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Memorable 800th for Krzyzewski, Blue Devils

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KANSAS CITY — Nolan Smith, Kyrie Irving and Duke's other players walked onto the Sprint Center court Tuesday night and knew they were facing something different.

"I definitely saw a lot of purple shirts in the crowd, so it felt like an away game," Duke freshman point guard Kyrie Irving said of the atmosphere before the top-ranked Blue Devils faced No. 4 Kansas State. "That's how

we approached it. We had to block them out and just play our game."

They blocked out the raucous Wildcat-heavy crowd and passed their first big test of the season to make it an historic night for Coach Mike Krzyzewski.

Aggressively driving to the basket at every opportunity, Irving and Smith each scored 17 points as Duke placed five players in double figures to easily beat Kansas State 82-68 in the CBE Classic championship game that didn't end until 12:41 a.m. Wednesday.

By winning the first meeting of teams ranked in the top 5 this season, Duke (5-0) delivered Krzyzewski his 800th win at the school.

"It means I'm at a great school," Krzyzewski said. "It has afforded me the chance to recruit great kids. I feel really comfortable coaching at a high caliber, and you're much better able to form a team with kids with the good character. We try to develop the good character they bring us.

"Duke allows us to recruit nationally, and for me being there for 31 years, ... I'm a lucky guy to be there."

Luck had little to do with the Blue Devils' overwhelming win over Kansas State (4-1).

Duke took charge midway through the first half with a 9-0 run that propelled it to a 47-38 halftime lead. When Kansas State crept within five points at 48-43, the Blue Devils unleashed a 16-4 run to build a 64-47 lead with 11:50 to play.

The Wildcats never were closer than 11 points the rest of the game.

"Our defense was just really good," Krzyzewski said. "I thought we never let up.

I don't think they gave up, but we won a big-time game."

They won it in a big-time environment. Playing approximately a 2-hour drive from the Kansas State campus in Manhattan, Kan., the Blue Devils effectively took large number of Wildcats supporters in the crowd of 18,696 out of the game.

"It was crazy," Duke guard Nolan Smith said. "For us, outside of the three freshmen, we were kind of used to it with Baylor and Butler [in the 2010 NCAA Tournament].

"So we are used to it, but this was definitely better than all of those. These folks are crazy. We did a great job keeping them out of it the whole night. It was all purple out there."

Irving and Smith combined to do the most damage. Both scored 17 points, while tournament MVP Irving dished out six assists and Smith four.

"We had to be really good or else we wouldn't beat a really good team." Krzyzewski said. "Our guards combined for 34 points, controlling the ball and playing outstanding defense, you've got a pretty good chance to win when you get that kind of production."

That defense held Wildcats senior guard Jacob Pullen, a preseason All-American, to four points on 1-of-12 shooting. Smith, Irving and others combined in that effort.

"It was total focus," Smith said. "When you are playing a great player like him, you have to stay with him. We didn't want him to breathe easy, at all. Every 3 he shot, he had a hand in his face. Everything was contested."

Duke continues its trip west with a game against the Oregon Ducks on a neutral court in Portland, Ore., on Saturday (5 p.m., Fox Sports South). Once again, the term neutral is used loosely, since the Ducks will have a strong following at the Rose Garden, home of the NBA's Portland Trail Blazers.

But it will be another early season test for the Blue Devils.

"We have a lot of young guys," Krzyzewski said. "What will they do to follow up? Will they live in the past or will they try to get better?"

"Their team is going to get a lot better, and we want to get a lot better. We are finding out a lot about our guys."