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Georgia tops Notre Dame for third place at the CBE Classic

By BLAIR KERKHOFF
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It's not even Thanksgiving, but coaches know the computers don't care about the calendar.

Georgia's 61-57 victory over Notre Dame in the third-place game of the CBE Classic at the Sprint Center could become a meaningful outcome for NCAA Tournament consideration.

"This is a resume game, and these games mean something later on," Bulldogs coach Mark Fox said.

In February, when analysts talk about "good victories," Fox hopes this one is on the list.

The good news for the Irish is Tuesday's game probably won't qualify in the other category.

"You have to keep away from the bad losses," Notre Dame coach Mike Brey said.

This one was bad for the Irish only because their comeback fell short. Trailing by nine in the second half, Notre Dame got the game squared 53-53 with about 5 minutes left.

But Georgia's defense went into lockdown mode. Notre Dame missed its next five shots as the Bulldogs pulled away.

Freshman guard Kentavious Caldwell-Pope buried a three-pointer from the top with 3:42 left for a 56-53 lead. That shot proved to be the game-winner.

Caldwell-Pope finished with 16 points, and his defense on the Irish's Tim Abromaitis was crucial.

A night after scoring 22 points against Missouri in his season debut, Abromaitis was flustered into a one-for-12 shooting night and finished with six points. Abromaitis came up with a steal and had a shot to give Notre Dame a late lead, but it didn't fall.

Fox was happy with his prize freshman throughout the weekend.

"He had a great defensive weekend, and he's not known for being a defender," Fox said. "He's known for being a scorer and a shooter. But he's become a more complete player."

As for the Irish, Brey said he'll remind his team of what happened in last year's CBE Classic: Marquette, the team that finished 0-2, went to the NCAA Tournament and advanced to the Sweet 16.