



East Carolina 81, Evansville 58

Semifinals: March 30, 2013

GREENVILLE, N.C. --- East Carolina had been to Division I postseason play four times prior to 2013 and never won a game.

The Pirates evened up its postseason ledger and earned their fourth straight win Saturday night with an 81-58 victory over Evansville in the CIT semifinals to advance to the championship game.

ECU will travel to Ogden, Utah to play Weber State Tuesday night in the title game. The CBS Sports Network will televise the game at 8 p.m. ET.

The Pirates (23-12) had three players post a double-double led by senior Maurice Kemp, who scored 20 points for the eighth-consecutive game. Kemp finished with 20 points and 11 rebounds, Robert Sampson added 13 and 11, while Miguel Paul scored 19 points and handed out 11 assists. Ty Armstrong also scored double figures, netting 17 points.

Paul distributed his 228, 229 and 230th assists of his career to break Brock Young's ECU single-season record of 227.

"That's maybe the best we've played all year. We played terrific tonight. We had a lot of energy. Defensively we were alert, and did a great job at all spots.

Colt Ryan, who ranked 13th in the nation in scoring with 20.4 points per game, was limited to just 12 points by the ECU defense. Ryan was just 3 of 10 from the floor, including 0 for 4 behind the arc.

"We made it really tough on Ryan tonight," Lebo said. "Paris (Roberts-Campbell) was terrific. I thought he was outstanding, and he was exhausted at the end of the game. Two times during the game he gave me a tired signal from having to defend him."

Paul ignited the sell-out crowd by drilling a 3 to open the game as the Pirates scored eight of the game's first 10 points.

The Purple Aces (21-15) pulled within one at 9-8 and then East Carolina flexed its muscle. The Pirates went on a 22-7 run over a 7:19 stretch to take a 16-point lead, 31-15.

Sampson started the run with a dunk then Kemp scored six straight points forcing UE to call timeout. Paul nailed back-to-back 3s out of the timeout before capping the run with a pair of free throws.

The Pirates limited Evansville to 25.6 percent shooting in the opening half, while connecting on 50 percent of their field goal attempts en route to a 40-26 halftime lead.

The lead grew to 20 inside the first three minutes of the second half and then ballooned to 25 on a dunk worthy of ESPN SportsCenter's Top Plays by Kemp, who threw down over 6-foot-10 Egidijus Mockevicius, sending Pirate fans into a frenzy and Twitter a buzz.

Evansville made a run to get within 16 with 5:41 left, but the Pirates scored nine unanswered to thwart any comeback the Aces may have had in mind.

ECU finished the game shooting 55.4 percent from the floor, its second-best shooting percentage of the season, while holding the Aces to just 31.8 percent.

While its 3-point attempts weren't falling, the Pirates used their size and strength to score 48 points in the paint along with their speed and quickness to convert nine UE turnovers into 20 points.