



**NJIT 78, CANISIUS 73**

**Quarterfinals: March 28, 2015**

NEWARK, NJ -- Sophomore forward Tim Coleman and sophomore guard Damon Lynn each scored 22 points, leading NJIT to a 78-73 victory over visiting Canisius in the quarterfinals of the College Insider.com Tournament (CIT) Saturday night at the Fleisher Athletic Center.

With the win, the Highlanders (21-11) advance to the CIT semifinals, where they will face Northern Arizona on Tuesday night in Flagstaff. Northern Arizona (21-14) earned its berth in the semifinals with a 74-73 overtime victory at home against Kent State on Friday night.

With Saturday night's loss at NJIT, Canisius completes its season with an 18-15 record.

NJIT's Coleman made some huge plays down the stretch, including a steal and subsequent layup that gave the Highlanders a seven-point lead late.

Lynn, the season's leading scorer for NJIT coming in (17.4 ppg), recovered from a subpar shooting performance (4-of-18 overall, 3-of-15 from 3-point range) to still make big shots and free throws in the second half, helping the Highlanders gain the victory. Lynn connected on 11-of-13 free throws, including 9-of-11 after halftime.

Besides Coleman and Lynn, the Highlanders got 14 points from junior guard Winfield Willis. Coleman also grabbed 11 rebounds and had four steals for the winners.

Canisius received 16 points from Kevin Bleeker and 13 from Kassius Robertson. Zach Lewis added 11 and Jeremiah Williams 10 for the Golden Griffins.

The Highlanders had the better part of the early going, jumping out to a 17-9 lead, thanks to seven points from Coleman.

But the Golden Griffins slowly crept back into the game, aggressively attacking the basket. Canisius scored six straight points, four on drives from Robertson and Lewis and two free throws from Jamal

Reynolds. It capped a 14-4 run and enabled Canisius to take the lead at 23-21 with 6:35 left in the opening half.

The Griffins held the lead for the remainder of the half, scoring down low on consecutive trips by Adam Weir and Reynolds and pushing their lead to 31-26 with 1:46 remaining.

Canisius held a 35-31 lead at the break.

Eight of the nine Golden Griffins who saw action in the first half scored at least two points, with Bleeker's eight points leading the way. Willis had eight and Coleman seven at halftime to pace the Highlanders.

Canisius was awarded a two-shot administrative technical foul to start the second half and Lewis made both free throws. On the first possession, Josiah Heath made a steal at midcourt and steamrolled toward the basket, throwing down a thunderous dunk, giving the Golden Griffins a 39-31 lead just seconds into the second half.

But the Highlanders, using the 3-ball, came back to tie the game at 42-42 on the second of two consecutive 3-pointers by Coleman with 16:50 on the second-half clock.

The Highlanders actually took a 48-46 lead on a 3-pointer from junior guard Ky Howard, but then the Golden Griffins went on a 9-0 run to take seeming command of the game. Five of the points came from reserve forward Jermaine Crumpton, who drained a 3-pointer from beyond the top of the key, then scored on a power move to make the score 53-48 at the 11:39 mark.

Williams made a steal and drove the length of the floor for the layup that gave Canisius a commanding 55-48 lead with 11:45 remaining in regulation.

But the undaunted Highlanders came storming back to score the next six points and draw within 55-54 with 7:45 remaining. Senior forward Daquan Holiday had a reverse layup down low, Howard had a rebound basket and Coleman had a driving bucket that brought NJIT to within one once again.

The Highlanders then outscored the Griffins, 12-5, to take a 66-62 lead with 3:09 remaining. Coleman had a steal and layup to give the Highlanders their biggest lead since the first half.

After Lynn made one free throw, Holiday had a power move down low with 1:40 left to give the Highlanders a 69-62 lead.

The Highlanders then held off the Golden Griffins to secure the huge victory.