



WASHINGTON – The University at Buffalo men's basketball team defeated American, 78-61, in the opening round of the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament at Bender Arena on Wednesday night. It was the Bulls' 20th win of the season, giving UB back-to-back 20-win seasons and four in the past eight years.

The Bulls had a lethal combination of inside and outside scoring. Javon McCrea and Mitchell Watt dominated the play inside, scoring 18 and 15 points, respectively. Zach Filzen countered with 18 points on 6-of-9 shooting from beyond the arc.

Buffalo broke open a close game midway through the first half with a 16-0 scoring run to turn an 18-15 lead into a 34-15 advantage. The Bulls were very active defensively with six of their 10 steals in the first half. Jarod Oldham and Filzen each had three steals for UB.

"I thought we were pretty locked in defensively," head coach Reggie Witherspoon. "I just think our guys communicated very well. This is a team that wants to stretch you out, so we did a good job of staying locked in."

American (20-12) began to heat up from beyond the arc and following consecutive three- pointers, Buffalo's lead was just 39-34 early in the second half. However, Filzen hit consecutive treys of his own and McCrea followed with a foul-line jumper to extend the lead to 47-36.

After American cut the lead to 47-38, the Bulls responded with an 11-2 scoring run, capped by a Watt jumper to extend their lead to 18. The lead would remain in double digits the rest of the way.

Buffalo got contributions from a number of different players and 10 different players scored. The Bulls shot 52 percent from the field. They dominated play inside, outscoring the Eagles, 38-22, in the paint. Buffalo was also good in transition with 14 fast break points.

Watt added a game-high nine rebounds to go along with his 15 points. McCrea scored his 18 points in only 19 minutes. Oldham had six assists to go with his four points, four rebounds and three steals. Tony Watson chipped in with six points on two three-pointers and added four assists.

Defensively, the Bulls held American to 34 percent shooting. Coming into the game, the Eagles were shooting over 40 percent from three to ranked 10th in the nation. UB limited them to just 7-of-27 shooting from beyond the arc.

Buffalo handed American just its second home loss in 15 games this season.

Buffalo will now travel to Oakland for the second round on Saturday.