

Printed from the Charlotte Observer - www.CharlotteObserver.com
Posted: Wednesday, Mar. 16, 2011

2nd season gives Davidson a boost

By Jim Utter
Published in: Sports

Related Stories

Related Images

DAVIDSON That should remove any bad taste Davidson had left over from its first-round ouster in the Southern Conference tournament.

The Wildcats (18-14) opened play Tuesday night in the College Basketball Invitational with a lopsided 85-65 victory against James Madison (21-12) at Belk Arena.

Unlike in its loss to UNC Greensboro less than two weeks ago, the Wildcats did just about everything well.

Davidson shot 50 percent from the field, including 45.6 percent (11-of-24) from 3-point range; it committed just 10 turnovers and turned 17 Dukes turnovers into 31 points; and the Wildcats battled to a near-draw in rebounding (41-36) against a much bigger team.

"For my freshman class, this is our first postseason victory, and it's good to get that out of the way," said sophomore guard J.P. Kuhlman, who finished with 14 points and made both of his 3-pointers. "It definitely takes the dirt out of your mouth a little bit."

Davidson had roared through the month of February with a 7-1 record and appeared ready to do some damage in the Southern Conference tournament. Instead, the Wildcats' trip came to an abrupt end in an upset by UNC Greensboro.

Tuesday's win was much more reminiscent of how Davidson played the second half of the season.

"You think back to eight, nine days ago and how we shot the ball against Greensboro and how we shot the ball today, and I felt a great sense of confidence in (the players') shots," said Davidson coach Bob McKillop.

"We talked about two things since Greensboro: focus and effort. When you focus on every play and give effort on every play, confidence will happen."

It showed from the opening tip against the Dukes.

The first three possessions of the game, Davidson players drove to the basket for layups and ran out to a 6-0 lead. The Wildcats led 42-34 at halftime and by 27 points in the second half.

Davidson will play at Creighton in the second round Monday.