

West Virginia, Richmond Win in Gotham Classic

Staten's 24 Leads WVU Over NC State

Juwan Staten played like the best point guard in the country and his coach collected win No. 750 as 20th-ranked West Virginia knocked off NC State 83-69 tonight in the Gotham Classic at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

Staten scored 24 points and handed out six assists and Bob Huggins is now seven wins shy of passing Hank Iba for 13th place on the NCAA all-time victory list. West Virginia's 10-1 record to begin the year is the Mountaineers' best start since reaching the Final Four in 2010.

"Wanny was Wanny again," said Huggins. "He was very, very good."

Tonight, West Virginia had its best shooting performance of the season, knocking down 31 of 58 overall, including a seasonhigh seven 3-pointers.

Jonathan Holton, who came into tonight's game shooting just 12 percent from 3, nailed two big triples late in the second half, his first coming with 3:49 left from the corner to expand West Virginia's lead to nine.

His second 3 with 1:16 left gave the Mountaineers a 14-point cushion.

The game began as a foulfest and Huggins drew a technical foul arguing a call during the under-eight timeout when the Mountaineers were leading 18-16.

Ralston Turner missed both free throws – a recurring theme for the Wolfpack tonight. Huggins explained his technical foul afterward.

"I wasn't trying to get our guys going – I thought our guys were alright, I was trying to help the other three at that point in time," he said. "It was different."

Following the Huggins T, the Mountaineers went on a 19-6 run to take control of the basketball game. Staten got things going with a short jumper, Holton followed with a dunk, Staten got free for another jumper, Williams converted one close, then came two Staten free throws and another basket from Williams to give WVU a 10-point lead.

"Dev made some huge shots for us when we were kind of struggling to score points at the start of the second half," said Huggins.

Jaysean Paige contributed back-to-back baskets when he tipped in Brandon Watkins' miss and then nailed a 3 off an assist from Staten, and the Mountaineers finished the first half with a Jevon Carter 3 from the corner that banked in.

NC State (9-3) scored 11 of the first 14 points of the second half to reduce its deficit to one, 44-43, on a Trevor Lacey 3, but Staten eventually answered with a pull-up jumper.

The last 10 minutes of the game were perhaps West Virginia's most effective stretch of offense this season, particularly inside of four minutes when WVU had the lead and was able to keep the ball in Staten's hands with the floor spread. Staten had a hand in 10 of West Virginia's final 11 points either by scoring himself or dishing off to a wide open teammate.

Devin Williams also played well tonight, finishing with 16 points and a game-high eight rebounds. Williams made six of his 11 field goal attempts and also grabbed six defensive rebounds.

Paige came off the bench to contribute 11.

"This was really a good team win," Huggins said. "We get 11 minutes from Brandon (Watkins), we get 15 minutes from Elijah (Macon) and that's what we've got to have."

West Virginia's bench gave them 30 points tonight for a 19-point advantage. "That says a lot about our depth. I think at one point they had shot 15 free throws and we had shot two," said Huggins.

"There are times when I expect them to shoot more free throws than us because of the way we're playing but I didn't expect that disparity."

West Virginia made 10 steals and forced the Wolfpack to turn the ball over 23 times to offset State's 55.6 percent shooting from the floor, including making 8 of 14 from 3.

"They shoot 55.6 percent from the field, they shoot 63 percent in the second half and they lose by 14," Huggins point out.

Lacey finished with 24 and Anthony Barber added 16. State's other big gun, guard Ralston Turner, finished with 9 – six below his season average coming into tonight's game.

"Their good scorers struggled to get open (late in the game) because they were tired," said Huggins. "They had to help break the pressure."

Spiders Win Gotham Classic Battle Over Pepperdine

Richmond guards Kendall Anthony and ShawnDre Jones had their Garden moments, hitting big shots in the final three minutes of play as Richmond won a 65-63 victory over Pepperdine in Madison Square Garden.

But it was Richmond's forwards who ultimately propelled the Spiders (6-4) to victory over the Waves (7-3).

Redshirt-sophomore T.J. Cline was named Gotham Classic Most Outstanding Player after scoring a team-high 13 points on 5-of-6 shooting from the field. Cline added five rebounds and three assists. He has averaged over six rebounds during the last four games.

Junior Trey Davis swiped a career-high five steals, one of which led to a thunderous run-out dunk, as he tallied double digits for the second time this season with 11 points.

Terry Allen scored 11 points with four rebounds and Deion Taylor finished with nine points and five rebounds. Alonzo Nelson Ododa added seven points and four rebounds.

As a team, the Spiders won the rebounding for the second-straight game (24-22), holding even with six offensive rebounds apiece. UR's season-high 10 steals led to 10 fast break points and 12 points off turnovers. The Spiders also reached double figures in assists (11) for the ninth time this season.

Richmond outshot Pepperdine (54.8-50.0) in a game where interior offense came in bunches. The teams combined for 66 points in the paint and Richmond's aggressiveness led to 25 free throw attempts, the second-most this season.

The Waves had three players score in double figures, led by Shawn Olden's 13 points. Stacy Davis only finished with 11 points on 4-of-11 shooting despite averaging 16.8 points coming in.

The Spiders grabbed an early 12-4 lead after threes from Allen and Alonzo Nelson-Ododa. Pepperdine slowly chipped away as Richmond's offense slowed down and the Waves were able to take a 20-19 lead with 5:39 left in the first half, one of 12 lead changes in the game.

The Spiders trailed 32-28 with just a minute left in the half when ShawnDre' Jones hit a big three-pointer and then raced down the court with time expiring to hit a twisting layup at the buzzer, giving the Spiders a 33-32 lead at the break.

After initial jockeying back and forth at the beginning of the half, Richmond built a six-point lead after an offensive put-back from Nelson-Ododa, a cutting layup from Cline and a free throw from Taylor.

However, Pepperdine responded again and the margin was cut to 57-54 when Anthony got wide open on the wing and Cline fed him for a dagger three-pointer with 2:50 left.

After the teams traded layups and Pepperdine hit two free throws, Jones aggressively drove to the paint and finished at the rim to give Richmond a 64-58 lead with 1:06 left. Pepperdine responded with a three-point play and after a Spider turnover, UR opted to foul with a three-point lead and 14 seconds remaining.

Pepperdine's Jeremy Major hit both free throws, but Allen responded by hitting one of two free throws and Anthony grabbed the rebound on Pepperdine's last-second shot to tie, sealing UR's 65-63 win.

The win marked Richmond's first victory away from the Robins Center and first program win in Madison Square Garden.

The Spiders will go for the Gotham Classic sweep on Tuesday at midday against IUPUI.