



Updated: Sat., Nov. 19, 2011, 8:16 AM

St. John's loses to Texas A&M by one point after missed free throws

By LENN ROBBINS

Last Updated: 8:16 AM, November 19, 2011

Posted: 1:46 AM, November 19, 2011

The first free throw never had a chance. It barely scraped the front of the rim. The second did everything but drop.

Nurideen Lindsey clapped his hands once in disappointment and could only head toward the bench, a look of disbelief on his face.

It would be easy to pin St. John's 58-57 loss to Texas A&M in the consolation game of the 2K Sports Classic at the Garden on those two free throws with two seconds left, but the Red Storm made enough mistakes in the final five minutes to share the blame.

Red Storm coach Steve Lavin took these two games — Thursday's 81-72 loss to Arizona and last night's one-point setback to the Aggies — so his young team could learn what's it like to face big-time competition before the start of the Big East Conference schedule.

In the two losses, the Red Storm have learned they must take better care of the ball (31 turnovers, 14 last night), shoot better from the foul line (22-of-38 against A&M) and not fall behind early (23-12 against the Aggies and 19-10 against the Wildcats).

The ending, however, might provide the most important lesson:

How will a team this young support a teammate who didn't get it done in the clutch? The answer to that might prove more important than correcting the physical flaws.

"You can't just blame Nuri," guard D'Angelo Harrison said. "Everybody missed free throws, at least two. I missed two free throws, so I feel like I lost the game."

The officials gave the Red Storm (3-2) every chance to win the game. They went to the line 38 times. Texas A&M (3-1), which got 16 points from Ray Turner, got just three free throw attempts.

"New York's a great city," Aggies coach Billy Kennedy said jokingly, when asked about the free throw disparity. "I think justice was served at the end."

Lindsey, who was 8-of-16 from the line, said he was in a similar situation in high school — down one with two seconds left — and missed both. He was so distraught he boarded the team bus without speaking to the media, but manned up enough to speak to reporters on the phone.

"I do it every day, shooting free throws," Lindsey said. "I was thinking positive in that situation, win the game. I'll try to stay positive about it and not have a battle in my head about it. I'll get in the gym and give myself more opportunities like that and not miss them next time."

The Red Storm, who got 12 points each from Harrison and Lindsey and 10 each from Moe Harkless and Phil Greene, blew too many opportunities down the stretch, when they were 4-of-10 from the line, committed a turnover and took one shot ridiculously early in the shot clock. But after Elston Turner hit a 16-foot jumper with 7.2 seconds left, Lindsey — who was named to the all-tournament team — took a pass from Harkless and charged to the basket.

He was fouled, going up with two seconds left. There was some confusion before he stepped to the line, so Lavin called Lindsey over.

"Have fun with it," Lavin said.

He didn't. Now we see how the Red Storm goes from here.

lenn.robbs@nypost.com

NEW YORK POST is a registered trademark of NYP Holdings, Inc.
[NYPOST.COM](http://nypost.com), [NYPOSTONLINE.COM](http://nypostonline.com), and [NEWYORKPOST.COM](http://newyorkpost.com) are trademarks of NYP Holdings, Inc.
Copyright 2011 NYP Holdings, Inc. All rights reserved. [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
