

Richmond Times-Dispatch

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Miners speed past Spiders

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The University of Richmond's defense failed to cut off Texas-El Paso's guards. That's the simplest way to explain last night's 81-69 UR loss in the semifinals of the College Basketball Invitational.

Before 2,363 at the Robins Center, the Miners got 34 points from 6-5 Stefon Jackson and 19 from 6-0 Randy Culpepper. Those two combined to take 24 of UTEP's 33 free throws.

"They find ways to get their guys angles to drive," UR's Ryan Butler, who fouled out, said of the Miners' dribble-drive-based offense. "They're tough to guard."

The Miners (22-12) of Conference USA, move on to the best-of-three CBI championship series against Oregon State (16-17), 65-62 winner over Stanford last night in the other semifinal.

The Spiders (20-16), who led 3-2 and never again, end a season in which they won nine of their last 13. Richmond loses only one scholarship senior, 6-9 starter Jarhon Giddings.

Richmond coach Chris Mooney missed the final 4:44 after drawing his second technical foul. Jamie Luckie hit Mooney with one late in the first half for excessive jawing. He picked up another one from Gene Steratore in the second half. Mooney removed his jacket and gave a dismissive wave to the officials after a foul was called on Giddings.

"I apologized to the team, because that shouldn't happen," Mooney said. "The second one, I didn't say anything. So, I think it's probably more cumulative, if I'm asking for too many calls. But I certainly didn't swear or raise my voice or anything like that."

Associate head coach Kevin McGeehan directed the Spiders in Mooney's absence.

Richmond had been allowing an average of 67.1 points. UTEP led 42-33 at halftime. By then, Jackson already had scored 18.

"That kid can play, man," UR guard David Gonzalez, who scored 24.

Gonzalez noted that even when Richmond's guards were able to stay in front of Jackson, who arrived as the nation's fifth-leading scorer (24.3 ppg), he hit pull-up jumpers.

"He just knows how to score," Gonzalez said.

UR guard Kevin Anderson regularly scored 20 or more during Richmond's late-season run. Culpepper, primarily, forced Anderson (10 points) into a 4-of-14 shooting night. Still, the Spiders -- down 12 in the first half and by 10 with 13 minutes left -- rallied to trail 58-56 with eight minutes remaining.

UTEP, which played at home Monday and made the trip to Richmond on Tuesday, looked tired. The Miners switched to a zone defense. UR scored one point in the next five minutes.

Gonzalez said, "That was a good call, going to that zone. It kind of stunted us a little bit."

The Spiders eliminated St. John's and the College of Charleston on the way to this meeting with the fourth-place finisher in Conference USA. The Miners knocked out Nevada and Northeastern.

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UTEP (22-12)

	M	FG	FT	R	PF	A	Pts
Moultrie-----	34	2-5	1-1	11	3	0	5
Jones-----	12	1-4	0-0	3	2	0	2
Stone-----	35	4-7	4-6	4	2	2	12
Jackson-----	38	10-21	14-16	4	1	0	34
Portalatin-----	10	0-0	0-0	0	4	0	0
Culpepper-----	33	6-15	5-8	5	3	0	19
Gordon-----	8	0-2	0-0	2	1	0	0
McCulley-----	30	3-8	2-2	8	2	0	9
Munoz-----	0+	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Team				2			
Totals -----	26-62	26-33	39	18	2	81	

RICHMOND (4-5, 12-12)

	M	FG	FT	R	PF	A	Pts
Giddings-----	24	4-8	1-2	8	4	0	10

Gonzalvez-----	38	7-14	6-8	7	3	4	24
Smith-----	15	2-4	0-0	3	2	0	4
Anderson-----	40	4-14	2-2	3	1	3	10
Butler-----	31	3-7	0-0	5	5	2	7
Garrett-----	12	1-3	1-2	3	2	0	3
McGonigal-----	0+	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
McLean-----	0+	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
Duinker-----	3	0-1	0-0	0	1	0	0
Martel-----	13	1-2	2-2	2	1	0	5
Smith-----	1	1-2	0-0	0	2	0	2
Harper-----	23	1-7	2-3	6	1	0	4
Team				4	2		
Totals -----	24-63	14-19	41-24	9	69		

UTEP ----- 42 39 -- 81

Richmond ----- 33 36 -- 69

3-point goals -- UTEP (3-10): Culpepper 2-6, McCulley 1-2, Jackson 0-1, Gordon 0-1. Richmond (7-19): Gonzalvez 4-6, Martel 1-1, Giddings 1-3, Butler 1-4, McLean 0-1, Anderson 0-2, Harper 0-2.

Turnovers -- UTEP (11): Jackson 2, Culpepper 2, Moultrie 2, Stone 2, Jones, McCulley. Richmond (17): Gonzalvez 5, Butler 3, K.Smith 2, Harper 2, Anderson 2, Garrett, Martel, Giddings.

Blocked shots -- UTEP (2): Moultrie, Stone. Richmond (3): Giddings, Garrett, Harper.

Steals -- UTEP (11): Culpepper 3, Moultrie 3, Jackson 2, Jones, Stone, Portalatin. Richmond (4): Butler 2, K.Smith, Gonzalvez.

Technical foul -- bench.

A -- 2,363.