

UTEP Climbs to 2-1 With 77-65 Win Over Western Carolina

Randy Culpepper keyed a 14-0 run with eight straight points as the Miners beat the Catamounts 77-65 on Saturday.

[box score](#)

EL PASO, Texas – Randy Culpepper triggered a 14-0 run with eight straight points, as UTEP mounted a 22-point lead in the second half on its way to a 77-65 win over Western Carolina on Saturday at the Don Haskins Center.

The Miners moved to 2-1 on the young season, knocking off the Catamounts (1-2) in a Legends Classic Regional Round game.

UTEP scored the last five points of the first half and the first nine of the second, turning a 32-30 lead into a 46-30 cushion. After Culpepper scored two three-pointers and a layup, Julyan Stone, Christian Polk and Jeremy Williams finished off the 14-0 spurt with buckets of their own.

The Miners forged a 66-44 cushion with 6:43 to play before holding off a late rally by Western Carolina, a 22-game winner last season.

Culpepper scored 24 points on a perfect night from beyond the arc (4-for-4). He moved past Antoine Gillespie into third place on UTEP's career scoring list with 1,725 points.

Three other Miners scored in double figures. Williams and Stone chipped in with 11 points each and Polk added 10. Stone has scored in double figures in three straight games for the second time in his UTEP career, tying his personal best streak in the process.

The Miners shot well in both halves, firing at a 46.2 percent clip in the opening 20 minutes and 63.2 percent after halftime for 53.3 percent on the night. They were stout on the defensive end of the floor as well, holding the Catamounts to a .355 field goal percentage including .273 in the second period.

UTEP dominated inside with a 48-18 edge in points in the paint and received a season-high 30 points from its bench, as Claude Britten led the way with nine points and six rebounds in 15 minutes.

Mike Williams, a high school teammate of Britten's, led Western Carolina with 18 points.

The Miners will host NM State in round one of the SONIC I-10 Rivalry Series on Tuesday at 7:05 p.m. A Miner-Aggie game in El Paso hasn't been sold out since 2004. Tickets are for sale by calling (915) 747-5234.