

ASU dumps UNCG, 72-64

Written by Mike Kelly

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The Appalachian State men's basketball team is beginning to assert itself as a contender in the North Division of the Southern Conference.

The Apps (10-7 overall; 4-2 North Division of the Southern Conference) won their third straight game by knocking off UNC-Greensboro 72-64 at the Holmes Convocation Center Saturday afternoon on Alumni Day. Donald Sims led ASU with 21 points on 7-13 shooting.

"A win is a win", said ASU coach Buzz Peterson. "We had some ups-and-downs, but we came through down the stretch and put it away. I was worried about Greensboro coming in.

"They've played a very tough schedule, and they'll win their share of games in the conference. But at this time of the year, you want your team to be the aggressor. And we took it to them, especially near the end."

The Apps outrebounded UNCG 46-33 and ASU attempted 29 free throws to only seven for the Spartans. Ike Butts had nine points and 11 rebounds to pace ASU inside. Jeremy Booth had 12 points and nine boards. Josh Hunter had eight rebounds, and Andre Williamson had eight boards and four blocked shots.

"We're beginning to understand coach Peterson's game plan," said A.J. Highsmith, who finished with five points. "He's been stressing defense since day one. And playing defense is a pride thing and hard work. And we have the confidence to win games in the final seven minutes by making the stops on defense and by hitting our free throws."

The win also gives ASU sole possession of second place in the North Division standings. College of Charleston lent a helping hand by blasting Chattanooga 90-66 on the road.

"It's nice to be in this position," said Donald Sims. "Now, we have to keep it up by winning down at Georgia Southern on Wednesday."

And Sims is slowly becoming Appalachian's go-to-guy. His six-point run in the second half allowed ASU to outscore UNCG 11-2, snapping a 51-51 tie, and giving ASU a 62-53 lead. The Spartans (3-15; 2-4) got within six at 68-62 with 30 seconds left, but would get no closer.

"Our guys really respect Donald," Peterson said. "He has the talent to be our guy in the clutch."

ASU travels to Georgia Southern Wednesday night. And our coverage comes your way beginning at 6:15 pm on WATA 1450 AM.

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