



## **Texas A&M Corpus Christi 82, Northern Colorado 71**

**First Round: Wednesday March 19, 2014**

GREELEY, Colo. – Rashawn Thomas (22 points) led five players in double figures, as the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi men's basketball team defeated Northern Colorado, 82-71, at the Butler-Hancock Sports Pavilion in the opening round of the College Insider Tournament on Wednesday. It marks the first postseason tournament win in school history for the Islanders (18-15).

John Jordan (16 points, six rebounds, six assists) had a strong all-around game, while Jeff Beverly and Jake Kocher each scored 12 points in the victory. Hameed Ali added 10 points and four assists, while Zane Knowles snared 10 rebounds. The Islanders went 17-for-20 from the free-throw line in the win.

Derrick Barden led the way for Northern Colorado (18-14), scoring 18 points to go with seven rebounds and three steals. Tate Unruh (15 points), Tevin Svihovec (13) and Dominique Lee (11) also finished in double figures. Svihovec added seven assists for the Bears.

Early on, the Bears scored the first four points, but A&M-Corpus Christi got hot from distance, hitting its first three triples of the game – two from Jeff Beverly and one from John Jordan – to put up a 9-0 run and garner a 9-4 lead. The Islanders continued to push ahead, and got the lead all the way to 17-8 on a nice baseline drive for Thomas that resulted in two underneath.

Northern Colorado came right back, though, embarking on an 8-0 run to cut the lead to just one, 17-16. From there, the two teams traded points to a 22-22 score, and a baseline drive and dunk by Barden put the Bears back ahead 24-22. UNC pushed it to 27-24 on a Barden three, but the Islanders went on a 12-4 run, capped off by a Kocher three-ball, to pull ahead 36-31. Northern Colorado was able to convert the final two baskets of the half, entering the locker room down just one, 36-35.

Out of the locker room, neither team was particularly sharp on the offensive side, with the Bears able to pull ahead on a Svihovec three that made it 40-38. UNC pushed its lead to four on a pair of free throws by Jordan Wilson that made it 45-41, matching the Bears' biggest lead of the game.

The Islanders were able to chip away, with the Bears holding a 51-48 advantage a few minutes later. But A&M-Corpus

Christi embarked on a 9-0 run to regain the lead, 57-51. Jelani Currie was a key catalyst of the rally, turning up his effort on the defensive end and contributing four points at the line. Kocher added a big three during the run.

A thunderous putback dunk for Barden cut the lead back to four, but Thomas stepped up his game to a new level at that point, contributing on both the defensive and offensive end, capping off a strong rally with two free throws that pushed the lead to double digits for the first time, 67-57. A Beverly three and a Jordan floater countered a pair of free throws for the Bears, pushing the lead all the way to 12.

Northern Colorado turned up the defensive pressure in the closing minutes, getting the lead down to as little as nine, but the Islanders were able to get defensive stops in key spots and hit their free throws down the stretch to preserve the victory. Thomas capped off the night with a dunk to make it an 11-point victory.