

## Mountaineers Finish Strong at Samford

Written by Charles Cochrum  
Friday, 06 January 2012 08:51

---

Appalachian State University men's basketball fended off a late Samford run to secure a 68-63 road win on Thursday night at the Hanna Center. The Mountaineers fought off a slow start and

played well down the stretch to improve to 2-1 in Southern Conference play.

The Apps (6-7, 2-1 SoCon) shook off an early 16-4 deficit with a 20-4 run over the next seven minutes to steal away the lead from the homestanding Bulldogs. Appalachian then extended the advantage to as many as 11 points late in the half before a tip-in at the buzzer pulled Samford (3-10, 0-2) back within 37-28 at the intermission.

ASU maintained a healthy cushion throughout a majority of the second period before the Bulldogs chipped away and eventually pulled within a single point on two different occasions as the clock approached three minutes.

With just over a minute remaining, Jeffrey Merritt sank a free throw to pull SU within 64-62.

Reigning SoCon Player of the Week Andre Williamson (Dayton, Ohio/Prince George) then responded with a jumper with 56 ticks on the clock to bump the lead back to four points.

Raijon Kelly sank another Samford free throw for the home team's final point with 16 seconds remaining. Omar Carter (Charlotte, N.C./Charleston Southern) added a free throw on the next possession and then after another defensive stop, Williamson tacked on one more with eight seconds to play.

Nathan Healy (New Bern, N.C./Blair Academy) matched a career high with 14 points in the game, including 10 in the first half. The junior sank 4-of-7 shots with a three-pointer and 5-of-5 mark from the foul line. He added eight rebounds and three of ASU's six blocks.

Carter led all scorers with 17 points on 6-of-10 shooting with a pair of treys. He matched Healy for the team lead at eight rebounds to accompany three assists and two clutch steals late in the contest.

Despite playing the final five minutes of the game with four fouls, Williamson remained aggressive to notch 10 points, five rebound, two assists and a block. The senior forward was 4-of-5 from the field.

The Apps shot a stout 54.2 percent from the field and knocked down 6-of-16 three-pointers. Samford improved from the first half to the second but managed just 39.7 percent in the game. Both teams struggled from the charity stripe, as ASU sank 10-of-20 free throws and Samford drained just 7-of-18 freebies.

ASU was dominant at times on the boards, securing a 40-31 advantage, including nine rebounds on the offensive glass for seven second-chance points.

Tab Hamilton (Winston-Salem, N.C./Fishburne Military) added 12 points on 5-of-8 shooting, including a pair of three-pointers. Making his second-straight start, the freshman played 26 minutes and added a rebound and a steal.

Mike Neal (Greensboro, N.C./Oak Ridge Military) made his third consecutive start at point guard and chipped in 11 points on 5-of-9 shooting. He dished out three of the team's 14 assists and hauled in three rebounds in 28 minutes.

Drew Windler led Samford with 15 points, while Merritt recorded a double-double with 14 points and 10 rebounds.

The Mountaineers have little time to enjoy the win as the squad travels to Chattanooga for a Saturday night matchup against the defending North Division champions.

## Mountaineers Finish Strong at Samford

Written by Charles Cochrum  
Friday, 06 January 2012 08:51

---

NOTES: ASU dressed out just nine players for the game ... Senior Isaac Butts did not travel with the team due to an indefinite suspension due to conduct detrimental to the team ... Junior Rodney Milum missed a second-straight game while attending to family matters ... Sophomore Brian Okam did not dress out due to illness.

**ASU 68, SAMFORD 63**

### Score By Periods 1st 2nd Total

Appalachian State.....	37	31	68
Samford.....	28	35	63

**ASU:** CARTER 17 (8 REBOUNDS), WILLIAMSON 10 (5 REBOUNDS), HAMILTON 12, TRICE 2, NEAL 11, VILARINO 2, HEALY 14 (8 REBOUNDS). FG: 26-48, 3FG: 6-16, FT: 10-20. 40 REBOUNDS, 19 TURNOVERS, 14 ASSISTS.

**SAMFORD:** HOOD 4, WINDLER 15, MERRITT 14 (10 REBOUNDS), COOK 5, McNEIL 4, HAYMAN 3, KELLY 10, FRIDAY 8. FG: 25-63, 3FG: 6-23, FT: 7-18. 31 REBOUNDS, 10 TURNOVERS, 13 ASSISTS.

## **Mountaineers Finish Strong at Samford**

Written by Charles Cochrum  
Friday, 06 January 2012 08:51

---

**Photo Courtesy: Nathan Healy, by Dave Mayo, ASU Athletics**