

Seniors Lead ASU Past Winthrop Home Finale

Written by Charles Cochrum
Saturday, 18 February 2012 23:25

Led by 15 points each from seniors Isaac Butts (Milledgeville, Ga./Georgia Military College Prep) and Omar Carter (Charlotte, N.C./Charleston Southern), five players scored in double figures to lead Appalachian State University men's basketball to a 76-64 win over Winthrop on Saturday at the Holmes Center. In the final home game

for four ASU upperclassmen, the Mountaineers won a third-straight BracketBuster contest with a balanced effort.

In his home finale, Butts set the tone early on with 11 points, 11 rebounds, three steals and two assists before the intermission. The fifth-year senior center finished with 15 rebounds, three steals, two assists and gave the crowd a treat early in the contest by making what was nearly a three-pointer. Carter hauled in six rebounds with an assist and a steal to accompany his game-high four three-pointers.

Thanks in part to the big man's solid shooting, ASU jumped out to a 26-10 lead before the Eagles rallied back to within two points late in the half. ASU finished strong before the intermission to take a 41-35 lead into the locker room.

The Eagles were not discouraged by the early deficit and clawed back to take a 58-57 lead with 7:47 remaining in regulation. From there, Mike Neal (Greensboro, N.C./Oak Ridge Military Academy) sparked a 13-4 Mountaineer run with six of his 10 points coming over the stretch. In addition to helping ASU regain an eight-point cushion late in the contest, the freshman dished out a team-high four assists and hauled in five rebounds.

After WU responded to cut ASU's lead back down to six points, the Mountaineers closed out the win with the game's last six points, including a Butts layup and Neal jumper.

Appalachian shot 47.3 percent in the game after a 13-of-26 outing in the second half. The Apps drained 7-of-17 shots from downtown compared to 4-of-16 from the visitors. Winthrop made 45.2 percent of its shots from the floor, but just 4-of-10 free throws on the afternoon.

The Apps were dominant on the glass early on and took a 37-33 advantage for the contest. ASU converted 14 offensive rebounds into 14 second-chance points.

Nathan Healy (New Bern, N.C./Blair Academy) recorded double-figure points with 13 on 4-of-4 shooting and 5-of-5 free throws. He was matched by Tab Hamilton's (Winston-Salem, N.C./Fishburne Military Academy) 13 points on 4-of-9 shooting and 5-of-6 mark at the charity strips. The pair of regular starters combined for five rebounds and three assists off the bench. In limited action, Andre Williamson (Dayton, Ohio/Prince George) scored two points with a pair of assists and a rebound. The senior forward missed Wednesday's game due to a back injury. Classmate Petey Hausley (Marion, N.C./Iowa Western CC) made his second-straight start and scored one point with a rebound in 10 minutes on the floor.

Matt Morgan led the Eagles (11-18) with 2 points on 10-of-14 shooting. Reggie Middleton added 16 points, five rebounds and three assists.

Appalachian wraps up the final week of the regular season on the road, beginning Wednesday at The Citadel. Next Saturday's finale takes place at Western Carolina on Saturday.

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ASU 76, WINTHROP 64

Score by periods 1st 2nd Total

Winthrop	35	29	64
Appalachian State	41	35	76

WINTHROP: MORGAN 22, JEROME 6, VALENTINE 5, MIDDLETON 16, JONES 4, GAMBLE 4, SMITH 3, BROWN 4. FG: 28-62, 3FG: 4-16, FT: 4-10. 33 REBOUNDS, 10 TURNOVERS, 13 ASSISTS.

ASU: WILLIAMSON 2, HAUSLEY 1, BUTTS 15 (15 REBOUNDS), CARTER 15, NEAL 10, HAMILTON 13, VILARINO 4, HEALY 13, WOODS 3. FG: 26-55, 3FG: 7-17, FT: 17-25. 37 REBOUNDS, 10 TURNOVERS, 14 ASSISTS.

Photo Courtesy: Issac Butts, ASU Athletics