

Kunkel's Career-High 35 Puts Belmont Over Boston College

BOSTON (AP) -- Belmont's first-year coach Casey Alexander broke into a smile and seemed a bit surprised when asked about his team's outstanding 3-point shooting.

"It was pretty good today, huh, but that's not something you can count on," he said after the Bruins shot 58 percent from beyond the arc in a 100-85 victory over Boston College on Saturday afternoon in the Gotham Classic.

Adam Kunkel scored 10 of his career-high 35 points during a game-breaking run, connecting on a pair of treys in the key spurt.

"It felt amazing. I was just living in the moment," said Kunkel, a 6-foot-3 sophomore guard. "My team had a couple of big stretches where we were just lighting it up. It was a lot of fun."

Nick Hopkins chipped in with 15 points, Nick Muszynski had 13 and Michael Benkert 10 for the Bruins (2-1). Kunkel was 5 for 9 on 3-point attempts and 10-of-10 from the free-throw line. Belmont was 15 for 26 on 3s.

Nik Popovic led the Eagles (3-1) with 23 points, and Derryck Thornton scored 15 with seven assists despite playing with a sore right ankle that sent him to the locker room briefly in the opening half.

"I was disappointed about how we guarded the ball, how we rotated. All the things we had done really, really well, we didn't do tonight," BC coach Jim Christian said. "A learning lesson for a lot of guys. I'm disappointed in myself and the way we played today. We're a better basketball team than that."

The Bruins used their torrid 3-point shooting during a 30-7 run over a 7:22 stretch, pushing their two-point lead to 79-54 on Hopkins' 3 from the right corner with just over 12 minutes to play.

During the run, Belmont went 6 for 7 from beyond the arc, connecting on all of them in a 4:43 stretch. Belmont went to the locker room holding a 49-45 edge after a well-played opening half that saw both teams shoot over 50 percent (BC 61, Belmont 55).

In the first half, the lead changed hands 16 times and neither team led by more than five.

Thornton, a graduate transfer from USC, went down and grabbed his ankle midway into the first half before heading to the locker room, but returned to action about two minutes later. He also limped off favoring the same ankle in the last game.

It was the first-ever meeting between the schools and was part of the Gotham Classic, which is made up of five teams (also Saint Louis, Eastern Washington and High Point) from across the country.

Boston College forward Jairus Hamilton missed his third straight game with a leg injury.