



EVANSVILLE 89, UL-LAFAYETTE 82

Quarterfinals: March 26, 2015

LAFAYETTE, La. – Purple Aces junior D.J. Balentine scored 22+ points for the third game in a row as the University of Evansville men's basketball team defeated Louisiana by an 89-82 final at Blackham Coliseum on Thursday evening.

With the win, the Purple Aces (22-12) advance to the semifinals of the CIT and will play at the Ford Center on Tuesday against UT Martin.

Balentine led all scorers with his second 35-point game in the last three outings. He was 11-18 from the field and 4-7 from outside. He was one of four players to record double figures. Jaylon Moore tallied 12 while Adam Wing had 12 and Mislav Brzoja posted 10 points and a team-best nine rebounds.

"This is a great team effort, this is what it's all about," UE head coach Marty Simmons said. "Jaylon Moore gave us a great game from start to finish, but we had great play from everyone in the game."

A quick start from outside for the Purple Aces saw them take a 6-5 lead in the opening minutes of the game. After UL scored the first points, D.J. Balentine got UE on the board with a triple before Adam Wing hit the second one less than a minute later.

With Louisiana up 9-8, the Aces made their first run of the game, scoring seven in a row to go up 15-9. A Mislav Brzoja layup spearheaded the run while a pair of Duane Gibson free throws capped it off. In the middle was Balentine's second trey of the day.

Evansville continued to lead at 18-13 before the Ragin Cajuns made their first big run of the game. A 14-8 run saw them go back on top by a 27-26 score with 9 minutes left in the period. Devonta Walker registered three points in the run while Steven Wronkoski posted a trey.

Over the final minutes of the half, the Aces withstood UL's efforts. With the Ragin Cajuns leading 32-31 with 5:12 remaining, UE outscored Louisiana by a 12-5 margin to head into the locker room up 44-37. Jaylon Moore finished the half with an old-fashioned 3-point play for the Aces.

Balentine posted a game-high 17 points in the opening stanza while Moore had the best half of his career, registering 10 points and three rebounds. He hit four of his six shots in the period. Balentine, who entered the game hitting 9 of his last 16 from outside, hit 3 out of 5 in the first half.

Out of the break, the game remained scoreless over the first two minutes before a Mockevicius free throw gave UE a 45-37 lead. Bryce Washington scored back-to-back baskets to get UL within four before Balentine ended the quick spurt with a driving layup and a pair of free throws to match the 8-point advantage.

With UE up 51-43, Louisiana shot its way right back into the game. The Aces missed four in a row while the Ragin Cajuns utilized a 7-0 run to get back within a point at 51-50 with 12:17 left. Balentine put a quick end to that rally with his fourth trey. Midway through the half, Brzoja took his turn from outside, knocking down the Aces' sixth three of the night to put UE up 59-51.

Just past the halfway point, Louisiana pushed its way back once again. A Jay Wright triple was the capper on a 6-0 stretch as UL cut the UE lead to 59-57. Evansville received four more Balentine tallies to go up 65-59 with 8 minute on the clock.

UE continued to lead and added to it, taking its largest lead of the game with 1:44 left as Adam Wing moved into double figures to put the Aces up 82-72. That was enough to clinch the 89-82 win.

Louisiana was led by Shawn Long, who had 24 points and 11 rebounds. Kasey Shepherd had 15 while Devonta Walker finished with 13.