

ASU Comes Up Short at Winthrop

Written by Ryan Bower

Monday, 16 December 2013 09:32

Appalachian State University men's basketball nearly finished off its biggest comeback in over a decade, but was unable to overcome a 19-point first-half deficit in an 80-72 loss to Winthrop on Sunday at Winthrop Coliseum.

Despite a slow start that saw the Mountaineers (2-7) fall behind by double digits just five minutes into the contest, Appalachian clawed its way back and used a 22-8 run to cut the Eagles' (6-2) lead to just five points (41-36) at the break.

After seeing its lead cut to just three points twice in the opening two minutes of the final period, Winthrop was able to regain its footing and pushed its lead to nine points (57-48) with 12:38 left in the contest. The Eagles' lead would hover between seven and nine points for the next four-plus minutes before Appalachian nearly erased the deficit.

After Ty Toney (Alpharetta, Ga./Alpharetta) sliced through the lane and connected on a twisting, acrobatic layup to make it 66-63, Chris Burgess (Lakeland, Fla./George Jenkins) nailed a pair of free throws to make it 66-65 with 5:18 to go. Winthrop pushed the lead back to four points with less than five minutes to play, but a layup from Tevin Baskin (Stamford, Conn./Chipola College) and a pair of free throws by Toney helped to once again make it a one-point game (70-69) with just over three minutes to play.

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It would be all the closer the Mountaineers would get, however, as Jerome Joab's three pointer on the next possession gave the Eagles a three-point cushion and Winthrop got several key stops while converting crucial free throws down the stretch en route to the victory.

Tab Hamilton (Winston-Salem, N.C./Fishburne Military) led the Apps with 20 points on 7-of-16 shooting and tied a career-high with six three-point field goals. Burgess poured in 15 points and dished out a game-high five assists while Baskin added 12 points and seven rebounds. Michael Obacha (Edo State, Nigeria/High Point Christian) led all players with 13 boards while scoring eight points.

Joab paced the Eagles with 20 points and tied for the team lead with five rebounds while Keon Johnson (15) and Keon Moore (11) also scored in double figures. Winthrop connected on 44.2 percent (23-of-52) of its shots while the Mountaineers shot 42.1 percent (24-of-57) from the floor. The Eagles finished with a 27-of-40 mark at the charity stripe and shot 17 more free throws than Appalachian, which was 17-of-23.

The Mountaineers return to action on Wednesday when they travel to Presbyterian for a 7 p.m. game and return home to take on Milligan at 2 p.m. on Saturday.

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NOTES: Appalachian dropped to 5-2 all-time against Winthrop... Obacha's 13 rebounds marked the third time this year that he has pulled down double-digit boards... Aaron Scott (Columbia, S.C./Richland Northeast) saw his first action of the season, playing three minutes... had Appalachian State completed the 19-point comeback, it would have been the team's largest comeback since erasing a 20-point deficit in an 83-76 win at James Madison on Dec. 30, 2002... Toney tied a career-high with eight points.

WINTHROP 80. APPALACHIAN STATE 72

Score by periods 1st 2nd Total

Appalachian State 36 36 - 72

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Winthrop 41 39 - 80

ASU: BASKIN 12 (7 REBOUNDS), OBACHA 8 (13 REBOUNDS), HAMILTON 20, BURGESS 15 (5 ASSISTS), NEAL 2, KOBANI 2, SPAGNOLO 4, EAVES 1, TONEY 8. FG: 24-57, 3FG: 7-18, FT: 17-23. 40 REBOUNDS, 10 ASSISTS, 15 TURNOVERS.

WINTHROP: JEROME 20, BOURNE 3, BROWN 8, JOHNSON 15, SMITH 8 (4 ASSISTS), FARMER 5, MOORE 11, DAVENPORT 4, SCOTT 2. FG: 23-52, 3FG: 7-18, FT: 27-40. 31 REBOUNDS, 10 ASSISTS, 9 TURNOVERS.

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Photo Courtesy: Tab Hamilton, ASU Athletics