

Kelly helps Cal pull away from Hampton 80-66

By Michael Wagaman

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Two games into his freshman season Andre Kelly is feeling pretty good about his role with California.

Junior transfer Paris Austin looks comfortable, too.

Kelly scored five of his 15 points as part of a pivotal run midway through the second half and California pulled away to beat Hampton 80-66 on Tuesday night.

"It felt good that my teammates trust me, especially being a freshman, in key situations like that," Kelly said. "They're confident in me to give me the ball and make plays for the team. I'm happy tonight that I was able to come through."

Austin had 20 points and six assists, Justice Sueing added 17 points and seven rebounds and Darius McNeill scored 11 for California.

The Golden Bears (1-1) led by 17 at halftime then had to hold off a late surge by the Pirates to win their home opener after losing to Yale in China last week.

In that loss Cal shot a paltry 35.3 percent and had no rhythm to its offense.

"We were really excited so we just came out jacking up shots," Austin said. "Today our emphasis was great shots instead of good shots. We just continued to move the ball and do it at a face pace, and thing opened up for us."

After Kalin Fisher and Akim Mitchell scored on consecutive layups to cut Cal's lead to 61-55 with 9:14 remaining, Kelly scored on a three-point play. Austin added two free throws and Kelly made a layup as part of 9-0 run.

"They made their run and I was happy to see that we fought through it," Jones said. "The zone saved us in that because (Jermaine) Marrow was getting into the lane. That was a key. At the end of the day we're still a young team but we're continuing to grow. Tonight you saw them really look like a team.

Marrow scored 26 points for Hampton. The Pirates (1-2) are in their first season in the Big South.

WEAVING IT UP

The Bears repeatedly used the weave as part of their offense and Jones hinted it's likely to be a staple of Cal's offense.

"With teams that switch you want to get the mismatch," Jones said. "With teams that don't switch you want to run some clock. The weave was good for us tonight and something that we'll continue to use."

ETC.

All five Cal starters scored in double figures. . Hampton outrebound Cal 44-37. . The Bears had 15 assists after tallying six against Yale. . Cal shot 57.1 percent (8 of 14) on 3-pointers, higher than any game it had all of last year.

BIG PICTURE

Hampton: Give the Pirates credit for hanging around long enough to make a run in the second half but they couldn't get over the hump in the final four minutes. Marrow looks ready to follow up on his spectacular 2017 season, although he was called for a technical foul in the second half.

California: It definitely wasn't pretty but for a team that had only eight wins last season, the Bears will take what they can get. Kelly looks to be formidable in the middle and might be Cal's most versatile center in some time. It also says something that the Bears won despite being beaten on the boards.

UP NEXT

Hampton: The Pirates return home to face Bowling Green on Monday. Hampton has won 13 of its last 16 home games.

California: Hosts Detroit Mercy and first-year coach Mike Davis on Thursday in the second round of the Legends Classic before heading to Brooklyn next week for the final two games of the tournament. Davis has 352 career wins at Indiana, Alabama-Birmingham and Texas Southern.