

Orange Defeats Michigan; Advances to Legends Classic Championship Game

[box score](#)

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. -- Junior Kris Joseph scored a season-high 22 points to lead No. 10/10 Syracuse to a 53-50 victory against Michigan in the semifinals of the Legends Classic on Friday, November 26 in Atlantic City, N.J. The Orange will face Georgia Tech in the title game of the Legends Classic on Saturday, November 27 at 8 p.m.

The victory is Syracuse's fifth straight to open the 2010-11 campaign, while the loss is Michigan's first of the season, giving it a 3-1 mark.

Joseph was one of three Syracuse players to score in double figures. Sophomore Scoop Jardine recorded 11 points, while senior Rick Jackson added 10 points and 12 rebounds for his fourth consecutive double-double and 11th of his career. Jordan Morgan and Stu Douglass paced Michigan with 11 points apiece.

Joseph scored five of Syracuse's first 10 points as the Orange jumped out to a 10-6 lead in the first four minutes of action. Sophomore Brandon Triche gave SU 12-9 lead but the Wolverines tied the score with a three-pointer at the 14:16 mark. The teams traded baskets before back-to-back buckets by freshman C.J. Fair and Jackson gave the Orange a 21-17 advantage. The Wolverines answered as Matt Vogrich hit a three-pointer to cut the lead to one and Stu Douglass' three-pointer gave Michigan a 23-21 lead. Fair recorded a tip-in basket to tie the score, but Douglass hit another outside shot, putting the Wolverine up by two, 25-23.

Freshman Dion Waiters netted his only basket of the game at the 5:11 mark to tie the score before Michigan scored six straight points to take its largest lead of the half, 31-25. Joseph ended Syracuse's scoreless drought of more than three minutes when he scored off an assist from Jardine, cutting the lead to 31-27. The Orange got the ball with less than 10 seconds remaining in the half, and Jardine was fouled on a drive to the basket. He hit two free throws with 2.6 seconds left to cut Michigan's lead to 31-29 at halftime.

After Michigan scored the first basket of the second half to increase its lead to 33-29, Triche stole the ball just past midcourt and converted a layup to cut the lead two. Triche's basket sparked the Orange on a 9-0 scoring run that gave Syracuse a 38-33 lead with 16:58 remaining. Joseph had five points during the run, while Jackson's bucket capped the run and gave the Orange its largest lead of the game.

The Wolverines responded with four straight points to even the score at 38-38 for the seventh tie in the game. Joseph and Jackson hit back-to-back baskets to again give the Orange a four-point advantage, but Michigan wouldn't go away. With SU leading 44-40, the Wolverines scored five unanswered points to take a one-point lead with 5:53 on the clock. The Orange responded with a basket by Jardine, SU's first points in nearly six minutes, which gave SU the lead for good. Syracuse hit four-of-six attempts from the free throw line in the closing minutes to record the 53-50 victory.

Jardine finished with five assists and a steal, while freshman Baye Moussa Keita pulled down nine rebounds, helping the Orange to a 39-37 advantage on the boards. He also had two blocks.

Syracuse goes for its sixth consecutive win when it takes on Georgia Tech (4-1) on Saturday, November 27 in the finals of the Legends Classic. The Yellow Jackets advanced the championship game by defeating UTEP, 71-61, in the first semifinal on Friday.

