

Mountaineers Surge Past North Greenville

Written by Ryan Bower

Thursday, 05 December 2013 10:07

Appalachian State University men's basketball erased a 10-point second-half deficit with a 26-6 run and held on to defeat pesky North Greenville, 78-70, on Wednesday night at the Holmes Center.

Appalachian State (2-5) made just 11-of-35 shots in the first half and was in jeopardy of being upset when North Greenville (6-2) extended a six-point halftime lead to 47-37 with 16:34 to go in the ballgame. However, spurred by 15 points from Mike Neal, Appalachian scored 26 of the game's next 32 points to take a 63-53 advantage with 8:19 left to play.

North Greenville pulled within a point on Micah Parker's layup with five minutes to go but Parker picked a costly technical foul immediately after the bucket. NGU's second technical of the game sparked a 5-0 run by the Mountaineers and the Crusaders never drew closer than four points the rest of the way.

The Crusaders showed early on that they would challenge the Mountaineers for the majority of the night as they erased a 10-point Appalachian lead (19-9) with an 11-2 run that cut the deficit to one point (21-20) with 10:06 left in the first half.

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North Greenville would ride the wave of momentum to a 43-37 halftime lead thanks in large part to its accuracy from the floor. The Crusaders shot 53.1 percent (17-of-32) from the floor in the first half, including an 8-of-14 mark from beyond the arc.

Fortunately for the Mountaineers, they would hold North Greenville to just 32.3 percent (10-of-31) in the second half. The Crusaders shot just 10.0 percent (1-of-10) from long range over the final 20 minutes of the game as Appalachian rallied for the win.

Coming off the bench, Neal led the second-half surge by scoring 21 of his career-best 27 points after the break. The junior shot 9-of-17 from the field (7-of-11 in the second half) to pace the Mountaineers, who only made 36.4 percent of their shots as a team (24-of-66).

Michael Obacha also had a career night for Appalachian State with 11 points and 16 rebounds. The 16 rebounds were a career high for the sophomore while the double-double was his first of the season and second of his career.

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Tevin Baskin rounded out three Mountaineers in double-figures with 19 points, thanks in large part to a perfect 9-for-9 night at the free-throw line.

Chris Dean (19), Parker (16) and Thomas Horn (13) led three Crusaders with double-digit points while Keith Johnson ripped down a team-best eight rebounds.

Appalachian State out-rebounded North Greenville, 47-37, and turned the ball over only seven times, compared to 15 turnovers for NGU.

The Mountaineers return to action on Sunday with their most anticipated non-conference home matchup of the season versus local rival Charlotte. Game time is set for 2 p.m. at the Holmes Center.

NOTES: The Mountaineers improved to 3-0 all-time against North Greenville... Appalachian is now 122-57 at the Holmes Center since the building opened in 2000... Obacha's 16 rebounds were the most for a Mountaineer since Isaac Butts grabbed 16 against Chattanooga on Feb. 15, 2012... of Obacha's 59 rebounds this season, 32 have come on the offensive glass... Frank Eaves pulled down a career-high seven rebounds and tied a career-high with three assists.

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ASU 78, NORTH GREENVILLE 70

Score by periods 1st 2nd Total

North Greenville 43 27 - 70

Appalachian State 37 41 - 78

NORTH GREENVILLE: BROWN 4, PARKER 16 (7 REBOUNDS), GEORGE 5, JOHNSON 9 (8 REBOUNDS), DEAN 19 (7 REBOUNDS), HORN 13, COUVILLION 2, BLYDEN 2. FG: 27-63, 3FG: 9-24, FT: 7-8. 37 REBOUNDS, 9 ASSISTS, 15 TURNOVERS.

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ASU: BASKIN 19 (6 REBOUNDS), OBACHA 11 (16 REBOUNDS), HAMILTON 3, BURGESS 3 (4 ASSISTS), EAVES 7 (7 REBOUNDS), NEAL 27, TONEY 8. FG: 24-66, 3FG: 5-24, FT: 25-36. 47 REBOUNDS, 12 ASSISTS, 7 TURNOVERS.

Photo Courtesy: Mike Neal, ASU Athletics