

Mountaineers Win SoCon Opener

Written by Charles Cochrum
Friday, 02 December 2011 08:22

Senior Omar Carter (Charlotte, N.C./Charleston Southern) broke out of a scoring slump with a season-high 24 points to lead Appalachian State University men's basketball to a 78-64 win over visiting UNCG in the Southern Conference opener on Thursday night

at the Holmes Center.

Carter shot 9-of-15 from the field and matched a career high with 12 rebounds to notch his first double-double of the young season. He added three assists and a 5-of-6 mark from the free-throw line.

The Mountaineers (4-2, 1-0 SoCon) shot 49.1 percent from the field and matched a season high with 10 three-pointers in 22 attempts. The Appalachian defense held the Spartans (2-5, 0-1) to just 31.3 percent shooting and a 5-of-18 mark from beyond the arc.

Isaac Butts (Milledgeville, Ga./Georgia Military) scored 10 points on 4-of-6 shooting and added seven rebounds as ASU's second leading scorer. The big man played a season-high 34 minutes and notched a block and an assist.

Appalachian fell behind in the rebound category, 22-11, at halftime before attacking the glass at both ends of the floor after the intermission to end the game with a 41-40 lead. G.J. Vilarino (McKinney, Texas/Gonzaga) and Andre Williamson (Dayton, Ohio/Prince George) hauled in six boards each to give the Apps a balanced effort on the boards.

Williamson battled early foul trouble to score seven points and swat four shots for a second game in a row. The senior added two assists and a steal. Vilarino dished out four of ASU's 16 assists in the contest and added four points in the win.

Appalachian's solid all-around effort led to a 24-9 advantage in bench points, as three reserve players recorded double-figure minutes. Rodney Milum (Houston, Texas/Midland College) found his stroke from downtown, scoring all nine of his points on 3-of-5 shooting from deep.

Tab Hamilton (Winston-Salem, N.C./Fishburne Military) notched eight points, including a pair of three-pointers as well as two rebounds and a steal. Mike Neal (Greensboro, N.C./Oak Ridge) added four assists of his own to accompany seven points and a pair of rebounds off the bench. Appalachian fought back from an early seven-point deficit with a 10-point run and eventually worked up to a 10-point halftime lead at 43-33. The Apps also battled early foul trouble as Williamson and Jamaal Trice (Los Angeles, Calif./Midland College) each picked up two early and combined for just 15 minutes in the opening frame. Trice scored nine points with two rebounds and a block in 19 minutes on the court.

UNCG cut the Mountaineer lead down to five points on two occasions early in the second half before the Apps used a set of runs to regain a comfortable lead at 16 points with three minutes to play.

Aaron Brackett and Trevis Simpson led UNCG with 17 points each. The Spartans converted 19 offensive rebounds into 17 second-chance points and scored 18 points off of 17 ASU turnovers.

The Mountaineers take to the road to face Georgia Southern on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. in Statesboro.

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ASU 78, UNCG 64

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UNCG.....	33	31	64
ASU.....	43	35	78

UNCG: SIMPSON 17, BRACKETT 17 (9 REBOUNDS), WILLIAMS 8, PARKER 3, ARMSTRONG 10 (8 REBOUNDS), VAN DUSSEN 3, RANDALL 5, HENRY 1. FG: 21-67, 3FG: 5-18, FT: 17-26. 40 REBOUNDS, 11 TURNOVERS, 11 ASSISTS.

ASU: WILLIAMSON 7 (6 REBOUNDS, 4 BLOCKED SHOTS), BUTTS 10 (7 REBOUNDS), VILARINO 4 (6 REBOUNDS, 4 ASSISTS), CARTER 24 (12 REBOUNDS), MILUM 9, HAMILTON 8, NEAL 7. FG: 27-55, 3FG: 10-22, FT: 14-21. 41 REBOUNDS, 17 TURNOVERS, 16 ASSISTS.

Photo Courtesy: Omar Carter, by Meghan Gay, ASU Athletics