Baskin put a stop to the run with a layup to make it 23-19 with just under five minutes to play, but the Phoenix responded with nine-straight points to jump out to a 28-23 lead on Josh Bonney's layup with 2:11 left in the half.

Neal was able to break the run with a three-pointer to make it 28-26, but Jack Isenbarger responded with a high-arcing three-pointer of his own with 57 seconds remaining to send the Phoenix to the locker room with a 31-26 lead.

The Phoenix notched the first bucket of the second half when Beaumont scored just over a minute into the period to give Elon a 33-26 lead before the Mountaineers mounted a 9-0 run, capped off by a Jamaal Trice three-pointer to give the Apps a 35-33 lead with 15:46 left to play.

Elon responded with two quick buckets, including a Sebastian Koch shot from long range, to regain the lead at 38-35. Appalachian State was able to tie things up when Jay Canty nailed a layup and hit the ensuing free throw to make it 40-40 with just over 12 minutes remaining.

After the Phoenix scored the next bucket to make it 42-40, App State scored seven-straight points on the strength of two buckets by Healy and one from Baskin to make it 47-42 at the 8:35 mark of the half.

The Mountaineers were able to stretch the lead to seven points (54-47) with 4:23 left to play, but Elon would put together yet another rally as it scored six-straight points to draw within one (54-53) with just over two minutes on the clock.

With the score standing at 56-55 in favor of the Apps in the final two minutes, Trice was able to draw a foul and connected on both shots from the charity stripe to give Appalachian a three-point lead (58-55) with just 1:11 to go.

After Beaumont brought the Phoenix back within one (58-57) in the final minute of play, the Mountaineers turned the ball over with a chance to pad the lead and Koch hit a pair of free throws with just 4.5 ticks on the clock to give Elon a one-point lead and the Phoenix sealed the deal from the free-throw line down in the closing seconds.

Canty led the Mountaineers with 17 points and nine rebounds while Healy scored 12 and pulled down seven boards. Michael Obacha finished with seven points and seven rebounds and Neal tallied nine points, four boards and three blocks.

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Beaumont paced all players with 22 points and 13 rebounds while Isenbarger (16) and Koch (11) rounded out a trio of double-digit scorers for the Phoenix.

The Mountaineers shot just 39.2 percent (20-of-51) from the floor including 3-of-16 from beyond the arc while Elon connected on 37.9 percent (22-of-58) of its shots including a 12-of-15 mark at the charity stripe.

Appalachian State closes out its 2012-13 road slate at UNCG at 2 p.m. on Sunday before closing out the regular season with three-straight home games.

GAME NOTES: Appalachian State dropped to 52-43 all-time against Elon... the loss gives the Phoenix a 30-12 advantage in games played at Elon... Thursday's contest was Appalachian's second-straight loss at Alumni Gym after a string of three-straight victories in the facility... Healy finished in double figures for the fifth-straight game and the 14th time in his last 15 games... App State was outscored 15-9 on second-chance opportunities... the Mountaineers finished with a 28-24 edge in the paint.

ELON 61, ASU 58

Score by periods □ 1st □ 2nd □ Total

Appalachian State 26 32 - 58

Elon 31 30 - 61

ASU: OBACHA 7 (7 REBOUNDS), HEALY 12 (7 REBOUNDS), NEAL 9, CANTY 17 (9 REBOUNDS), BASKIN 8, TRICE 5. FG: 20-51, 3FG: 3-16, FT: 15-20. 34 REBUONDS, 7 ASSISTS, 11 TURNOVERS.

THREE-POINTERS: TRICE, NEAL, HEALY.

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ELON: BEAUMONT 22 (13 REBOUNDS), BLAKE 3, ISENBARGER 16 (5 ASSISTS), KOCH 11, BONNEY 4, WINTERS 5. FG: 22-58, 3FG: 5-15, FT: 12-15. 37 REBOUNDS, 14 ASSISTS, 10 TURNOVERS.

THREE-POINTERS: KOCH 3, BLAKE, ISENBARGER.

Photo Courtesy: Jay Canty, ASU Athletics