



BRIDGEPORT, Conn. – Colin Nickerson scored 22 points while Rakim Sanders tallied a double-double with 21 points and 11 rebounds as the Fairfield team overcame a 13-point halftime deficit to defeat Yale University by a 68-56 count in the first round of the CollegelInsider.com Postseason tournament.

Fairfield held the lead early in the game, the last of which came at 9-8 with 15:10 remaining in the first half. Yale pushed past the home team with a 10-0 run that gave it an 18-9 lead with 11:10 remaining in the game. Fairfield broke a five-minute scoreless stretch when Colin Nickerson scored two of his career-high 22 points to make it an 18-11 game, but Yale answered with Greg Mangano's layup to keep it at nine points.

The Stags rallied after that basket and came within four points at 26-22 at the 5:51 mark as Rakim Sanders tallied six points in the team's 11-6 spurt. The Bulldogs responded with nine straight points to build its biggest lead of the game at 35-22 in the closing minutes, a deficit that would remain intact at the half.

The second half started well for Fairfield with Keith Matthews scoring back-to-back layups to bring Fairfield within nine points at 39-30. The run continued with Maurice Barrow's jumper for a seven-point disadvantage. After Mangano made one of two free throws, Fairfield's rally continued with seven unanswered points to pull within a point at 40-39 with 13:51 on the clock.

Yale gathered some breathing room after Reggie Willhite's jumper pushed the edge to three points. Nickerson and Sanders teamed up for baskets to give the Stags their first lead since early in the first half at 43-42. The team's rally continued with a three-point play by Matthews and three additional points from Nickerson, allowing Fairfield to slowly pull away from their intrastate foe.

Yale never came within four points from that point, getting with 52-48 with 4:08 on the clock after a layup from Mangano. Fairfield used a 9-2 run from that point to gain its first double-digit lead at 61-50 at the 1:52 mark. The Bulldogs cut that lead nearly in half, pulling within six at 62-56. However, Fairfield finished off the game with six straight points to advance to the second round of the CIT with the 68-56 win.

Fairfield's defense was the difference over the final 20 minutes, holding Yale to 17 points in the second half and just 17 percent shooting from the floor. Fairfield made 64 percent of its second-half shots, netting 14 of 22 attempts.

Fairfield will host a second-round game against Manhattan on Sunday at Alumni Hall, beginning at 4 pm.