



UMBC gets past Fairfield in first round
The Retrievers get their first-ever postseason win

BALTIMORE – UMBC won its first post-season NCAA Division I tournament game as the host Retrievers defeated Fairfield, 88-83, in the first round of the College Insider Tournament.

The victory was UMBC's 19th (19-12) of the season, tying the 1988-89 team for the third most victories in 30 seasons of Division I competition.

UMBC will learn of its second round opponent after the first round of games is completed on Thursday.

The Retrievers displayed great balance, as five players scored in double figures. Junior guard Jairus Lyles (Silver Spring, Md./DeMatha), who moved into third place with 572 points in a UMBC single season, led the way with 20 points and senior forward Will Darley (Timonium, Md./Dulaney) added 17 points.

Fairfield junior guard Tyler Nelson was brilliant, leading all scorers with 30 points, and he added 10 rebounds and seven assists as the Stags finished the campaign at 16-15.

The Stags erased a 46-41 deficit by opening the second half on a 16-7 run and taking a 57-53 lead at the 15:46 mark. The lead would change hands five more times until Retriever junior guard K.J. Maura (San Juan, Puerto Rico) sank a trey to put the hosts on top, 63-61, with 11:27 to play.

The key surge by UMBC occurred after Nelson buried a three to cut the gap to 65-64 with 9:49 remaining. Sophomore Sam Schwietz (Frisco, Texas) started t an 11-2 surge with a tip-in and Lyles capped it with back-to-back field goals.

Fairfield got to within 81-76 with 2:25 remaining and had two chances to make it a one-possession game, but missed a trey and committed a turnover. With 31 seconds left, Neison converted his sixth trey of the night to trim the gap to 84-81, but Maura sunk four consecutive free throws to seal the victory for the Retrievers.

Maura contributed 15 points and five assists, while reserves Jourdan Grant (Bowie, Md./Archbishop Spalding) and Arkel Lamar (Bridgeport, Conn.) added 10 apiece. Grant added a team-best six assists as UMBC recorded 24 assists on 31 field goals made.

UMBC stayed over 50 percent shooting from the field, hitting 31-of-61 attempts (50.8 percent) and sunk 12-of-29 treys and 14-of-16 free throws. It was the 14th time on the season that the Retrievers, the nation's 22nd-ranked team in treys made per game, hit 10 or more 3-point field goals.

Fairfield hit 45.8 percent from the floor (33-of-72) and sunk 13-of-39 attempts from behind the arc. Sophomore forward Matija Milin supported Nelson's effort with 20 points.

UMBC hit over 53 percent from the floor in the first half and buried 8-of-19 from behind the arc. They led for the great majority of the first twenty minutes, building a pair of eight-point bulges late in the period. But Nelson's trey with 1.5 seconds to play in the half trimmed the UMBC advantage to 46-41 at intermission.

The Retrievers, who outrebounded Fairfield, 37-35, improved to 14-1 when scoring 80 or more points and 13-0 when winning the battle of the boards.