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(enlarge photo)

Longhorns freshman Jordan Hamilton (23) is pressured by Iowa's Matt Gatens on a drive during the first half Monday night. Hamilton scored 16 points and converted 4 of 8 three-point shots, with all his treys coming in the first half.



(enlarge photo)

LONGHORNS MEN'S BASKETBALL

Pittman picks up pace as UT men beat Iowa

By Mark Rosner AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Tuesday, November 24, 2009

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Dexter Pittman was nearly invisible in the first half Monday, quite a trick for somebody who weighs 280 pounds.

But Pittman later asserted himself, scoring 11 of his 15 points in the second half as the third-ranked Longhorns defeated Iowa 85-60 in the semifinals of the CBE Classic at the Sprint Center.

Texas (3-0) will face Pittsburgh (4-0) for the championship game tonight around 9 p.m. Pitt beat Wichita State 68-55 in the other semifinal. The title game will be televised by ESPN2.

Longhorn senior Damion James collected 12 rebounds, becoming the third player in school history to pass 1,000. He has 1,002.

That seems like just a number to him.

"I really don't care about individual stats," said the 6-foot-7-inch James, who scored 10 points. "I care about winning."

The 6-10 Pittman converted all five of his shots in the second half after making 2 of 4 during the first 20 minutes. One of his misses in the first half was a dunk attempt.

James, meanwhile, made just one basket in the first half, a three-pointer. The game was tied, 38 apiece, at halftime.

"Coach (Rick Barnes) told me and Damion that we didn't show in the first half," Pittman said.



Damion James had 10 points, 12 rebounds.

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But in the second half, Pittman elected to attack the basket, even when Iowa sent more than one defender after him. He held the ball high instead of dribbling in traffic.

"It's very difficult getting the ball in there the way they were sagging on defense," Barnes said.

Texas shot 66.7 percent in the second half after hitting 44.4 in the first. Iowa hit just 6 of 32 shots in the second half, 18.8 percent.

All those missed shots by Iowa enabled the Longhorns to take a 25-14 edge in rebounding in the second half.

The Longhorns took advantage of Iowa's missed shots to score 14 fast-break points in the second half.

Barnes made his first change of the season to the starting lineup, replacing one freshman, J'Covan Brown, with another, Avery Bradley. Both had their moments. Brown scored 14 points and Bradley had 11.

A third freshman, Jordan Hamilton scored 16 and converted 4 of 8 three-point shots, with all his treys coming in the first half. Dogus Balbay assisted on three of the four three-pointers.

Hamilton, shooting from the corner, made three three-point baskets in a span of 1:40. His shooting helped the Longhorns take a 14-point lead in the half.

Iowa (1-3) wouldn't go away, though, not yet. The Hawkeyes pulled even at halftime with a 70-foot shot by freshman guard Cully Payne as time expired. They missed 10 of their first 11 three-point shots in the half but converted 5 of 8 to finish the period.

Then they made one more trey, by Matt Gatens (11 points), to start the second half, taking a three-point lead.

Texas, having seen enough, responded with a 17-0 push, holding Iowa scoreless for six minutes.

Now comes Pittsburgh, a team that is undergoing reconstruction after losing four starters — DeJuan Blair and Sam Young are in the NBA — from a team that lost to Villanova by two points in the NCAA regional finals.

The only returning starter, guard Jermaine Dixon, is out with a broken right foot. A prospective starter, forward Gilbert Brown, was suspended for the fall semester because of academic deficiencies.

Guard Ashton Gibbs, a dangerous shooter, scored 18 against Wichita State. Travon Woodall, a redshirt freshman point guard filling in for Dixon, scored 19 in the Wichita game.

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3-Texas 85, Iowa 60

FG FT Reb

IOWA Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS

Cougill 25 4-5 1-2 1-4 1 5 11

Cole 27 2-5 5-8 0-3 0 5 9

Tucker 31 3-14 0-0 2-4 3 2 8





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