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Cooper's Three Lifts Alabama To 65-62 Win Over Oregon State Crimson Tide start season 3-0 for second consecutive campaign

[box score](#)

NEW YORK CITY – Sophomore guard [Rodney Cooper](#) hit the game-winning three-pointer with 13 seconds remaining, while sophomore [Trevor Lacey](#) poured in 20 points to lift Alabama to a 65-62 victory in the semifinals of the 2K Sports Classic benefiting Wounded Warrior Project in Madison Square Garden.

With the win, the Crimson Tide moves to 3-0 on the year for a second straight season.

Lacey connected on 7-of-13 shots from the floor and 4-of-7 from beyond the arc to account for his second 20-point game of the young season (had a career-high 23 points vs. West Alabama on Nov.11). The Huntsville, Ala. native has connected on 61 percent (20-of-33) of his field goal attempts and 65 percent (11-of-17) of threes on the year..

Junior [Trevor Releford](#) finished with 14, 12 of which came in the opening 20 minutes of play, while Cooper finished with 12.

"I am excited to get the win and get the chance to play for a championship (Friday)," head coach [Anthony Grant](#) said. "I have to give Oregon State credit; we were able to get them down in the second half, they did a good job at fighting and making plays. I thought our guys did a good job at making the plays we had to make down the stretch, coming up with loose balls, and (Rodney) Cooper being able to knock down an open shot to give us the win. I am proud of our guys the way they continued to stay with it and fight. "

The first half was a back-and-forth affair, which featured seven ties and 11 lead changes. The Tide took the lead for good at the 5:45 mark of the opening stanza. Trailing by two, 28-26, Releford hit a layup and was fouled, which triggered a 9-4 run to end the half, giving Alabama a 35-32 lead at intermission.

The run continued to start the second half, with the Crimson Tide scoring 12 of the opening 14 points to take a commanding 47-34 lead. In all, the 21-6 Alabama spurt spanned halftime and lasted a total of 10:59.

Alabama built its lead to as many as 15 points (49-34) and looked to be in control. But Oregon State picked up its defense and began to chip away at the lead.

With the Tide leading 59-45 at the 8:46 mark, the Beavers went on 17-3 run over the next 8:02 to tie the game at 62 all with 44 seconds remaining, setting up Cooper's heroics.

"My teammates are confident in me taking shots and if they have confidence in me, I just want to make the shot for my team," Cooper said. "It means a lot making the shot, but it means even more to get the win for the team."

It marked the second game-winning three of the young season for Alabama. Back on Nov. 9, Lacey's three-pointer at the buzzer lifted the Crimson Tide to a 70-67 win over South Dakota State in Coleman Coliseum.

The Crimson Tide now moves on to the championship game of the 2K Sports Classic, which will take place Friday night at 6:30 p.m. CT (7:30 ET) on ESPN2. Alabama will face the winner of the Villanova-Purdue, currently in progress.