



## Evansville 84, Tennessee State 72

First Round: March 19, 2013

EVANSVILLE, Ind. -- Colt Ryan led all players with 22 points as the Purple Aces advanced to round two of the CollegeInsider.com Tournament with an 84-72 victory over Tennessee State on Tuesday evening at the Ford Center.

Ryan went 6-of-13 from the floor for Evansville (19-14, 10-8 MVC) while hitting nine out of ten from the charity stripe. Ned Cox found his stroke from long range, registering 16 points including a 4-for-6 effort from three-point range. Tennessee State (18-15, 11-5 OVC) was led by Kellen Thornton, who notched 20 points and 10 boards. Robert Covington also finished with a double-double, recording 19 points and 13 caroms.

"We are thrilled to death to get the win tonight," Aces head coach Marty Simmons said. "Our main focus right now is to get better and give ourselves more opportunities to play in the postseason."

Both teams began the game 1-for-5 from the floor before Cox hit a three to give UE a 5-2 lead. Three-point shooting made a difference early as UE was 2-3 while the Tigers hit one of their first seven. Their offense got rolling as they fought back from an early deficit to tie the game up at nine.

With Evansville up 15-13, they scored seven of the next nine to take a 7-point lead, but the threes finally started falling for the Tigers as they notched back-to-back treys to cut the gap to one at 22-21. Inside the final eight minutes of the opening stanza, the Aces seized control of the game. That control came from a 10-0 run that saw UE open up its first double figure lead. Over that stretch, the Tigers missed four shots while registering three turnovers.

That run propelled UE to a 38-29 halftime lead. In an unselfish half, eight different Aces scored as Ned Cox led the way with eight tallies. Jaylon Moore and Egidijus Mockevicius each hauled in six boards in the first half. That marked a career high for Moore, who topped his previous total of four in a game.

Colt Ryan tallied just four points in the first half, but quickly surpassed that in the second as he notched five in the first four minutes of the half. He tallied his first trey of the contest as the Aces opened up their largest lead of 14 points. TSU got within seven at 41-34 before Ryan and Cox fueled a 7-0 run.

Cox dialed it up from downtown for the fourth time to give the Aces a 15-point lead with 13 minutes remaining. A quick 5-0 spurt cut into the gap before Jordan Nelson got on the board with his first three of the evening. That was the beginning of a 10-0 stretch that saw UE take a 20-point advantage at 61-41.

Facing a large deficit, Tennessee State quickly made its way back in the game. Utilizing a full-court press for most of the night, the Tigers forced UE to go 0-4 with a turnover as they scored eight points in a row to get within 12 points at 64-52.

Down by 14 with three minutes left, the Tigers still showed fight, hitting two more treys as the gap was cut to eight (76-68) with 1:44 left. Evansville held off the charge, going a perfect 8-for-8 from the free throw line over the remainder of the game to take the 84-72 victory.

Mockevicius had a solid night, notching 8 points and 8 boards while Nelson and #D.J. Balentine# scored nine apiece. UE shot 47.6% on the night while holding TSU to 39.7%. Three-point shooting made a big difference as Evansville as 9-18 while the Tigers hit just 7 out of 32 attempts.

Evansville is now 1-1 in CIT play after playing in the inaugural event in 2009. The Aces will wait until tomorrow evening to find out who their next opponent is and when that game will be played. Follow [GoPurpleAces.com](http://GoPurpleAces.com) for full information.