

Mississippi State breaks Century Mark in Downing UNA in Legends Classic Opener

Varnado had a big night with 16 points, 14 rebounds and seven blocked shots

[box score](#)

STARKVILLE, Miss. – Currently leading the nation in blocked shots, Mississippi State junior Jarvis Varnado knocked away seven and matched a career-high 16 points to power the Bulldogs to a 102-61 victory against the visiting North Alabama Lions in first-round action of the Legends Classic on Wednesday at Humphrey Coliseum.

Varnado now stands just three blocked shots away from becoming MSU's all-time career blocks leader.

He also slammed the boards for 14 rebounds to record his first double-double of the young season. Tying for the team lead was fellow junior Barry Stewart, who drained 3-of-5 treys for 16 points. Sophomores Elgin Bailey and Kodi Augustus continued their solid play with a combined 18 points and 12 rebounds, while Bailey's 10 points tied a career high.

A couple of standout freshmen had big games on the night, as Romero Osby recorded a new season-high point total before halftime and finished with 15 on 5-of-9 shooting along with a season-high four assists. Dynamic starting point guard Dee Bost tallied 10 assists, placing him just 30 assists shy of breaking into MSU's all-time single-season Top 10 by a freshman just three games into the season.

MSU, which hasn't trailed at all this year, stormed out of the gates behind three Varnado blocks in the first three minutes, while hitting five of their first seven attempts from the floor. Midway through the first half, State staked a 20-2 run, sparked by back-to-back threes from Osby and sophomore Riley Benock to hold a 48-30 halftime advantage.

North Alabama took the initiative into the second stanza, however, by scoring six straight points to start the half. Then holding just an eight-point lead, the Bulldogs responded in a big way with 11 unanswered points to pull away for good.

Approaching tonight's matchup leading the SEC in field-goal percentage defense (29.9%), three-point percentage (44.2%), and blocks (13.5bpg), Mississippi State continued its dominance. State held UNA to 31.3% shooting from the field, shot 44.0% from long-range, and blocked 13 shots.

MSU eclipsed the 100-point mark for the first time since scoring 101 against Bradley in the second round of the NIT in 2007, while State's bench accomplished a rare feat by combining for an impressive total of 47 points.

"Our bench presents a lot of toughness and effort," MSU coach Rick Stansbury said. "After we fix some of those mistakes, we are going to be able to sprinkle that into our rotation down the stretch."

Following suit, the Dawgs put up an outstanding number on the boards, outrebounding UNA, 51-27.

After the opening-round win, Mississippi State takes on Fairleigh Dickinson on Saturday in the second round of the Legends Classic. The Bulldogs tip off at 6 p.m. looking for their first 4-0 start since 2003-04.

