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ROGER RUBIN

Friday, November 18, 2011

On five occasions last season, St. John's savored the sweetness of upsetting a nationally ranked foe at the Garden. This new version of the Red Storm, with six newcomers in a seven-man rotation, has taken two shots at it over the last two nights but still hasn't gotten a drop.

Nurideen Lindsey was able to get to the free throw line with 2.3 seconds left against No. 19 Texas A&M in the 2K Sports Coaches vs. Cancer Classic consolation game Friday with the Red Storm looking at a one-point deficit.



Friday's game against Texas A&M turns out to be just out of reach...

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But the sophomore was too short on the first and a little too strong on the second, which rattled out. The Aggies' Elston Turner corraled the rebound for a 58-57 A&M victory.

If there is an irony in the Johnnies losing at the free throw line, it is this: free throws were the one place that St. John's had a lopsided advantage, taking 38 to the Aggies' three. The Storm missed 16 of them.

"The first one I knew was short. But the second one felt pretty good.... It came out," said Lindsey, who came in making 62% and was 8-for-14 on the stripe to that point. "I'll work to get back to that foul line and get more opportunities like that."

After a hotly contested nine-point loss to No. 15 Arizona Thursday, the Johnnies (3-2) again felt pain of a near-miss.

"(Thursday) night turnovers were really costly. Tonight is was free throws," Storm coach Steve Lavin said. "Both games, down the stretch, we weren't able to put away an opponent because of something we can control...correctable errors."

Lindsey and freshman D'Angelo Harrison each scored 12 and freshman Moe Harkless and freshman Phil Greene each added 10 for St. John's. Ray Turner scored 16 for A&M (3-1).

St. John's trailed by 11 in the first half and 10 in the second, grabbing its first lead, 55-54, on two Lindsey free throws with 4:23 left. Their other lead was 57-56 when Harkless made one of two free throws with 21.6 seconds to play. The Aggies' Turner sank a 13-footer for the 58-57 margin.

A tearful Lindsey received support from teammates.

"They told me not to hang my head about the situation. They want me to be in that situation....they have the utmost confidence in me and that they know if I get another opportunity like that I'll come through."

STATE OF GRACE: In the title game, Mississippi State never trailed and pulled away late for a 67-57 win over No. 15 Arizona, its second win over a ranked foe in two days. Classic MVP Arnett Moultrie scored 19 for State (4-1), and Solomon Hill had 12 for Arizona (4-1).

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