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## No. 1 Duke Overcomes First Challenge, Holds Off Marquette

Terrance Harris, provided by



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KANSAS CITY, Mo. - All the signs have been there that the No.1 [Duke Blue Devils](#) are good.

It was just hard to gauge how good the defending national champions are this season with blowout victories against [Princeton](#), Miami of Ohio and [Colgate](#) to start. Not exactly the who's who of college basketball.

But finally Monday night, the Blue Devils ran into a respectable [Marquette](#) team that was talented enough to challenge them during in the semi-final round of the CBE Classic. After breezing in their first three games, the Blue Devils found themselves tied with the Golden Eagles about midway through the second half.

First it was 53-53, then it was 55-55 and finally it was 57-57 before [Duke](#) woke up.

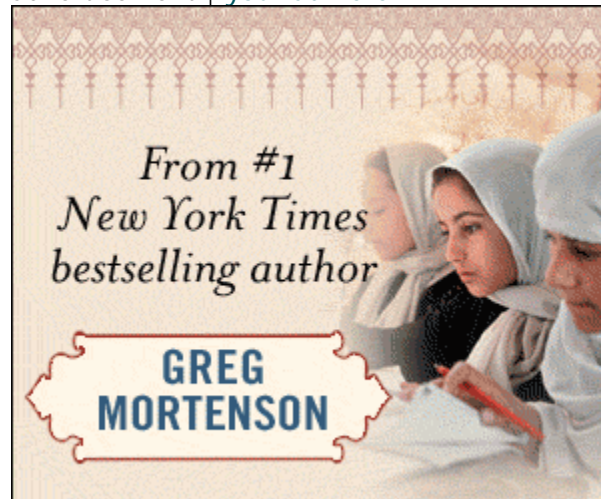
That is when we saw our first real glimpse of the potential toughness of Duke as sophomore post player [Mason Plumlee](#) muscled his way inside by scoring 14 of his career-high 25 points to push the Devils back out to a comfortable lead that eventually led to a 82-77 win over Marquette here at the Sprint Center.

Finally, Duke had reason to wipe its collective and untested brow this season.

"It was definitely a test," said Duke senior guard [Nolan Smith](#). "We had been beating teams pretty bad, everything has been sweet. That was a good wake up call for us, knowing that every team wants to come out here and beat us. Marquette is a very good team that's going to play hard. We had a big lead early and was smiling thinking everything was slick.

"We have to know now that we have a big target on our chests and teams are going to be lining up to beat us. We won the national title last year and this year's team is good so we've got to play for 40 minutes."

That the Blue Devils (4-0) certainly didn't do Monday night. And for a moment, the consensus No.1 team in the nation looked like it might just be vulnerable to a smaller but much scrappier Marquette squad that lost for the


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