



HOUSTON - With a 74-68 win over Drake in the second round of the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament, Rice Basketball sailed into uncharted waters.

No Rice team in the history of the program had won more than one postseason game in a given season. Rice, 19-15, trailed at halftime but came from being down at intermission for only the third time this season to grab its second straight postseason victory.

Now the Owls advance to the quarterfinals of the CIT, traveling to suburban Detroit to take on Oakland University. Tipoff Tuesday night is slated for 6 p.m. Central Time.

"This was a win that our program needed to be able to go out and get," said Rice head coach Ben Braun. "Nobody was going to give it to us. Drake is a fine team and well coached. I was really proud of our guys. We had to go out and earn this victory."

The Owls struggled late in the first half as two final-minute turnovers led to Drake's first lead of the game.

Kurt Alexander scored following a Rice turnover to give the Bulldogs a 33-32 lead with 42 seconds to play. Jeremy Jeffers came up with a steal as the Owls failed to get off a final shot to end the half. Jeffers tossed the ball ahead to Rayvonte Rice who scored on a fastbreak layup which beat the horn and sent Drake to the locker room holding a 35-32 advantage.

The Owls would score the first four points of the second half to regain the lead.

Later in the half, Arsalan Kazemi came up with a defensive rebound and made a pass up the floor to Jarelle Reischel for a fastbreak dunk. With the basket, Rice was up 49-47 with 12:31 to play. Reischel would later score in the paint on a jumper and Kazemi's layin off a Reischel pass had the Owls up by six.

Drake would comeback one last time, tying the game at 56-56 with 9:31 to play on back-to-back three-pointers by Ben Simons. The Owls would answer with a 10-0 run which included a three-pointer by Dylan Ennis which put Rice up by five and later, an Ahmad Ibrahim triple which gave the Owls their biggest lead, 66-56 with 5:58 to play.

Rice shot 53 percent for the game including a 13-for-22 performance from the field in the second half. The Bulldogs had not allowed an opponent to shoot higher than 50 percent from the field in their last 18 outings. Since a Jan. 7th loss to Northern Iowa, Drake had held opponents to 41 percent shooting.

Ennis scored 17 points to go along with six rebounds and six assists to help lead the Owls. Arsalan Kazemi came up with 13 defensive rebounds to go along with 11 points.

Drake did not score any second-chance points and only had six offensive boards. As a team, Rice outrebounded the Bulldogs 36-27.

Drake's Rice led the Bulldogs with 23 points while Simons finished with 21.

The Bulldogs, who finished in a tie for third place in the Missouri Valley Conference, finished their season at 18-16.