

Mountaineers Struggle Against ETSU

Written by Charles Cochrum

Saturday, 10 December 2011 22:33

East Tennessee State flexed its muscle in the interior on Saturday afternoon, scoring 38 points in the paint and grabbing 13 offensive rebounds to hand

Appalachian State University men's basketball a 65-48 defeat at the Holmes Center. ETSU (4-5) did the majority of its damage in the first half, shooting 56.7 percent from the field and outscoring Appalachian (4-5) 26-4 in the paint and 16-0 off turnovers to take a commanding 43-24 halftime lead. Everything appeared to be going the Bucs' way in the half, as Jarvis Jones sank a three-pointer as the clock expired.

ASU head coach Jason Capel shook up the lineup after the break, sitting starters Omar Carter, G.J. Vilarino and Isaac Butts in favor of Rodney Milum, Mike Neal and Brian Okam to open the frame. The Mountaineers responded by cutting the 19-point halftime deficit to 11 on two occasions. However, Appalachian could never get within single digits and ETSU, which made just 15-of-31 free throws on the game, hit 8-of-9 foul shots down the stretch to pull away. Milum and Jamaal Trice led the Mountaineers with 12 points apiece. Milum's success came on 4-of-7 shooting from three-point range and Trice was aggressive on the offensive end of the floor to sink 5-of-10 attempts.

Okam had his best game to date in the Black and Gold, scoring four points and leading the Apps with seven rebounds. He swatted one of the team's eight blocks as well in 17 minutes. Andre Williamson blocked three shots to accompany his four points, four rebounds, two assists and a steal. Butts was less effective against the ETSU defense as the senior fouled out without scoring. He hauled in two boards and blocked a shot in 20 minutes.

Immediately after Butts' early departure from the game, Milum sank a three-pointer off of a pass from Williamson with a little more than eight minutes left in regulation. Neal then brought down a rebound on the other end and found the junior open for a second-straight trey to slice the lead down to 11 points. The Mountaineers then regained possession with a chance to cut the deficit to single digits, but were unable to capitalize.

Neal's four assists led Appalachian and tied his season best. The freshman added four rebounds, two points and a steal in a season-high 22 minutes.

Adam Sollazzo (23 points, nine rebounds) and Isiah Brown (16 points, eight rebounds) paced ETSU.

For the game, Appalachian was outscored 38-12 in the paint and 21-5 off turnovers. The Mountaineers committed 18 miscues compared to just seven for the Bucs. Overall, ASU connected on 42.5 percent of its attempts from the field and 8-of-20 three-pointers. ETSU shot 47.1 percent from the field, including 2-of-3 longballs.

The Apps won the second half by a 24-22 scoring margin. The Bucs' 22 points after the break were the fewest allowed in any second half by Appalachian on the season. ASU's eight blocks marked the most by the team since swatting a program-record 12 against Lees-McRae in the season opener.

Appalachian was outrebounded by its opponent for a third-straight game by a slim 32-30 clip. ASU uses the upcoming week to take final exams and prepare for a battle at North Carolina. Tipoff for the Dec. 17 game is set for 6 p.m. and will be televised nationally on ESPNU.

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ETSU 65, ASU 48

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ETSU.....43 22 - 65

ASU.....24 24 - 48

ASU: WILLIAMSON 4, VILARINO 2, TRICE 12, CARTER 4 (7 REBOUNDS), MILUM 12, HAMILTON 8, NEAL 2, OKAM 4. FG: 17-40, 3FG: 8-20, FT: 6-13. 30 REBOUNDS, 18 TURNOVERS, 10 ASSISTS.

ETSU: BROWN 16 (8 REBOUNDS), JONES 8, COOLEY 2, HUBBARD 3, SOLLAZZO 23 (9 REBOUNDS, 5 ASSISTS), DUBOSE 5, PODERIS 8. FG: 24-51, 3FG: 2-3, FT: 15-31. 32 REBOUNDS, 7 TURNOVERS, 12 ASSISTS.

Photo Courtesy: Rodney Milum, by Dave Mayo, ASU Athletics

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