

Mountaineers Ground Seahawks in WNIT

Written by Ryan Bower
Friday, 16 March 2012 07:34

Appalachian State University women's basketball picked up its first-ever WNIT victory in a 79-73 win over UNC Wilmington in the first round of the 2012 Women's National Invitation Tournament

on Thursday at Trask Coliseum.

The Mountaineers (25-7) got off to a quick start before the Seahawks (21-12) were able to regain their composure and the lead, but the Apps battled back from a six-point halftime deficit to pick up the victory.

After starting the contest with two, six-point leads in the first four minutes of the game, Appalachian State allowed UNCW back into the contest with an 11-5 run that drew the teams even at 13-13 with 13:38 left in the opening half.

Both teams would trade buckets over the next several possessions before Anna Freeman gave the Mountaineers a 17-16 lead with 10:02 remaining.

The Seahawks would snag a four-point lead (23-19) at the 8:16 mark, but the Apps battled back to regain the lead at 25-23 on Kelsey Sharkey's jumper just two minutes later.

With the score tied at 27-27 with just under five minutes to play in the half, UNCW reeled off a quick 7-0 run to take a 34-27 lead thanks to a pair of three-pointers from Abria Trice and Tawanna Lee and a free-throw from Karneshia Garrett.

Raven Gary was able to bring the Mountaineers within six points (40-34) as she hit a shot from long-range to end the half.

After extending its lead to as many as eight points on two occasions in the early-going of the second half, UNCW would surrender its lead to the Apps when Chakeitha Weldon hit a pair of free throws to make it 50-49 with 13:18 remaining in the contest.

The Seahawks were able to grab the lead back at 58-57 with just under nine minutes left to play. It was the final time that UNCW would lead in the game, though the score was tied four times over the final ten minutes.

Appalachian State was able to put the game away with a 10-4 run over the final three and a half minutes to nail down its first postseason victory since winning the Women's Basketball Invitational in 2009.

Freeman paced the Mountaineers with 16 points to go along with eight rebounds and eight assists. Mallow poured in 13 points in her first collegiate start and Sharkey posted a double-double with 11 points and 12 rebounds.

Weldon scored 10 points off the bench and Courtney Freeman also scored 10. UNCW got a game-high 23 points from Abria Trice.

Appalachian State will face N.C. State in the second round of the WNIT at 5 p.m. on Saturday at Reynolds Coliseum.

GAME NOTES: Appalachian State forced 10 or more turnovers for the 99th-straight game... the Mountaineers set a new school record for wins (26) in a single season... the Apps improved to 5-1 all-time against the Seahawks and 1-4 in the WNIT... Appalachian State outscored UNCW in the paint by a 48-44 total... the Mountaineers shot 52.5 percent (32-for-61) from the floor including 4-of-9 from beyond the arc... the Seahawks converted just 14-of-24 free throws... the Apps finished with 24 assists on 32 made shots.

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ASU 79, UNC-WILMINGTON 73

Score by periods 1st 2nd Total

Appalachian State...	34	45	79
UNC-Wilmington.....	40	33	73

ASU: SYDNOR 6 (7 REBOUNDS), A. FREEMAN 16 (8 REBOUNDS, 8 ASSISTS), GARY 7, MALLOW 13, C. FREEMAN 10, SHARKEY 11 (12 REBOUNDS), WELDON 10, EDWARDS 6. FG: 32-61, 3FG: 4-9, FT: 11-17. 38 REBOUNDS, 21 TURNOVERS, 24 ASSISTS.

UNCW: TRICE 23 (7 REBOUNDS), GARRETT 15 (6 REBOUNDS), LEE 14 (5 ASSISTS), ANDREWS 5 (8 REBOUNDS), J. FREEMAN 9 (6 ASSISTS), WEAVER 7. FG: 27-56, 3FG: 5-11, FT: 14-24. 28 REBOUNDS, 19 TURNOVERS, 19 ASSISTS.

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Photo Courtesy: Kelsey Sharkey, ASU Athletics