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## Rapid Reaction: NC State 77, Texas 74

By Andy Katz



EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. -- NC State pulled off one of the more remarkable comebacks I've seen after coming back from 18 down to beat Texas [77-74](#) in the consolation game of the Legends Classic at the IZOD Center at the Meadowlands.

**Overview:** Texas dominated the game early. The Longhorns had their way getting to the basket, creating shots for the perimeter players and exposing the Wolfpack's inability to stop the ball either along the baseline or in front. Texas was up 43-33 at the half and built an 18-point lead in the second half. But then there was a bizarre collapse.



[J'Covan Brown](#), who had emerged as UT's go-to scorer -- the one veteran player who was a given to produce -- had a costly meltdown. He already had four personal fouls and then committed his fifth by questioning a call. He was given a technical and he was gone, with Texas up by 13 with 8:25 remaining.

The collapse continued as NC State became the aggressor, finding ways to score from the perimeter and getting inside at will. NC State chipped away at the lead and went on a 12-0 run. [Alex Johnson](#) buried a 3-pointer and [C.J. Leslie](#), playing in his second game of the season after a three-game suspension, got to the bucket to score too.

The Pack flustered the Texas offense and ended up closing out the victory. Foul problems cursed the Longhorns as [Alexis Wangmene](#) fouled out as well. Earlier in the game, UT's [Jonathan Holmes](#) and [Sheldon McClellan](#) were able to score. But then the offense went in the tank. Freshman phenom [Myck Kabongo](#) had his most pedestrian game of the season. He was 0-for-2 with one point, three assists and three turnovers.

**Star of the game:** It's hard to pick one. Each of the Wolfpack standouts -- Leslie, [Scott Wood](#) (who didn't play against Vanderbilt due to a sprained ankle), [Lorenzo Brown](#) and [DeShawn Painter](#) (before he fouled out) -- all had their moments. This was a win that can change a season because of the way in which the Wolfpack never quit. Impressive.

**What this means:** NC State won a game that it wouldn't have been able to a season ago. This team was dead in the water, down 18. But the Pack showed the kind of fire that can get this program moving in the right direction.

NC State was integrating two new players for the first time here in New Jersey with Wood being out the previous game and most of the Princeton victory due to a sprained ankle. NC State also got good news earlier Monday when Belgium big man [Thomas de Thaeys](#) was cleared by the NCAA. The Wolfpack flew him up for the game Monday. He played only two minutes but was around the ball with a rebound and an assist.

NCSU has as much, if not more, talent than any other team in the ACC outside of North Carolina, Duke and Florida State. Leslie, Howell, Wood, Brown, Painter, Johnson and [C.J. Williams](#) are all scorers. There is length on this squad. And the Wolfpack have the ability to defend when they focus, which was the case in the turnaround against Texas in the second half. NC State has the ability to cause problems for teams on their schedule, even a squad like Syracuse, if it can take care of the basketball and not go through lulls.

Meanwhile, Texas can rebound from this crushing defeat. This is still a young squad that lost three players early to the NBA draft. Kabongo has to settle down and make better decisions. Holmes, McClelland and Wangmene can be effective offensive players. [Clint Chapman](#) is scrappy but has to be more productive in the post. The issue for the Longhorns will be can Brown mature and not lose control like he did Monday night?

The Longhorns will be a tougher team to deal with in the Big 12. But few probably saw Texas leaving New Jersey 0-2.

**What's next:** NC State plays Elon on Friday, but the more important games on the schedule are against Indiana on Nov. 30, at Stanford on Dec. 4, against Syracuse Dec. 17 and against St. Bonaventure in Rochester on Dec. 20. Texas plays Sam Houston State on Saturday. But the Longhorns' next true test will be at UCLA on Dec. 3 before rugged games later in the month against Temple (Dec. 17) and at North Carolina (Dec. 21).

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