



ATLANTA--Making its first postseason appearance since 2002, Georgia State opened play in the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament in impressive fashion, defeating Tennessee Tech, 74-43, at the GSU Sports Arena, led by Devonta White with a career-high 24 points.

Georgia State's will now face Mercer in Macon on Saturday at 4 p.m.

Ten years to the day after falling to Tennessee Tech in the 2002 NIT, the Panthers improved to 22-11 under first-year head coach Ron Hunter. The win is Georgia State's first postseason victory since the Panthers of Charles "Lefty" Driesell defeated Wisconsin in the first round of the 2001 NCAA Tournament.

White, the sophomore from Alpharetta, Ga., connected on nine of 13 from the field and also contributed four assists and four rebounds. Senior James Fields added 17 points on 7-for-10 shooting, plus seven rebounds and five steals.

"I am really proud of the guys," commented Hunter. "There were two things that could happen tonight; we could feel sorry for ourselves and go through the motions or we could come out as a team excited and ready to play. Our team was excited to play and it showed."

"The atmosphere and environment was different tonight," commented White on his first postseason game. "We were just trying to keep the pace up, play our game and get the win."

Georgia State dominated at both ends, shooting 52.7 percent from the field, including 9-for-15 from beyond the arc, while holding the Golden Eagles to just 28.3 percent. Tennessee Tech (19-14) managed just two three-pointers on 22 attempts.

Redshirt-senior Jihad Ali, playing in a school-record 125th game, added seven points and eight rebounds. Senior Eric Buckner finished with five points and five rebounds, while adding to his school-record blocked shot total. Buckner recorded three blocks on the night and now has 112 this season, among the top five in the NCAA. Josh Micheaux handed out seven assists.

Tennessee Tech's Kevin Murphy entered the game as the 10th leading scorer in Division I at 21.1 points per game, but the Panthers limited the Atlanta native to seven points.

Georgia State broke open a close game midway through the first half. With the score tied at 7-7, GSU went on a 15-2 run

to build a 22-9 lead with 10 minutes left in the half. The Panthers added to their lead by scoring the final eight points of the half, punctuated by Fields three-pointer with eight seconds left, to take a 42-21 advantage into the locker room.

The Panthers shot 55.6 percent from the field in the first half with five treys while holding Tennessee Tech to just 8-for-26 (31 percent), including 1-for-13 from beyond the arc.

Sophomore Rashaad Richardson added seven points and a career-high six rebounds off the bench.

Liam McMorrow finished with a team-high 13 points for the Golden Eagles, shooting 5-of-8 from the floor.