

NDSU Knocks Off Notre Dame Behind Bjorklund's 26 Points

[box score](#)

SOUTH BEND, Ind. – Marshall Bjorklund scored 26 points to lead North Dakota State to a road victory over Notre Dame, 73-69, in the BlackRock Gotham Classic at Purcell Pavilion on Wednesday night. Lawrence Alexander added 16 points and a career-high 14 rebounds to help the Bison (7-3) earn their fifth straight win.

Pat Connaughton scored 21 to lead Notre Dame (7-3). The Bison limited the Fighting Irish to 20-for-56 shooting (35.7 percent) for the game.

Jerian Grant hit a pair of free throws to get the Irish within one point, 67-66, after Bjorklund fouled out with 42.1 seconds left, but Taylor Braun knocked down a pair from the line, then stole the ball as the Irish pressed for a shot. He fed the ball ahead to Kory Brown, who slammed it in with 16 seconds left to seal the victory. Braun finished with 13 points.

NDSU becomes just the second Summit League team in history to win a road game against an ACC opponent (IUPUI, 12/29/01 at Georgia Tech). This was NDSU's first meeting with an ACC opponent.

Entering the game, Notre Dame was 124-10 at home since the start of the 2006-07 season and 76-2 in its last 78 home non-conference games. The Fighting Irish own the nation's fourth-highest home win percentage over the previous seven seasons. Bjorklund's 26 points were the second-most in his career, just one point shy of the 27 he scored against Fresno State on Nov. 26, 2011.

Connaughton scored a pair of breakaway baskets five minutes into the second half to give the Irish their first lead since 7:12 of the first half. The second, a one-handed slam after Garrick Sherman tipped the ball away from Bjorklund on the other end, brought the Notre Dame crowd to life for the first time since the opening tip and capped a 9-2 run.

After the Bison scored six straight get their lead back to three, Connaughton knocked down a 3-pointer to tie it with 9:20 to go, but the Irish couldn't keep their momentum going.

Bjorklund responded with consecutive buckets down low as the Irish continued to fire, and miss, from the arc. Their next four shots from the field after Connaughton's three were misses from deep, but Atkins managed a traditional three-point play on a tough drive to the hoop with 6:21 to go to get Notre Dame back within one.

But North Dakota State kept feeding Bjorklund in the paint, and he continued to deliver, knocking down two more jump hooks in the lane to put the Bison back up by five points. Notre Dame countered by switching to a zone, and Tom Knight corralled a steal and blocked a Bjorklund shot on consecutive possessions.

Another Connaughton 3-pointer at 2:11 cut the Bison lead back to two.

The Bison took a 39-37 lead into halftime after shooting 58 percent (14-for-24), including 71 percent (5-of-7) from 3-point range. Bjorklund, Alexander and Braun each had 10 points in the first half, while Notre Dame's Demetrius Jackson knocked down three 3-pointers and scored 11.

Neither team led by more than six points all game.

