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Gonzaga 66, MU 63

Golden Eagles lose their way at CBE Classic



AP

Jimmy Butler (left) and Darius Johnson-Odom trap Gonzaga's Steven Grey but officials called a foul rather than a jump ball on Marquette with just seconds left, which sent Gray (middle) to the line.

By [Todd Rosiak](#)

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Kansas City — A young Marquette Golden Eagles squad came to Kansas City looking to establish itself against a top-notch field in the CBE Classic.

It left the Sprint Center winless against both ranked opponents it faced instead. Dogged by its inability to guard on the perimeter in the first half or effectively box out in the second, MU fell, 66-63, to the No. 22 Gonzaga Bulldogs on Tuesday night.

Steven Gray scored 20 points, with 15 coming off three-pointers in the first half, Elias Harris had 19 and Mangisto Arop 15 to lead Gonzaga (3-2). The Bulldogs also out-rebounded MU by 16 while avoiding their first three-game losing streak since 2008.

Jimmy Butler scored 17 of his game-high 22 points in the second half, and Darius Johnson-Odom added 13 and Jae Crowder 10 for the Golden Eagles (4-2).

"I told them I thought we spent a lot of money, ate really good food, stayed at a really nice hotel, played on national TV, played the No. 1- and No. 22-ranked teams," said coach Buzz Williams. "And we learned that we have to be 'us'. When we're not 'us,' we'll get beat by any team we play, and when we are, we'll have a chance to beat any team we play."

After allowing Gonzaga to shoot 64.0% in the first half and grab a 42-33 lead at intermission, MU started the second half by stringing together four consecutive stops.

The Golden Eagles managed only four points over that span, though, while turning the ball over twice in pulling to within 42-37 with 18 minutes 28 seconds remaining.

A jumper from Harris finally got the Bulldogs onto the board, and jump-started a quick 7-2 mini-run that allowed Gonzaga to stretch its lead to 49-39 with 15:20 left - its largest of the game to that point.

MU was able to score a basket here or there but never enough to get back into the game. Silly turnovers, defensive breakdowns and forced shots against the Bulldogs' 2-3 zone all underscored the general malaise enveloping the Golden Eagles.

And once the offense finally started coming, MU was killed by its inability to box out. Four consecutive baskets by Arop came off either his or a teammate's offensive rebound, the last of which kept the Bulldogs' lead at 59-48 with 7:04 left.

Gonzaga grabbed 17 offensive boards, leading to 21 points. Fifteen of those rebounds came in the second half.

Gonzaga missed the front end of three straight bonus situations from there, and the Golden Eagles got points on the other end each time. That, combined with some strong defense, allowed MU to get within 63-60 with 1:13 left.

"Marquette is a very opportunistic team," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said. "They're opportunistic on offense, and they can kill you all of a sudden on a quick break or on drives by knifing through the lane or by kicking it out."

Gray hit two free throws on the other end to make it 65-60 with 49.3 seconds left. After another MU timeout, Butler hit a long three from the right wing to get the Golden Eagles to within 65-63 with 43.7 seconds remaining.

MU appeared to have forced a turnover on Gonzaga's ensuing possession when Johnson-Odom and Junior Cadougan both got their hands on the ball as Gray protected it near mid-court. The far official

blew the whistle though, sending Gray to the line with 12.6 seconds left.

He made the second free throw to give the Bulldogs a 66-63 lead. After a Gonzaga timeout, the Golden Eagles weren't able to get anything immediately going to the basket. Williams chose to burn his final timeout with 2.5 seconds left to set up a play.

The Golden Eagles wound up getting a 35-foot three-point attempt from Butler that fell short, leaving them to deal with their second straight loss.

"I didn't want to call a timeout, because I think it's easier to play against a defense that's in transition," Williams said. "I thought we did a great job of trapping the ball screen, I thought we had it covered up. It turns out that it's a foul.

"I ended up calling a timeout because I didn't think we were getting anything good. I thought we would end up getting a better shot than the shot I knew (we were) about to shoot."

Whereas MU was solid defensively against a good three-point shooting team in Duke on Monday, it was equally bad against a Gonzaga team that came in hitting 36.6% of its attempts from beyond the arc.

The Zags knocked down 6 of 10 in the first half, including 5 of 7 by Gray, who was usually wide open.

Butler was named to the all-tournament team.

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