

Mountaineers Ground Eagles, 81-68

Written by Ryan Bower

Saturday, 18 January 2014 20:24

Tommy Spagnolo recorded his first career double-double and Appalachian State University men's basketball saw five players score in double digits in an 81-68 win over Southern Conference rival Georgia

Southern on Saturday at the Holmes Center.

The Mountaineers (5-13, 1-4 SoCon) picked up their seventh-straight home win over the Eagles (9-10, 2-2) and snapped a five-game losing streak in the process.

After falling behind by as many as three points on two occasions in the opening 10 minutes, Appalachian reeled off a 10-1 run over a six-minute stretch to grab a 21-15 lead at the 5:30 mark and en route to its most impressive win of the season.

Georgia Southern was able to trim the deficit to just two points (23-21) with 3:51 to go in the opening period, but the Mountaineers outscored the Eagles 11-5 to close out the half and headed to the locker room with a 34-26 lead.

The Eagles opened the second half in impressive fashion with a 14-4 run to erase the halftime

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deficit and grab a 40-38 lead five minutes into the final period of play, but the lead was short-lived as the Apps jumped back in front (41-40) on Ty Toney's three pointer with 14:23 to play.

GSU tied the game 44-44 on a pair of free throws from Sam Mike one minute later and trailed by just two points (52-50) with just under 10 minutes to play, but Appalachian put its foot on the gas and the Mountaineers reeled off an 18-2 run to take an 18-point lead (70-52) and put the game out of reach.

Spagnolo set career highs with 12 points and 16 rebounds while Toney surpassed his previous career high with 11 points. Michael Obacha scored 14 points and snagged eight boards while Tab Hamilton and Chris Burgess poured in 17 and 15 points, respectively.

Brian Holmes paced Georgia Southern with 21 points and Jelani Hewitt scored 19, but the Eagles got just three points from Tre Bussey, who entered the contest averaging 18.6 points per game,

The Mountaineers shot 48.2 percent (27-of-56) from the floor, including 10-of-20 from long range, while holding the Georgia Southern to just 37.5 percent (18-of-48). The Apps grabbed 43 rebounds to GSU's 34 and dished out 21 assists while forcing 16 turnovers.

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Appalachian junior Jay Canty did not play after injuring his right hand in practice on Friday and is out indefinitely.

Appalachian State hits the road when it travels to Charleston, S.C. to take on The Citadel on Thursday at 7 p.m. at McAlister Field House.

NOTES: The Mountaineers improved to 25-17 all-time against Georgia Southern... Appalachian moved to 13-6 at home against the Eagles... Saturday's game was the final meeting between the teams as members of the Southern Conference... both will join the Sun Belt Conference next season... the Apps outscored the Eagles 30-14 in the paint... the Apps shot 58.3 percent (14-of-24) in the second half including a 6-of-9 mark from beyond the arc.

APPALACHIAN STATE 81, GEORGIA SOUTHERN 68

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SCORE BY PERIODS 1ST 2ND TOTAL

GEORGIA SOUTHERN 26 42 - 68

APPALACHIAN STATE 34 47 - 81

Ga.SO: BAYHAM 3, MATIAS 6, HEWITT 19, BUSSEY 3, HOLMES 21, MIKE 3, DIAMOND 7, DOYLE 6. FG: 18-48, 3FG: 11-25, FT: 21-35. 34 REBOUNDS, 8 ASSISTS, 16 TURNOVERS.

ASU: OBACHA 14 (8 REBOUNDS), SPAGNOLO 12 (16 REBOUNDS), HAMILTON 17 (5 ASSISTS), BURGESS 15, NEAL 3 (5 ASSISTS), KOBANI 9 (7 REBOUNDS), TONEY 11. FG: 27-56, 3FG: 10-20, FT: 17-28. 43 REBOUNDS, 21 ASSISTS, 13 TURNOVERS.

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Photo Courtesy: Tommy Spagnolo, ASU Athletics