

Wildcats, Bulldogs, Mocs Move On

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Samford took control of the game early and their control never relinquished as the Bulldogs snapped Elon's four-game winning streak, with a 67-36 victory in the quarterfinals of the 2012 Southern Conference

Women's Basketball Tournament in Kimmel Arena.

The Bulldogs went on a 7-0 run to open the game before senior Aiesha Harper put Elon (16-14, 12-8 SoCon) on the board. Samford did not allow the Phoenix to hit double-digit points until 5:54 remained in the first half and sophomore Kelsey Evans completed a layup.

As a whole, Samford shot 70 percent from behind the arc in the first half, while Elon hit 2-of-10. The Bulldogs finished the game shooting 55 percent from long range. The Phoenix only completed a pair of threes in the contest.

"I think everyone was just tight," said Elon head coach Charlotte Smith. "I tried to get everyone to relax during timeouts. I think it was just nerves and we need to find a way to calm them down and I think if we were out there making something happen offensively that would have settled us down."

Samford (18-12, 12-8 SoCon) held the Phoenix off, taking a 35-14 lead at the half.

"I was definitely pleased with our effort," said Samford head coach Mike Morris. "I thought we, from the defensive standpoint, set the tone for the game. I know we shot the ball well. I think they (seniors) brought that coolness, confidence and reassurance to the game. Not only for themselves, but for the team. I credit those three seniors for that confidence."

Off the bench, sophomore Shelby Campbell put up 13 points for the Bulldogs. As a whole, the Samford bench put 25 points on the scoreboard. Elon's bench tallied five points.

Freshman Taylor Reece paced Samford with a game-high 18 points. Reece, who was a member of the 2012 All-Freshman Team went 3-of-4 from behind the arc and was a perfect 3-for-3 from the charity stripe.

Junior Ali Ford led the way for the Phoenix with 11 points. Evans had nine points and pulled down a game-high nine boards.

Samford will play top-seeded Davidson tomorrow at noon in the semifinals at the U.S. Cellular Center in Asheville, N.C.

#1 Davidson 69, #9 Wofford 58

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The top-seeded Davidson Wildcats advanced to the semifinals of the 2012 Southern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament, following their 69-58 victory over No.9 Wofford Saturday afternoon in the Justice Center on the campus of UNC Asheville.

Wofford (13-18, 5-15 SoCon) opened the game by jumping out to an early 4-0 lead and the contest remained close throughout the half. The Terriers' largest lead came at 14:09 when they led by six points.

Both teams were perfect from the charity stripe in the first half.

Davidson (22-8, 17-3) took an 18-point lead over the Terriers following a 21-5 run. Senior Amanda Ottaway scored eight of her 14 points in the second half. Wofford came within ten, 58-48 with 1:48 remaining but junior Barbara Sitton hit 7-of-8 freethrows down the stretch to seal Davidson's victory.

Sophomore Laura Murray connected on 3-of-6 shots from behind the arc and recorded a game-high 19 points. She also dished out a game-high five assists.

"I'm very proud of the girls and how they hung in there," said head coach Michele Savage. "I knew Wofford was going to come out and give us their best shot. We played hard and we were ready to go. We made some shots and a couple of buckets in a row to get us going."

The Wofford bench accounted for 27 of the Terriers' points with junior Morgan Wrightson leading the way with 21 points. She also finished 7-of-9 from the free-throw line. Junior Daniella Motley tallied 15 points and four rebounds. The Terriers' lone senior April Moorhouse pulled down a team-high eight rebounds.

Wofford finished the matchup 3-of-20 from three-point range and committed 24 turnovers. The Wildcats are the first team to advance to the semifinals and will face the winner of the Samford and Elon game, tomorrow, March 4 at 12:00 p.m. in the U.S. Cellular Center.

#3 Chattanooga 60, #6 Furman 38

Chattanooga secured the final spot in the 2012 Southern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament semifinals with their 60-38 win over Furman in Kimmel Arena. After trailing 22-17 at halftime, the Mocs outscored the Paladin 43-16 in the second half to move to the semifinals for the eighth consecutive season and 13th time in 14 years.

Despite opening the game on a 6-0 run, Chattanooga could not hold off the Furman offense as the Paladins had a 22-17 advantage at the break. Junior Kaitlin Murphy led the way with eight points.

Sophomore Janice Roberts tied the game at 14 which was part of a 14-0 Furman run.

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Senior Whitney Hood put up 10 of Chattanooga's 17 first half points.

Chattanooga (22-8, 16-4 SoCon) came back to take the lead from the Paladins in the second half. Early in the half, the two teams battled back and forth and the score was tied twice.

However the Lady Mocs overcame their halftime deficit with a second half surge and their defense silenced Furman, who made their last field goal with 7:27 left on the clock.

"We knew coming into this we had to put together 40 minutes of basketball and unfortunately we only put together 20," said Furman head coach Jackie Carson. "Our girls fought and this is a great lesson for us and what we need to build on in the future and what it takes to win a good championship. A lot of credit goes to Chattanooga because they came out and showed that fire in the second half and made big shots and we just froze."

In the second half, Furman (15-16, 10-10 SoCon) shot twenty percent from field goal range and committed 10 turnovers.

Chattanooga had three players score in the double-digits, sophomore Taylor Hall led the way with 16 points on 4-of-6 shooting from three-point range. Senior Whitney Hood and junior Kylie Lambert contributed 14 and 10 points, respectively. Hood pulled down eight rebounds. The Lady Mocs finished shooting 91.7 percent from the free throw line.

Murphy and junior Teshia Griswold paced the way for the Paladins each scoring 10 points Chattanooga advances to the semifinals tomorrow and will play Appalachian State at 2:30 p.m. in the U.S. Cellular Center.

Photo Courtesy: Taylor Reece of Samford, Southern Conference Athletics