

Peterson wins ASU debut

Written by Mike Kelly
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The Buzz Peterson era (part two) at Appalachian State got off to a good start Friday night at the Holmes Center.

And the Mountaineers (1-0) also avenged a gut-wrenching, overtime loss to UNC-Wilmington last season. This time around, the Mountaineers, led by Kellen Brand and Donald Sims, built a 19-point lead and beat the Seahawks, 79-68.

"Last year's game was on my mind coming in," said Sims, who made some huge free-throws down the stretch. "We owed these guys after last year. It was a physical game, but we beat a good team from the Colonial (Athletic Conference) in Wilmington. They made it close down the stretch, but we finally put it away."

And the Mountaineers did it with a strong effort at the foul line. The Apps were 33-42 at the line. Brand, who finished with 20 points, was 14-14 at the foul line. Sims, who had 18, was 9-10 at the charity stripe. And Brand, who came in averaging 20 points a game in season openers, now has 999 career points. He will certainly crack the 1,000-point-barrier at East Tennessee State Saturday.

"It's special," he said. "I thank God and I thank my teammates. They have found a way to get me the ball in the right places."

ASU was coasting along at 58-39 with less than eight minutes to go before UNCW (0-1) went on an 18-5 run and got within four points at 72-68 with 32 seconds left. Sims and Brand put it away down the stretch making five of six free throws.

"It got a little close down the stretch," Peterson said. "But we finished strong and won the game. It's good to get that first one. It was a physical game, but we kept our composure, especially in the second half."

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John Fields, who led the Seahawks with 21 points and seven boards, was ejected with three seconds to go after he picked up an intentional foul that sent Brand sprawling across the floor. Isaac Butts, who fouled out with less than a minute to go, finished with 12 points and a team-high seven rebounds.

Andre Williamson had a career-high five blocked shots. ASU also shot 50% (22-44) from the floor. A crowd of 2,544 was in attendance for the season opener. The Apps hit the road Saturday for a game at East Tennessee State. The game can be heard on WASU 90.5 FM and goasu.com beginning at 3:30 pm.

NOTES: The ASU women won their season opener at Marshall, 63-58 Friday night Huntington, WV. The Mountaineers (1-0) were led by Sam Rameriz with 23 points and eight rebounds. Chakeitha Wilson had 14 points, seven boards and six assists; Catherine Williams had nine points, eight rebounds and four blocked shots.