

Loyola Starts Fast, Holds Off Oral Roberts, 86-78, To Advance To CBI Semifinals

[box score](#)

CHICAGO - Loyola raced out to a 15-point halftime lead and knocked down nine straight free throws over the final 40 seconds to withstand a furious late charge in an 86-78 win over Oral Roberts in a College Basketball Invitational (CBI) quarterfinal game tonight at Gentile Arena. The Ramblers improve to 21-13 and equal their highest single-season win total since 1985. The Golden Eagles' season comes to an end with a 19-15 record.

Oral Roberts' Aaron Young hit a three-pointer and converted a four-point play in the first 72 seconds to put the visitors on top before Loyola found its rhythm. A three-point play from [Montel James](#) and a three-point basket from [Jeff White](#) gave the Ramblers their first lead and a 10-0 run later, highlighted by five points from [Earl Peterson](#), put LU on top 20-13 just past the midway point of the half. A three-pointer from [Milton Doyle](#) pushed the lead to double digits for the first time and another triple, this one from [Devon Turk](#), made it a 37-22 game with 3:29 remaining. Oral Roberts scored the next five points but Loyola answered with the final five of the half to carry a 42-27 lead into intermission. Loyola shot 48% in the half and recorded assists on 11 of 13 buckets while its defense limited to the Golden Eagles to just 36% accuracy.

A Doyle trey and a James jumper early in the second half gave LU its largest lead of the night (49-32) before Oral Roberts started to chip away. Six straight points sliced the margin to 11 but a steal and lay-in from Peterson bumped the lead back to 16 (54-38) five minutes into the half. A Darian Harris triple pulled ORU within 10 (56-46) but [Ben Richardson](#) had an answer, drilling a three from the left wing. With Loyola over the foul limit early, Oral Roberts used two Bobby Word free throws to get within nine with 8:29 to play. Back-to-back baskets from James, the second on a beautiful setup from Doyle in transition, kept the Golden Eagles at an arm's length and two Richardson free throws made it a 74-62 lead with 2:40 to play before a wild finish.

Word drilled two long three-pointers around a pair of Doyle free throws to cut it to eight and, after White split a pair at the line, Word drained another one to make it a 77-71 game with 43 seconds left. After Doyle hit 1-of-2, Young was fouled on a three-pointer and hit all three from the line to cut the deficit to four. Peterson hit four free throws on either side of Young making a pair and Word was fouled on a three-pointer with 16 seconds remaining. He hit the first two to cut it to four but missed the third. [Joe Crisman](#) secured the rebound and hit two free throws for his only points of the night to give LU some breathing room. Peterson hit two final ones with just under two seconds left for the final margin.

Peterson was terrific all night, finishing with 19 points (4-5 FGs, 11-11 FTs), four rebounds and five assists to lead the Ramblers. James finished with 17 points while [Christian Thomas](#) (15 points) and Doyle (14 points, four assists) also reached double figures. Young led Oral Roberts with 26 points.

Loyola advances to the CBI semifinals where it will host the winner of the Colorado/Seattle game on Wednesday night. Tip-off from Gentile Arena is scheduled for 7 p.m. Check back with www.loyolaramblers.com for the most updated information.