



UMass men's basketball team stumbles against Rutgers

By Staff reports

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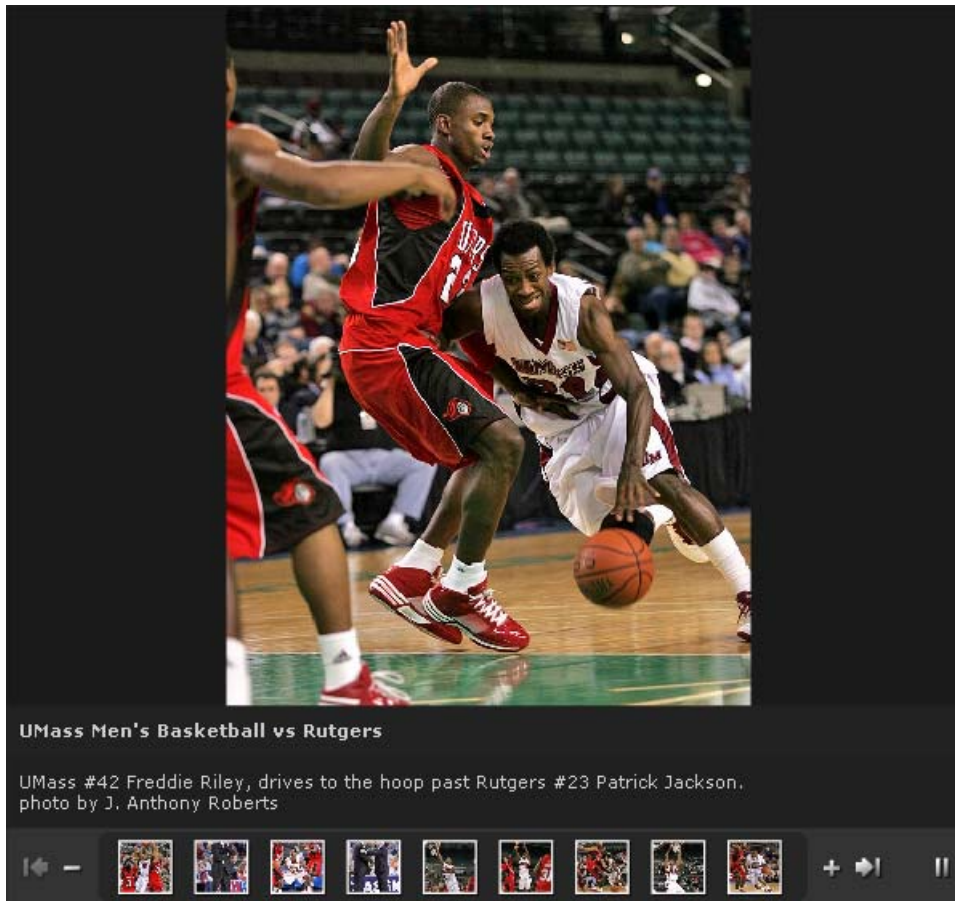


Associated Press

UMass' Terrell Vinson defends Rutgers' Mike Rosario Friday night at Atlantic City, N.J.

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. – Despite a combined 41 points from guards Ricky Harris and Anthony Gurley, the University of Massachusetts men's basketball team did not have enough at the end to steal a win away from Rutgers.

The Minutemen, behind 22 points by Harris and 19 from Gurley, rallied from a 17-point deficit late in the second half, but it was not enough Friday night as they fell to Rutgers 83-75, in the semifinals of the Legends Classic at Boardwalk Hall.



The Minutemen (2-3) will face No. 2-ranked Michigan State at 5:30 p.m. Saturday.

"We gave them a run down the stretch," UMass coach Derek Kellogg said. "We made a couple of stabs and got it close, but

The Minutemen stayed close to Rutgers (3-1) early, but could not find an answer to stopping Mike Rosario. The sophomore guard scored Rutgers' first 10 points as it built a 14-6 lead in the opening five minutes. However, UMass, behind six of Gurley's 12 first-half points, scored eight unanswered points to take a 14-12 lead.

It was the only time Minutemen led as the Scarlet Knights outscored UMass 13-0 over the next five-plus minutes.

Aided by Rosario's 18 first-half points and 56 percent shooting, Rutgers led by as many as 16 in the first half

before UMass cut the deficit to 46-35 at halftime. UMass shot just 34 percent and suffered from an inconsistent half from Harris as the senior had only two points in the opening 20 minutes, a cause for concern for both Harris and his coach.

"We need Ricky to play the game we know he can play all the time," Kellogg said. "He's a senior and he needs to play like that."

"I was a little too aggressive at the start," Harris said. "I got two quick fouls and I backed off and I wound up letting the rest of the team down."

In the second half, Rutgers appeared to have the game well in hand, holding a 66-49 lead with about 10 minutes remaining before the Minutemen, behind Harris, mounted the comeback.

Harris scored 15 of his 19 second-half points in the comeback as UMass cut the deficit to 79-75 with less than two minutes remaining. However, Rutgers put the game away as Mike Coburn made three of four free throws in the final minute to close it out.

"If I had played the first half the way I played the second half, the game would've ended differently," Harris said.

Rosario shared high-scoring honors with 22 points and Hamady Mdiaye and Coburn added 14 and 13, respectively for the winners. David Gibbs added 11 points for UMass.

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