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Talib Zanna Unlikely Hero as Pitt Holds Off Cliff Tucker, Maryland

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[Talib Zanna](#) and Pitt's deep roster saved the Panthers from deep trouble.

Zanna, a redshirt freshman, scored 14 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for his first career double-double as No. 5 Pitt held off Maryland 79-70 in the semifinal of the 2K Sports Classic.

Pitt star guard [Brad Wanamaker](#) mostly watched the decisive minutes from the bench. Wanamaker was in foul trouble much of the game and picked up his fourth on a charging call with 9:59 left to play. Wanamaker played limited minutes and scored 10 points after scoring 58 in his first three games.

The Panthers got heavy minutes out of nine players in a foul-filled game. Five Pitt players scored in double figures and seven scored at least seven points.

Meanwhile, Pitt's best defense was putting [Maryland](#) at the free throw line. The Terrapins shot a miserable 14-30 from the free throw line, many on the front end of one-and-ones.

Still, the Terrapins didn't make it easy for the Panthers, who won their last two games by an average of 43.5 points in up-and-down routs.

Maryland did a better job against Pitt's transition game than its last two opponents, aided by Wanamaker's foul trouble, and seemed to stage a comeback at any deficit. The Terrapins took the first lead of the game greater than one possession when they ahead 25-21 on a nifty drive by [Cliff Tucker](#) more than 15 minutes into the game. But the Panthers countered with a 10-2 to end the half to take a 31-27 lead heading into the locker room.

Pitt stretched its margin to 42-31 early in the second half, but Maryland rallied to tie the game at 46. But the Terps couldn't take the advantage again and Pitt managed to hold on to advance to the final Friday night.

Tucker led Maryland with 17 points, while Jordan Williams scored 14 points and pulled down nine rebounds, though the Terps star was also limited by early foul trouble.

Maryland struggled to compete on the glass against Pitt. The Panthers outrebounded Maryland 43-23 and allowed just five offensive rebounds. Nasir Robinson, the team's gritty rebounding and defense-first forward, played his first game since undergoing knee surgery before the start of the season. He returned two weeks earlier than expected and scored four points off the bench.

The big story, though, was Zanna. The Nigerian-born freshman gave the Panthers a strong post presence on an off night for starting center Gary McGhee and showed tremendous poise on the defensive end. He recorded the Panthers only block and broke up a Maryland 3-on-2 with Pitt leading 62-56, a defensive stop that turned into a Gilbert Brown dunk on the other end.

Zanna's emergence made up for a series of errors by Pitt's upper classmen. Wanamaker's foul trouble stalled the Pitt offense, particularly limiting backcourt mate Ashton Gibbs. The charge that gave him his fourth foul came in a series of two charges and a foul that kept Maryland alive.

Moments earlier, Brown picked up a technical foul after he collected his own rebound off a miss and threw down a momentum-changing dunk. But Brown lifted himself on the rim and slapped the backboard, sending Maryland to the free throw line to cut into a 55-48 Panther advantage.

Predictably, Maryland only hit one of the two technical free throws, then missed the front-end of a one-and-one on the subsequent possession.



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