

Akron Tops Urbana, 81-37, in Legends Classic

[box score](#)

AKRON, Ohio – The University of Akron men's basketball team put on a defensive showcase to improve to 3-1 on the season as it defeated Division II Urbana (0-5) 81-37 on Tuesday in a Legends Classic sub-regional match-up at Rhodes Arena.

The 37 points by the Blue Knights was the third-lowest point total allowed by the Zips since they joined the Division I ranks (1980-81) and it is the third time in the last two-plus seasons that Akron has held an opponent under 40 points. UA downed Tiffin 97-35 (Nov. 19, 2006) and Western Michigan 69-36 (Jan. 27, 2007), both at Rhodes Arena.

The Akron defense held Urbana to 25.5 percent shooting from the field (12-for-47), while posting a 48-34 advantage on the glass. The Zips swarmed the Blue Knights defensively, forcing 26 turnovers and converting them into 37 points. In four games this season, Akron has forced 80 turnovers while committing 44, and holds a 91-34 advantage in points off turnovers.

Leading the way for the Zips was Nate Linhart with a game-high 16 points and a team-high-tying six boards. Chris McKnight added 14 points for Akron, which shot a season-best 50.7 percent from the field (34-for-67).

The bench once again played well for the Zips, posting 39 points, eclipsing the 30-point mark for the fourth-straight time this season. Steve Swiech, Ronnie Steward and Nikola Cvetinovic led the Akron bench with eight points apiece.

Akron opened the first half with a strong defensive effort, holding Urbana to just one basket on its first 16 possessions and forcing eight turnovers to lead 16-4 with 12:57 left in the half. The Blue Knights were held without a basket until the 14:05 mark, shooting 1-for-7 from the field during the stretch.

The Zips held Urbana without a point over the final 4:35 of the opening period to take a 49-13 lead into the locker room. For the half, Akron shot 50 percent from the field (20-for-40) while holding the Blue Knights to 16 percent (4-for-21). UA held a 29-16 advantage on the boards while forcing 19 turnovers, resulting in 25 points, and Urbana would not recover.

Chris McKnight led all scorers in the first half with 10 points on 5-for-9 shooting. He added six boards and one assist. Steward and Linhart added eight points each in the opening stanza.

The Zips conclude play in the Legends Classic this weekend with two games in Hackensack, N.J., meeting Eastern Kentucky on Saturday and host school Fairleigh Dickinson on Sunday. Both games are scheduled to start at 7 p.m. EST. UA opened its participation in the event with an 86-67 loss at sixth-ranked Pittsburgh last Friday.

