

## Mountaineers Hang On To Beat Samford

Written by Ryan Bower

Thursday, 13 February 2014 20:35

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A late 12-0 run put Appalachian State men's basketball up by eight points late in the contest and the Mountaineers hung on for a 74-68 win over visiting Southern Conference foe Samford on Thursday at the Holmes Center.

Appalachian (8-16, 4-7 SoCon) topped the Bulldogs (11-16, 5-7) for the second-straight time as four Mountaineers scored in double figures.

Facing a four-point deficit (60-56) with just over five minutes to play, App State found its footing and reeled off a 12-0 run over the next three-plus minutes to take a 68-60 lead with 1:12 to play.

Tommy Spagnolo, who notched his fifth double-double in the past seven games, got things started on a layup that made it 60-58 with 5:13 to play before Ty Toney hit a layup just 23 seconds later to tie the contest at 60-60.

The run was capped off by another Spagnolo layup and pair of free throws from Toney with 1:26 left to give the Mountaineers a 68-60 lead. Samford would not go away quietly, however, as it

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cut the deficit to just three points (70-67) with 19 seconds to play but the Apps connected on each of their final four free throws in the waning moments to hang on for the win.

Appalachian got off to a quick start in the first half as it raced out to a nine-point lead (11-2) and forced a Bulldog timeout with 16:23 to go in the opening period, but Samford regained its composure and ripped off an 11-0 run to grab its first lead of the game (13-11) with 13:25 left.

After the Mountaineers bounced back to grab a five-point advantage (22-17) with just under nine minutes to go, Samford would outscore Appalachian 17-8 the rest of the way to take a 34-30 lead into the locker room.

The Bulldogs pushed the lead to six points on their opening possession of the second half and led by four points twice in the final six-plus minutes, but could not overcome the late surge by Appalachian State as it fell to 2-13 on the road this season.

Spagnolo led all scorers with 20 points while grabbing 10 rebounds and picking up three blocks. Tab Hamilton poured in 18 and dished out four assists while Toney scored 14 and was a perfect 8-of-8 from the charity stripe.

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Chris Burgess also provided the Mountaineers with solid offense as he scored 14 and dished out a game-high five assists. Michael Obacha pulled down a game-high 12 rebounds for his 10th double-digit rebound performance of the season.

Samford was led by a team-high 13 points from Isaiah Williams while Tim Williams scored 12 and Connor Miller and Rajon Kelly each had 10. Kelly also led the Bulldogs with a team-high seven rebounds and dished out four assists.

Appalachian connected on 50.0 percent (24-of-48) from the floor, including a blistering 71.4 percent (15-of-21) in the second half, but finished just 21-of-37 (56.8 percent) from the foul line.

Samford shot a respectable 47.4 percent (27-of-57) but was outrebounded 39-28 and turned the ball over 11 times.

The Mountaineers return to action when they host Wofford at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday as part of a basketball doubleheader. Both the Appalachian State men's and women's games on Saturday can be seen live on ESPN3.

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**NOTES:** The Mountaineers improved to 7-4 all-time against Samford including a 4-2 record at home... Appalachian's second-half shooting percentage (71.4) was its highest single-half shooting percentage since it connected on 77.8 percent (21-of-27) in the first half of a 111-83 win over Georgia Southern on Feb. 13, 2010... Jay Canty returned to the floor after missing the past six games due to a broken right hand and played three minutes... Thursday's game, which was originally scheduled to begin at 7 p.m., was changed to a 4 p.m. start time due to inclement weather... it was the first Appalachian basketball game to be altered due to weather since Feb. 6, 2010 when a road game at Western Carolina was moved from 7 p.m. to 3 p.m.

**APPALACHIAN STATE 74, SAMFORD 68**

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### SCORE BY PERIODS      1ST   2ND   TOTAL

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY   34   34 - 68

APPALACHIAN STATE   30   44 - 74

**SAMFORD:** T. WILLIAMS 12, HOOD 7, I. WILLIAMS 13, MILLER 10, CAPPS 8, ROBERTS 2, WILSON 4, KELLY 10 (7 REBOUNDS), BRADLEY 2. FG: 27-57, 3FG: 4-15, FT: 0-15. 28 REBOUNDS, 10 ASSISTS, 11 TURNOVERS.

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**ASU:** OBACHA 2 (12 REBOUNDS), SPAGNOLO 20 (10 REBOUNDS), HAMILTON 18 (4 ASSISTS), BURGESS 14 (5 ASSISTS), NEAL 5, EAVES 1, TONEY 14, FG: 24-48, 3FG: 5-12, FT: 21-37. 39 REBOUNDS, 13 ASSISTS, 13 TURNOVERS.

**Photo Courtesy: Tommy Spagnolo, ASU Athletics**