



Rider 63, Hartford 54

First Round: March 19, 2013

HARTFORD (CT) -- Insurance is used to hedge against the risk of an uncertain loss.

Playing in the Insurance Capital of the World, the Rider Broncs used a strong defense and a strong second half to avoid a loss at Hartford Tuesday night.

"We earned it," said Rider head coach Kevin Baggett. "It wasn't pretty but we'll take it. We did a good job defending the three-point line. Hartford is very good at shooting the three. It wasn't a great game but a win is a win is a win."

Hartford came into the game averaging 7.8 three-pointers made per game, but made just two of 17 on Tuesday night.

Junior Anthony Myles (Dover, DE/Poly-Tech) tied his career high with 23 points to lead Rider to victory at Hartford in the first round of the Fifth Annual CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament.

"Tonight Anthony drove the ball, got to the free throw line and was just a good all-around player," Baggett said.

The postseason victory is the first for Rider since the Roughriders won twice in the 1957 NCAA Tournament. "It's not the NCAA tournament, which is where we want to be at this time of year in the years to come," Baggett said, "but we're certainly glad to be playing in the postseason and if we're going to be playing this time of year I want us to win."

Trailing 48-47, Rider (19-14, 12-6 MAAC) out-scored Hartford 10-2, four points each by Myles and junior Daniel Stewart (Philadelphia, PA/Neumann-Goretti), to take a 57-50 lead with 2:38 left to play. That was the ninth and final lead change of the game.

Stewart finished with 10 points and eight rebounds.

Rider made eight of eight foul shots in the final 2:38 to preserve the win, four by Myles. For the game, Rider was 15 of 20 from the foul line, as Myles was six for six.

Rider shot 61 percent from the field in the second half, as the Broncs out-scored Hartford 38-31 over the final 20 minutes. "It took us some time to get used to a lot of what Hartford was doing," Baggett said. "Hartford is very talented and did a good job of moving."

6'6" sophomore forward Mark Nwakamma, a First Team All-America East selection, compiled 17 points and five rebounds for Hartford. "He's a special player," Baggett said. "He's going to be really good."

The son of seven-time NBA all-star Jack Sikma, Hartford sophomore forward Nate Sikma compiled 15 points and five rebounds.

The Broncs scored the first five points of the second half, three by Myles, to take a 30-23 lead.

Hartford (17-14, 10-6 America East) then went on an 8-0 run, four points by Nwakamma, to take a 31-30 lead with 15:45 remaining.

Trailing 21-18, Rider out-scored Hartford 7-2 over the final 2:50 of the first half, five points by Myles, to take a 25-23 lead at halftime.

Hartford went on a 6-0 run, four points by Sikma, to take an 18-14 lead with 6:21 left in the first half.

Rider senior Jonathon Thompson (Orlando, Fla./Jones) added 16 points, four assists, three steals and four rebounds, making seven of nine shots from the field.

This was Hartford's first postseason appearance since making the jump to Division I for the 1984-85 season.

Hartford boasts one of the youngest rosters in the nation with six sophomores and four freshmen.

This is Rider's fourth postseason tournament in the last six years. In 2011 Rider played Northern Iowa in the CIT. In 2009 the Broncs played Liberty in the CIT. In 2008 Rider played Old Dominion in the CBI.

Rider will find out its second round opponent on Wednesday. "Regardless of who we are playing we just have to keep getting better," Baggett said.

The CIT Second Round games are March 22-24, Quarterfinals March 26-27, Semifinals March 29-30 and the Championship Game is April 2.

"We want to enjoy this win and keep playing for one another," Baggett said, "and see where this thing takes us."