The Appalachian State men's basketball team continued its hot pace Saturday night at the Holmes Convocation Center.

The Mountaineers (17-11 overall) knocked off Tennessee Tech 81-68 in the ESPNU BracketBuster game. And the Apps did it with a strong effort from the field.

For the third consecutive game, ASU shot a blistering 60% from the floor in the second half (and 54% for the game). And Donald Sims, who attended his grandfather's funeral earlier in the day, turned in another Sims-like performance as he paced the Mountaineers with a team-high 25 points.

"I'm very impressed with Donald Sims," said ASU coach Buzz Peterson. "It was a very emotional day for him. He had to bury a man that practically raised him. And for him to go through something like that, and play like he did tonight, was simply impressive."

The Apps also did a great job shooting the three. They were 12-22 (55%) from behind the three-point line, and they made 74% of their free throws. Those numbers allowed ASU to gradually pull away as the Mountaineers built a 16-point advantage in the second half.

"Our goal right now is to win 20 games," said Ike Butts, who finished with 15 points and eight rebounds. "That's why we have to be ready to play every night. And since that loss to King, we aren't taking anyone lightly anymore."

In all, the Apps had four players in double figures. Kellen Brand finished with 16 points; Jeremy Booth had 15. Booth was also 5-7 from the three-point line.

"When that first one goes, it just feels right to me," said Booth. "I hit that first one and I got into a groove. But Donald and Ike were tremendous. They really set the tone for us in the first half."

And the Apps now have a chance to win the Southern Conference North Division title with a win at Elon Monday night. They currently lead Western Carolina by 1 1/2 games for that No.1 seed in the North.

"Monday is real big for us," said Peterson. "I told these guys, we can accomplish something a lot of people won't be able to do this season, and that's win a division title and possibly 20 games. It would be real special for us to do that.

"And I was very pleased with the way our guys stayed focused tonight. They came out and played hard. This game scared me a bit. It really reminded me of the King game (back in late January). But we came out and worked hard, and got the win."

ASU travels to Elon Monday night. Our coverage begins at 6:15 pm on WATA 1450 AM.

NOTES: The ASU women win again as they defeated UNC-Greensboro 67-49 Saturday afternoon at the Holmes Center. An 11-3 run with a little more than 10 minutes remaining handed ASU (16-10 overall; 12-5 SoCon) a 12-point lead and the Mountaineers coasted home from there. Anna Freeman paced ASU With 18 points and 12 rebounds. Sam Ramirez had 16 points and eight boards. ASU also shot a blistering 47% from three-point range. Defensively,

ASU held the Spartans to 35% shooting from the floor.The 16 wins by ASU is the most wins in a season since 1996-97; and the 12 conference wins are the most since 1995-96. College of Charleston comes to town Monday night.