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## Duke's a hazard: Cats fall hard to No. 1 Blue Devils

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The Kansas City Star

Kansas State isn't the smoothest offensive team anyway. Against Duke's pressure, the Wildcats had no chance.

The Blue Devils turned this battle of top-five teams into a mismatch, winning 82-68 Tuesday night in the championship of the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic at the Sprint Center.

Duke put five players in double figures and shot a good percentage. But the No. 1 Blue Devils won this game — coach Mike Krzyzewski's 800th victory at Duke — with defense.

Interior defense suffocated and quick-handed perimeter defense slapped away passes and hounded Wildcats' guard Jacob Pullen.

Pullen, K-State's All-America candidate, was held to four points. He missed 11 of 12 shots, and his night could be summed up with a possession with about 7 minutes remaining.

He missed a short runner as the ball trickled off the iron. The fourth-ranked Wildcats controlled the rebound, kicked it back to their leading scorer and Pullen missed a three-point attempt.

For most of the night, Pullen was frustrated by Duke's lightning quick freshman Kyrie Irving, who in addition to his stellar defense, poured in 17 points. He was selected the tournament's most valuable player.

"I just tried to stay in front of him, he's a great player," Irving said of Pullen. "We had great awareness on him."

Offensively, Irving's quick first step got him past K-State.

"We tried to stay aggressive," Irving said. "I saw openings and took what they gave me when I got pressure up high. I'm pretty fast, so when I saw the opening I took it."

Backcourt mate Nolan Smith added 17 points.

How discombobulated was Kansas State's attack? The Wildcats finished with 27 field goals and only 10 assists.

K-State had its usual strong game on the boards, holding a 39-31 advantage, and it came up with 12 second-chance points. But that wasn't enough to offset the poor perimeter shooting and sloppy ball-handling.

Just about everybody in the purple trimmed uniform had difficulty with the ball. In the first half alone, Kansas State committed 12 turnovers. The Wildcats had 21 in the game.

The Wildcats had 22 turnovers in the semifinal victory over Gonzaga, but they hit 12 three-pointers in that game.

On Tuesday, the Duke defense wouldn't allow that as the Wildcats went three for 17 from beyond the arc.

"We tried to chase them off the three-point line," Irving said.

Curtis Kelly showed a nice touch for K-State, finishing with 19 points, but he also had ball-handling problems and had six turnovers.

Duke led 47-39 at halftime, but K-State gave its fans reason to cheer coming out of the break.

Rodney McGruder scored inside, and when Jamar Samuels answered a Mason Plumlee free throw with a pair of his own, the Duke lead was just 48-43.

Kansas State got the ball back, but an offensive foul on big man Freddy Asprilla gave it right back to the Blue Devils.

Singler and Andre Dawkins then buried three-pointers around a Nick Russell basket. Duke had a nine-point lead and wasn't threatened.

The pro-Kansas State crowd was hardly a factor.

"I saw lots of purple shirts in the crowd, and it felt like a road game," Irving said. "That's how we approached it. We blocked them out and played our game."

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