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## Syracuse holds off Georgia Tech's upset bid to win Legends Classic

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By JOHN O'KANE, For The Press | Posted: Sunday, November 28, 2010

ATLANTIC CITY - Syracuse is the most overrated men's basketball team in the last 30-plus years at the school. The offense is terrible and if it wasn't for an easy schedule to open the season, the team may be 1-5.

Those aren't harsh words from a sports critic, a radio talk-show host or even a disgruntled fan.

Those are just a sampling of thoughts Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim has had on his own squad.

Ouch.

The Orange, the No. 9 team in the country in The Associated Press poll, came from behind to beat Georgia Tech 80-76 on Saturday in the final of the Legends Classic at Boardwalk Hall.

And college coaches across the country could be heard saying they wish they could be as "bad" as Syracuse.

"This is the first time that we've gotten into a regular game with someone that came out and played with us, so we were able to establish our offensive rhythm, which we just haven't been able to do," Boeheim said.

The Orange are 6-0 this season, but they have been anything but dominant.

Georgia Tech led most of the first half with Glassboro native Brian Oliver leading the way.

Oliver, who attended high school in Delaware, scored the team's first 10 points of the game.

And he wasn't done.

The sophomore forward made four 3-pointers in the first half and scored 18 of the team's 36 first-half points. He finished with 32 points and six rebounds.

"I was just surprised that I was getting so many open looks, especially after the first couple makes," Oliver said. "I feel like when they give me open space, take the shot. It does help that I caught a little fire, too."

Syracuse didn't lead until C.J. Fair sank a deep 3-pointer with nine seconds left to give the team a 38-36 halftime lead.

The defending Big East champs didn't wait long to give the lead back.

Oliver picked up right where he left off in the second half, making two early 3-pointers as the Yellow Jackets took a 49-44 lead three minutes into the second half.

That's when Boeheim's "terrible" offense and famed matchup zone defense took over.

The Orange went on a 22-4 run to grab a 13-point lead and wouldn't look back.

Syracuse had five different players in double figures, led by Kris Joseph's 19. Joseph was on the all-tournament team along with teammate Rick Jackson, who had double-doubles in both games and was named tournament MVP.

"I've got to hand it to the big fellow," Joseph said. "He doesn't get too many touches within the offense. He does it off the muscle. He's efficient down there. You got to give him his respect. He gets a lot of offensive rebounds and put-backs. He deserves that MVP."

One part of the Orange's offense that impressed Boeheim was its balance.

"We need to have balanced scoring," Boeheim said. "We don't have a guy that's going to go out there and get 30. We need to have balance every night, and I think we did that tonight."

"We need to score to win. It's not a matter of killer instinct. We were being killed, and we needed to instinctively react and win."

Joseph and Jackson were joined on the all-tournament team by Oliver, UTEP's Randy Culpepper and Michigan's Darius Morris.

Notes: The four schools in the Classic did not bring their bands to Atlantic City. No Problem. Atlantic City High School's band stepped in and more then held its own, even getting a late ovation from the crowd after being introduced by the public-address announcer. ... It was a tough day for former NBA star Glen Rice. Rice's alma mater, Michigan, lost to UTEP in the consolation game and Rice's son, Glen Rice Jr., plays for Georgia Tech. ... All six of Syracuse's games this season have been within three points at halftime.

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**SYRACUSE (6-0)Totals 25-45 26-38 80.GEORGIA TECH (4-2)Totals 30-63 8-12  
76.Halftime3-Point Goals-Fouled OutRebounds-Assists-Total FoulsA-**

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