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## Gators upset No. 2 Michigan State

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ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — In Florida's effort to upset the No. 2 team in the country, it came down to 17.3 seconds and one last defensive stand.

Through the frenzy of flailing arms and banging bodies, Michigan State guard Durrell Summers missed a pair of 3-point attempts. As the last one clanged off the iron at the buzzer, Florida players crowded all over each other at Boardwalk Hall's midcourt, celebrating an unforeseen 77-74 win Friday over the Spartans in the semifinals of the Legends Classic.



*The Associated Press*

Florida freshman guard Kenny Boynton, right, struggled with his shot and finished with 6 points on 2-of-12 shooting.

"Michigan State is a great team and ranked No. 2," Florida point guard Erving Walker said. "We wanted to prove we could be mentioned in the same breath as them."

Florida won against its highest-ranked opponent in the regular season since beating No. 2 Kansas 83-73 on Nov. 29, 2002. It also was the 10th time in Florida coach Billy Donovan's 14-year tenure that Florida won against a top-five opponent.

"The last two games, the level of competition we've played - Florida State, Michigan State - we've found out a lot more about ourselves," Donovan said. "Our guys were the ones who did all the work and battled."

Walker delivered the game's biggest shot, a fall-away, 21-foot 3-pointer over Michigan State point guard Kalin Lucas with 1:56 left that put the Gators ahead to stay 72-71.

"The shot clock was winding down," Walker said. "He backed off me a little bit. I knew I had the space to take that shot."

After Summers missed the front end of a one-and-one, Walker then drew a foul from Lucas and made two free throws to extend the lead to 74-71 with 1:34 left.

Florida went 22-of-25 from the free-throw line, including making 13-of-14 in the final six minutes. Florida senior forward Dan Werner, from an hour up the road in Middletown, N.J., made two huge free throws with 17.3 seconds left to put Florida ahead 77-74.

The Gators will play Rutgers in the Legends Classic finals tonight at 8. Rutgers beat UMass 83-77 in the earlier semifinal.

"With what we've gone through the last couple of years, how we've grown and matured as a team, this is a great win for us," Werner said. "And we're going to find out even more about ourselves tonight because we can't afford to let up."

Chandler Parsons led five Florida players in double figures with 14 points. Walker added 12 points and seven assists. Alex Tyus had 11 points, Vernon Macklin had 10 points and Ray Shipman scored 10 off the bench.

Lucas led Michigan State (4-1) with 20 points. Draymond Green added 15 points off the bench.

The Florida win denied Michigan State coach Tom Izzo from breaking Jud Heathcote's school record of 340 victories.

"That was a good team we lost against tonight, a top-20 team in the country," Izzo said.

After forcing 23 turnovers against Florida State, Florida forced 23 more turnovers against Michigan State. The Gators scored 28 points off the 23 turnovers.

Michigan State threatened to put the game away, going ahead 50-43 on a Lucas layup with 13:39 left. But after Donovan called a timeout, Florida responded with a 6-0 run, cutting the Michigan State lead to 50-49 on a pair of Werner free throws with 10:17 left.

"When we went down seven, we kept fighting and battling and were resilient and handled it," Donovan said.

Werner later hit a big 3-pointer with 6:32 left to cut the Michigan State lead to 59-57. Then, Walker gave up his body to get a steal off the press at midcourt. Walker then made two free throws to tie the score at 59.

The teams traded baskets for the next three-and-a-half minutes, with Parsons hitting four straight free throws to tie the score at 69.

Florida led 38-36 in the first half, scoring 22 points off 14 Michigan State turnovers. The Gators had eight first-half steals, with seven different players getting at least one steal.

Florida started the game in a 3-2 zone and threw a mix of zone presses at Michigan State that were effective early. Tyus sparked an early run with a turnaround and three-point play, banking in a shot as Roe fouled him. Freshman Kenny Boynton then followed with a steal and breakaway layup to give the Gators an early 9-2 lead.

That's when Green came off the bench to spark the Spartans. He scored on a putback to cut the Florida lead 11-9, then tied the score at 11 on a dunk in transition. Green capped off his stretch of seven straight points with a three-point play that gave Michigan State its first lead of the half, 14-13.

Florida regained the lead 17-14 on a Parsons 3-pointer. Shipman hit a 3-pointer to put the Gators up 23-18 and the Gators extended its lead to 27-20 on a Macklin dunk off a nice feed from Walker in transition.

Freshman Erik Murphy converted a three-point play to put the Gators ahead 34-27 with 3:40 left in the half. But Michigan State responded with a 7-0 run. Delvon Roe scored back-to-back baskets on open layups to cut the Florida lead to 34-31. Then, Lucas converted a three-point play, hitting a 14-foot jumper as he was fouled by Walker to tie the score at 34 with 2:08 left.

Macklin put Florida back ahead 36-34 on a driving baseline layup. Shipman followed with a steal and layup that extended the lead to 38-34. But Green followed with a layup with 57.9 seconds left to cut the Florida lead to 38-36. Michigan State had a chance to tie at the end of the half, but Lucas missed the front end of a one-and-one with 1.9 seconds left.

Of Michigan State's 36 first-half points, 20 were in the paint. The Spartans had three dunks and three putbacks in the first half. Overall, Michigan State outrebounded Florida 21-10 in the first half.

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