

## Furman Shoots Past Appalachian

Written by Ryan Bower

Saturday, 22 February 2014 17:07

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Furman scored on its opening possession and never trailed as Appalachian State University men's basketball suffered its third-straight loss by a 68-53 final in Southern Conference action on Saturday at Timmons Arena.

The Mountaineers (8-19, 4-10) shot just 25.0 percent (8-of-32) in the first half as the Paladins (9-18, 3-11) snapped a four-game losing streak to Appalachian in the final league tilt between the two teams.

Furman jumped out to an early 4-0 lead as it held the Mountaineers scoreless until the 16:45 mark of the first half and led by as many as seven points (12-5) in the first 10 minutes of play. Appalachian was able to reel off a 9-2 run to tie the score at 14-14 with 8:27 - the run began with a Chris Burgess three pointer at the 11:57 mark and ended on Tommy Spagnolo's layup three and a half minutes later.

The Paladins responded with seven-straight points to jump back in front 21-14 with just under five minutes to play and headed into the locker room with a 25-21 lead as it outscored Appalachian 11-7 over the final eight minutes of the opening half.

The momentum would carry over into the opening part of the second half for Furman, which scored the first four points of the half to take a 29-21 lead and force an Appalachian timeout.

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App State would pull within four points (29-25) after Spagnolo hit a free throw and Tab Hamilton drilled a three with 16:45 to go - but the Paladins responded with a 7-0 run over the next two minutes to push the lead to 11 points (36-25) with 15:10 to play.

After seeing the deficit balloon to 13 points (41-28), the Mountaineers would score nine of the next 11 points to cut Furman's lead to 43-37, but Keith Belfield answered from long range and connected on a pair of free throws to put the Paladins up by nine points (48-39) with 9:33 to play.

Appalachian would never really challenge from there as Furman never led by less than seven points the rest of the way and pushed the lead to as many as 18 points in the final minute to pick up just its third win in its last 14 games.

Spagnolo led all scorers with 16 points and tied Michael Obacha with a game-high 11 rebounds while Hamilton added 12 points and Jay Canty poured in 10 and grabbed six rebounds.

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Belfield and Stephen Croone paced Furman with 15 points each while William Gates scored 13 and Charlie Reddick ripped down 11 rebounds. In addition to his 15 points, Croone also dished out six assists and tallied three steals.

As a team, Appalachian shot just 31.1 percent (19-of-61) while the Paladins connected at a clip of 50.0 percent (25-of-50). The Mountaineers pulled down 45 rebounds while limiting Furman to 31, but scored just 12 second-chance points on 21 offensive rebounds.

The Mountaineers return to action at 8 p.m. on Thursday when they travel to Samford before closing the regular season out at Chattanooga on March 2.

**NOTES:** Appalachian State fell to 39-45 all-time against Furman including a 10-27 mark when playing the Paladins in Greenville... the Mountaineers' first-half shooting percentage of 25.0 percent (8-of-32) was its lowest in a league game this season... Spagnolo's double-double was his seventh in the last 10 games... Obacha pulled down nine of his rebounds in the first half... Appalachian's 19 losses are the most since the 2003-04 campaign when the Mountaineers went 9-21... the 53 points for App State were the fewest it had scored against Furman since a 53-45 loss on Jan. 26, 1983.

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### FURMAN 68, APPALACHIAN STATE 53

#### SCORE BY PERIODS 1ST 2ND TOTAL

APPALACHIAN STATE 21 32 - 53

FURMAN UNIVERSITY 25 43 - 68

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**ASU:** SPAGNOLO 16 (11 REBOUNDS), HAMILTON 13, BURGESS 3, TONEY 5, GILBERT 7, CANTY 10 (6 REBOUNDS). FG: 19=61, 3FG: 3-14, FT: 12-21. 45 REBOUNDS, 5 ASSISTS, 15 TURNOVERS.

**FURMAN:** RWABIGWI 6, FERRARA 4, CROONE 15, GATES 13, WIDEMAN 8, REDDICK 7 (11 REBOUNDS), BELFIELD 15. FG: 25-50, 3FG: 4-17, FT: 14-22. 31 REBOUNDS, 13 ASSISTS, 13 TURNOVERS.

**Photo Courtesy: Tab Hamilton, ASU Athletics**