

N.C. State rallies from 18 down to beat Texas 77-74

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EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. -- Scott Wood made up his mind to play and it turned out to be a great decision for North Carolina State.

The 6-foot-6 junior guard had 16 points for the Wolfpack, who overcame an 18-point second-half deficit to beat Texas 77-74 on Monday night in the third-place game of the TicketCity Legends Classic at the Izod Center.

Wood missed the Wolfpack's loss to No. 18 Vanderbilt in the semifinals Saturday with an ankle injury. Coach Mark Gottfried was planning not to have Wood play against Texas. It was the player who made the decision to go.

"I was real concerned about his ankle. I didn't think he was going to be able to play and I wasn't going to play him," Gottfried said. "But about 1 or 2 p.m., he came to me and said he wanted to give it a go. He convinced me to play him. No question, he was a big factor. He made a huge difference. He's a threat, especially when he gets even a little open. You have to go out and guard him."

C.J. Leslie scored 17 points for the Wolfpack (4-1), who trailed 65-47 with 11:43 to play when they finally started hitting shots — and that included Wood. They were able to go on a 19-1 run that tied the game at 66 with 6:10 to play on two free throws by Lorenzo Brown.

North Carolina State eventually went up 75-67 on a drive by Brown with 2:58 to go.

"It's still numb. I can't move much," Wood said of his ankle. "Once I came out, it was tough to get it going again. But I wasn't coming out. In the beginning of the day, I didn't think I'd be able to get in the game. But I did a little sprint work with the trainers and I felt a little better, but I still didn't know if I could go."

Texas (2-2) made its first field goal in a span of just less than 9 minutes, part of a three-point play by Sheldon McClellan that brought the Longhorns within 75-70.

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Texas forward Alexis Wangmene, left, gets a hand on the ball held by North Carolina State guard Lorenzo Brown during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in the Legends Classic on Monday, Nov. 21, 2011, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Texas had two chances to tie the game in the final 10 seconds but Jonathan Holmes missed a 3-point attempt from the corner and, after Leslie missed two free throws with 9 seconds to go, Julien Lewis was short with a 3 at the buzzer that was knocked away by Richard Howell of the Wolfpack.

The ball was not going in the basket, so there was no goaltending call.

"I thought it was short," Texas coach Rick Barnes said.

Brown had 11 points for North Carolina State.

"It speaks a lot about this team," Wood said of the win. "We had every excuse to lay down, but we came back and that shows a lot of character."

J'Covan Brown led the Longhorns with 17 points and Holmes and McClellan added 16 each. It was Brown's lack of self-control that became the turning point of the game.

Brown, who averaged 29.3 points over the first three games, picked up his fourth foul with 8:25 to play and the Longhorns leading 65-52. As he walked to the bench he said something to official Earl Walton and was called for a technical foul, which meant he fouled out of the game.

Wood made two free throws on the technical, Leslie made two on the personal and North Carolina State was within 65-56 and in the midst of the game-changing run.

"We have a fairly young team and when your older players do that, it's just wrong. He has to grow up," Barnes said. "He's been in the program for three years. He should know he just can't do that. Sooner or later, he has to figure out that it's a team game and he has to realize that it's not about him. He has come a long way, but he should have had it all figured out by now."

Texas played much better defense than it did in its 100-95 overtime loss to Oregon State in the semifinals, and the Longhorns also cut their turnovers from 23 to 13.

"We've been in this position before, but three of those freshmen were named Durant, Augustin and James. They turned out to be pretty good," Barnes said. "We definitely didn't deserve to win the game the other night (against Oregon State), but we played better tonight. We want to continue to improve."