

Wildcats Claw Past Mountaineers

Written by Ryan Bower

Sunday, 15 January 2012 18:39

Appalachian State University women's basketball jumped out to an early 12-point lead, but was unable to hang on in a 55-52 loss to Southern Conference foe Davidson on Sunday at the Holmes Center.

The Mountaineers (11-3, 5-1 SoCon) used stifling defense to shut down the

Wildcats (11-6, 7-1) in the first half, but Davidson roared back to send the Apps to their first conference loss of the season.

Appalachian State grabbed a quick 7-0 lead four minutes into the contest and held the Wildcats without a field goal for the first five minutes of play to snag momentum early.

Davidson managed to score just six points in the first 10 minutes as ASU led by as many as 12 points (18-6) after Chakeitha Weldon hit a jumper with 9:27 left in the first half.

The Wildcats would slowly chip away at Appalachian's lead, pulling to within one point (20-19) following a 13-2 run that was finally ended with back-to-back buckets from Canesha Edwards and Anna Freeman to give the Mountaineers a 24-19 halftime lead.

Appalachian State held Davidson to just 19.4 percent (6-for-31) from the floor in the first half while connecting on 35.7 percent (10-for-28) of its own shots.

The Apps were able to extend their lead to seven points (32-25) after just three minutes of play to start the second half, but the Wildcats caught fire and grabbed their first lead of the game (38-37) with 11:11 left to play.

Appalachian was able to tie the contest three times in the final 10 minutes of play and pulled even with the Wildcats at 50-50 after Kelsey Sharkey converted a free throw to complete a three-point play with just under three minutes left on the clock.

Davidson was able to regain the lead on a three-point play of its own with 1:21 remaining, but Freeman cut the deficit to just one point (53-52) with a pair of free throws before fouling out.

The Wildcats hit two free throws in the closing seconds and blocked a last-second ASU shot to cap off the comeback and knock the Mountaineers from the ranks of the SoCon unbeatens.

Sharkey and Weldon finished with 10 points each while Courtney Freeman ripped down a team-high 10 rebounds. A. Freeman was limited to just eight points but picked up seven steals, two blocks and two assists.

Davidson was paced by Sophia Aleksandravicius, the preseason SoCon Player of the Year, who fell just shy of a triple-double with 17 points, 20 rebounds and seven blocks.

The Wildcats also got solid contributions from Kristen Johnson (13 pts, 10 reb) and Laura Murray (10 pts, 2 steals) in the win.

As a team, Appalachian State shot 26.9 percent (18-for-67) while Davidson shot 33.9 percent (19-for-56). The Wildcats shot 52.0 percent (13-for-25) in the second half while holding ASU to just 20.5 percent (8-for-39).

The Mountaineers return to action with a 6 p.m. contest at Wofford on Wednesday before playing host to Chattanooga (Jan. 21) and Samford (Jan. 23) over the weekend.

GAME NOTES: Davidson's first-half shooting percentage was the lowest for any ASU opponent since Western Carolina shot just 14.7 percent on Jan. 4, 2010... the Mountaineers forced 10 or more turnovers for the 81st-straight game... ASU lost at home for just the second time in its last 25 games... Anna Freeman was held to less than 10 points for just the second time this

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season... she had scored in double-figures in 12-straight games... the Apps fell to Aleksandravicius scored 13 points and had 12 rebounds in the second half.

DAVIDSON 55, ASU 52

Score by periods	1st	2nd	Total
Davidson.....	19	36	55
Appalachian State.....	24	28	52

DAVIDSON: ALEKSANDRAVICIUS 17 (20 REBOUNDS), JOHNSON 13 (10 REBOUNDS), MURRAY 10, SITTON 3, CALIN 4, CENTER 8. FG: 19-56, 3FG: 3-10, FT: 14-21. 47 REBOUNDS, 21 TURNOVERS, 10 ASSISTS.

ASU: SHARKEY 10 (9 REBOUNDS), A. FREEMAN 8 (7 STEALS), WELDON 19 (4 ASSISTS), EDWARDS 5, C. FREEMAN 9 (10 REBOUNDS), TAYLOR 1, SYDNOR 7, WILLIAMS 2. FG: 18-67, 3FG: 1-9, FT: 15-23. 45 REBOUNDS, 15 TURNOVERS, 8 ASSISTS.

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Photo Courtesy: □ Chakeitha Weldon, by Bill Sheffield, ASU Athletics