

www.baltimoresun.com/sports/terps/bs-sp-terps-pitt-hoops-1119,0,4761414.story

baltimoresun.com

Maryland hangs in, but comes up short against No. 5 Pittsburgh, 79-70

By Jeff Barker

Baltimore Sun reporter

10:05 PM EST, November 18, 2010

NEW YORK

Are there moral victories in college basketball? Maryland hung in Thursday night against a bigger, experienced Pittsburgh team before falling, 79-70, at Madison Square Garden in the 2K Sports Classic Benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer.

"You're just trying to find out how good you are as a team," Maryland coach Gary Williams said. "We have some guys, this is their first big game and it happened to be at Madison Square Garden. I thought we did a good job overall."

Ultimately, the Terps fell under the weight of Pitt's size - the fifth-ranked Panthers outrebounded Maryland, 49-28.

Pittsburgh's inside strength forced the Terps into foul trouble. With about five minutes to go, all five Maryland players on the floor had three fouls apiece. Forward Dino Gregory fouled out in the final minute.

Maryland was also hurt by poor free-throw shooting. Time and time again, the Terps missed the front end of one-and-ones.

Maryland -- which had shot 5-for-18 from the line against College of Charleston on Nov. 10 -- did not make its first three throw until about 14 minutes remained in the contest. The Terps missed their first seven from the line and finished 14-for-30.

"Of course it's a concern," Williams said. "We make our free throws in the first half, we probably have the lead."

Pitt used its inside game to get to the line 37 times, making 26.

But Maryland showed resolve in a building in which Pitt -- which plays in the Big East tournament here -- had won 12 of its past 17 games. The Terps were led by Cliff Tucker (17 points).

advertisement



Aided by a vocal group of fans, the Terps hung in with sticky defense. The Panthers made just nine of their first 30 shots. Maryland pressed full court in the second half and looked to run whenever possible.

Maryland found itself trailing 42-29 after a 3-pointer by Pitt guard Ashton Gibbs early in the second half.

But the Terps came back. A dunk and a foul shot by Dino Gregory cut the deficit to three. A few moments later, Berend Weijs banked in a shot and converted a free throw to tie the contest at 46.

Pitt seemed to wear down Maryland after that.

Pitt, led in scoring by freshman Talib Zanna (14 points), extended its lead to 64-56 on a dunk by Gilbert Brown.

Maryland pulled to within 70-66 on a Jordan Williams dunk with about two minutes left. He missed the ensuing free throw. Overall, Williams (14 points) shot 2-for-7 from the foul line.

"They felt good," he said, unable to explain the misses.

"We make free throws tonight, we win the game," he added. "That's the No. 4-ranked team in the country [in the USA Today/ESPN Coaches poll]. I think we're No. 3.

"I really believe that. You have to think that way."

Williams said he got tired near the end. "They had two guys going on me the whole time. Playing against guys like that, you get tired."

Pitt focused on trying to stop Jordan Williams inside.

"We double-teamed him early, tried to take him out of his rhythm," Pitt coach Jamie Dixon said. "He may be the best low-post scorer in the country."

Dixon said of Pitt and Maryland, "I think neither team was as good as they're going to be later in the year."

The Terps were forced to foul in the final minute, and Pitt sealed the game at the line. Maryland plays at 5 p.m. today against the loser of Thursday night's Illinois-Texas game, which did not end in time for this edition.

jeff.barker@baltsun.com

twitter.com/sunjeffbarker

Copyright © 2010, [The Baltimore Sun](#)