



HIGH POINT 70, UMES 64

First Round, Wednesday March 18, 2015

HIGH POINT, N.C. – In a season filled with firsts, the High Point University men's basketball team (23-9) added yet another unparalleled accomplishment to its resume by picking up the program's first ever Division I postseason win Wednesday inside the Millis Center.

HPU defeated Maryland Eastern Shore, 70-64, in the opening round of the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament. The victory sends High Point to the CIT Second Round where the Panthers will match up with Eastern Kentucky on Friday (March 20) at 7 p.m. in Richmond, Ky.

With the victory, HPU sets a new Div. I top mark for wins in a season. The 23 victories are the eighth most in the program's 87-year history.

The Panthers trailed by as many as 15 (24-9) midway through the first half, but used a 45-22 run over the next 25 minutes of basketball to build a 10-point lead (56-46) with three minutes to play in the game.

"I'm very thankful for everyone that came out and supported us tonight," head coach Scott Cherry said. "I'm really proud of our effort. We got down big in the first half but battled back and played well for the rest of the game. Our guys have accomplished so many program firsts this season. We're excited to still be playing."

The Panthers shot 40.8 percent (20-49) in the game while the Hawks made 25-of-58 (.431) attempts. But the Panthers forced 18 UMES turnovers and used a strong inside game to get to the line and earn a +18 (26-8) edge in made free throws. HPU converted 81.3 percent of its attempts from the charity stripe and is now 17-3 when the team shoots 70 percent or better from the line.

Redshirt-junior John Brown continued his extraordinary 2014-15 campaign with a game-high 22 points against the Hawks. Brown made 11-of-12 free throw attempts and grabbed seven boards in 30 minutes of work. With his 15th point, Brown moved past Danny Witt (1966-70) and into sixth place on HPU's all-time scoring list.

Senior guard Devante Wallace added 19 points (3-5 3pt FG) and grabbed five rebounds in the game, while junior forward Lorenzo Cugini chipped in 10 points and a game-high nine rebounds.

The Hawks raced out to a 9-0 lead and held a 19-4 advantage at the 13:12 mark of the first half. HPU missed its first eight shots, before catching fire on the strength of three triples from Wallace. With UMES ahead 24-9, Wallace fueled a 7-0 HPU run that moved the Panthers within eight (24-16) at the 8:14 mark of the first half.

UMES pushed the lead back to 10 (30-20), but HPU used some great ball movement to generate a series of lay-ups down the stretch of the half. The result was an 11-2 run to close the half that moved High Point within one (32-31) at the break.

HPU shot 41.8 percent in the half while UMES made 13-of-29 (.448) attempts. Wallace led the Panthers with 11 first half points.

UMES built its lead back to five (40-35) at the 15:49 mark of the second half, but HPU raced back with a 7-0 run – capped by a Wallace jumper – that gave the Panthers their first lead of the game (42-40) with 12:07 to play.

The Hawks tied the score at 45-45 with 7:57 remaining, but from there, the Panthers used an 11-1 run to build a 10-point lead (56-46) and UMES could not move closer than four for the remainder of the game.

After erasing the 15-point first half deficit, High Point has now rallied from 15 or more down three times this season. HPU improves to 12-2 at home in 2014-15.