

## Pitt defeats Wichita State, 68-55

### Woodall's 19 points answer the call for Panthers

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By Ray Fittipaldo, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Charlie Riedel/Associated Press

Pitt center Gary McGhee dunks the ball over Wichita State forward Aaron Ellis during the second half of Pitt's 68-55 win in Kansas City, Mo. last night.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Wichita State decided early on that Pitt sophomore shooting ace Ashton Gibbs was not going to win the game for the Panthers with his outside shooting. The Shockers blanketed Gibbs every time he touched the ball near the 3-point line and never allowed the Big East's best 3-point threat an open look at the basket.

But in their obsessive pursuit of Gibbs, the Shockers forgot about the other starter in Pitt's backcourt, redshirt freshman Travon Woodall.

Woodall scored a career-high 19 points to lead Pitt past Wichita State, 68-55, last night at the Sprint Center to advance to the championship game of the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic. The Panthers (4-0) will face either No. 3 Texas or Iowa tonight. Those teams played the second game of the doubleheader after the Pitt game.

Gibbs, who scored 42 points in the previous two games, finished with 18, but he only attempted one 3-point shot and scored most of his points late in the game when the Panthers were pulling away.

It was Woodall who answered the call when the Shockers concentrated their efforts on stopping Gibbs at all costs. And the best part about his performance was that it entailed much more than scoring. Woodall also led the team in rebounds (6), assists (5) -- and much to coach Jamie Dixon's chagrin -- turnovers (6).

"He played really well," Dixon said. "The thing I'm most proud of is the rebounds. In the last two games, he's had six defensive rebounds. We've been after our guards to rebound more, and he's done that."

Woodall realized early on that he would have an opportunity to shine. Wichita State made it clear that someone other than Gibbs was going to have to be the hero for the Panthers.

"My teammates put me in a great position," Woodall said. "The way they were defending Ashton they were giving me open lanes to the basket."

Woodall capitalized by getting his teammates easy opportunities. Junior center Gary McGhee scored a career-high 10 points, thanks mostly to Woodall, who found him often off penetration. Woodall also got to the free-throw line 10 times and made seven of them.

"We thought we had the quicker guards," Dixon said. "We wanted to use penetration."

Wichita State, now 2-1, sorely missed its senior starting point guard, Clevin Hannah, who had to sit out the final game of a three-game NCAA suspension. Not only were the Shockers overmatched on the defensive end, but their offense was erratic, with 24 turnovers, including 13 in the first half when Pitt built a 32-21 lead at the intermission.

"Man, that's a good basketball team," Wichita State coach Gregg Marshall said. "They do so many things to defend you. They're so well-prepared and so well-coached. When you get down against them they make it difficult to come back. We were just too sloppy in our offensive execution to make it a one or two possession game at the end.

"Woodall played really well. Gibbs and Woodall are a pretty good backcourt. When they get [Jermaine] Dixon back that will give them a pretty good threesome."

The victory kept Jamie Dixon's perfect record in November alive. He has won all 35 games he has coached in the month during his seven-year head coaching career.

The Panthers have won 38 consecutive games in November dating to 2001.

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Check out Ray Fittipaldo's Pitt B-Ball blog and Paul Zeise's Pitt Stop videos about football exclusively on [PG+](#), a members-only web site from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Our [introduction to PG+](#) gives you all the details.



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