

Missoulian

Duquesne beats Griz 87-76 in first round of CBI

By **BOB MESEROLL** Missoulian sports editor | Posted: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 6:54 pm

For the first 20 minutes, the Montana Grizzlies looked as if they were on spring break.

By the time they got back to work, it was too late.

Duquesne blitzed the Griz with a 22-2 run in the first half and held on for an 87-76 win over Montana in the first round of the College Basketball Invitational in front of 2,830 fans Wednesday night at Dahlberg Arena.

The Dukes (19-12) of the Atlantic 10 advanced to face Oregon on Monday night in Eugene. The Ducks beat Weber State 68-59 on Wednesday. Montana ended its season at 21-11.

Five Dukes scored in double digits, led by a career-high 17 from reserve guard Sean Johnson. T.J. McConnell, the Atlantic 10 rookie of the year, added 15 points, while Bill Clark and B.J. Monteiro chipped in 13 apiece.

Freshman Kareem Jamar led the Griz with a career-best 22 points and senior Brian Qvale ended his career with 15 points and three blocked shots, which gave him the Big Sky Conference single-season record with 95. Junior Jordan Wood added a career-high 14 points.

The Griz started out well enough, taking a 12-8 lead on consecutive layups from Art Steward with 16:16 left in the first half. But six turnovers and eight missed shots fueled the Dukes' 22-2 burst that gave them a 30-14 lead with 9:02 to play before intermission. Johnson had seven of his points during the burst.

"I thought we were ready to go," Qvale said. "We came out and were playing hard right away, then we just kind of hit a lull for probably 10 minutes. We can't do that. We are a great defensive team and we don't allow that many points. Offensively, we figured things out ... but we don't normally allow (87) points scored on us. It wasn't a normal situation."

It was the most points the Griz - the top defenders in the Big Sky this season - gave up this season, home or away, win or loss.

"We knew they were going to pressure us and we knew we could get open shots if we just took care of the ball," Qvale said. "We just weren't being as strong with it as we normally are."

Qvale put his finger on the problem. The Griz turned the ball over 19 times, including seven apiece by Will Cherry and Derek Selvig.

"The No. 1 key was to handle the pressure," Montana coach Wayne Tinkle said.

The Dukes stretched their lead to as many as 22 points twice in the first half before the Griz trimmed it to 49-35 at the break.

The Griz pulled within striking distance on several occasions in the second half. The closest they got was 63-57 with 9:15 to play on a put-back by Wood.

Montana kept the margin under double digits until a pair of turnovers and a missed 3-point attempt by Selvig allowed the Dukes to stretch their edge back to 74-61 with 6:19 remaining.

The Dukes also wore the Griz down with superior depth. Ten players logged 10 or more minutes for coach Ron Everhart, who used wholesale substitutions to keep his players fresh. Everhart said he hit on the strategy by accident. Starting post Damian Saunders was sick, prompting him to substitute more frequently.

"What we did is we went with a platoon system, play more like a hockey line and try to utilize our depth," Everhart said. "We felt that from a depth perspective we could maybe wear these guys down a little bit if we could make it an up-and-down game."

But Everhart knew the Griz wouldn't go away.

"I personally think there are two NBA players on (that) team," Everhart said, referring to Qvale and Cherry. "I think that before Will Cherry leaves here he will have a chance. He's really good. Then saying all that, Jamar was the one who really hurt us time after time tonight."

Jamar was 9 for 16 from the field and grabbed five rebounds and three steals.

"I got a lot of easy layups," Jamar said. "I feel like I should take (Selvig) out to lunch or something. He got me a lot of layups."

Tinkle said it was tough to get the Griz back on track after falling to Northern Colorado in the championship of the Big Sky tournament last week in Greeley, Colo.

"There had been some concern over the last few days, to be honest," Tinkle said. "Just about the letdown from Northern Colorado and the fact that we missed out on our goal. Saturday and Sunday were really hard; we were in limbo at that point.

"As much as we tried to get the best effort, we didn't have it. Then on Monday we knew we were in and we had an opponent and we tried to rally the troops. It was much, much better on Monday and Tuesday and we got off to a helluva start. Then for some reason, we stalled."

Still, Tinkle was proud of the season his team turned in. Picked to finish third in the league, the Griz were within one game of the regular-season crown and within six points of their second straight NCAA appearance.

"We used a timeout late in the game and I told the guys, 'I love you and I'm proud as hell with the way you battled this second half,'" Tinkle said. "It wasn't pretty in the first half ... but we battled and showed a lot of character and I know moving forward we can build off of that."

NOTES: Idaho State's Slim Millien held the single-season record for blocked shots before Qvale passed him in his final game ... The Griz played without starting guard Shawn Stockton, who injured a hamstring last week in Greeley, and Chase Adams, who was out with an undisclosed injury. Then Vaughn Autry caught a finger in the eye with 11:42 to play and did not return. ... The Griz played just eight players. ... Saunders finished with 11 points, five blocks and five steals despite his illness.

DUQUESNE (87)

Mins FG-A FT-A Reb PF A Pts

f-Saunders 27 4-9 2-3 5 2 2 11

f-Clark 28 3-7 5-6 4 2 0 13

g-Talley 16 1-1 0-0 2 4 0 2

g-McConnell 25 5-8 4-4 3 1 6 15

g-Monteiro 20 6-9 0-1 1 1 0 13

Marhold 12 3-4 1-2 2 4 0 7

Wright 12 2-5 0-1 4 2 1 4

Evans 19 1-3 0-0 1 2 1 3

Jones 17 1-4 0-0 5 0 1 2

Theis 1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Johnson 24 6-9 4-4 4 2 1 17

Peggau 1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Totals 200 32-59 16-21 36 20 12 87

MONTANA (76)

Mins FG-A FT-A Reb PF A Pts

f-Steward 23 3-6 0-0 7 4 0 6

f-Selvig 30 2-10 3-4 4 2 3 8

c-Qvale 29 6-9 3-4 6 3 0 15

g-Cherry 38 2-8 5-6 3 2 6 9

g-Jamar 38 9-16 2-5 5 3 1 22

Autry 6 0-0 0-0 1 0 1 0

Wood 25 6-6 1-4 3 1 1 14

Ward 11 0-1 2-2 0 2 0 2

Totals 200 28-56 16-25 31 17 12 76

Halftime score: Duquesne 49, Montana 35.

3-point goals: DU 7-18 (Clark 2-4, Evans 1-2, Johnson 1-3, McConnell 1-2, Monteiro 1-3, Saunders 1-4), UM 4-10 (Jamar 2-3, Wood 1-1, Selvig 1-4, Steward 0-1, Cherry 0-1).

Turnovers: DU 16 (Saunders 3), UM 19 (Cherry 7, Selvig 7).

Blocked shots: DU 6 (Saunders 5), UM 4 (Qvale 3).

Steals: DU 14 (Saunders 5), UM 10 (Selvig 4).

Officials: Gregg Morstein, Ken Neilson, DG Nelson.

Attendance: 2,830

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ELSEWHERE

Oregon 68, Weber State 59

WEBER ST. (18-14) - Bullinger 5-14 1-4 16, Mahoney 2-5 0-0 4, Morris 2-6 0-0 4, Bamforth 6-16 0-1 17, Hughey 4-11 2-2 12, Richardson 0-1 0-0 0, Fulton 1-4 2-2 4, Tresnak 1-2 0-2 2. Totals 21-59 5-11 59.

OREGON (17-17) - Singler 4-9 7-7 16, Catron 6-15 12-13 24, Nared 1-4 2-2 4, Sim 2-7 0-0 5, Armstead 3-4 2-4 8, Fearn 0-0 0-0 0, Loyd 0-2 0-0 0, Williams 1-1 0-0 2, Strowbridge 4-9 0-0 9. Totals 21-51 23-26 68.

Halftime-Weber St. 28-26. 3-Point Goals-Weber St. 12-31 (Bullinger 5-9, Bamforth 5-14, Hughey 2-6, Richardson 0-1, Fulton 0-1), Oregon 3-15 (Sim 1-3, Singler 1-4, Strowbridge 1-4, Catron 0-1, Nared 0-1, Loyd 0-2). Fouled Out-Mahoney, Morris. Rebounds-Weber St. 35 (Bullinger 9), Oregon 36 (Catron 12). Assists-Weber St. 9 (Morris 3), Oregon 14 (Armstead, Singler 3). Total Fouls-Weber St. 22, Oregon 14. A-4,375.