

Arizona Upsets Florida to Win IKON Classic

Anderson scores Cats' final six points to close out 75-71 victory

[box score](#)

NEW YORK (AP) -- Rick Anderson wasn't around for Arizona's run to last season's national championship game. He came up with the big plays Friday night that made it possible for the Wildcats to win the Coaches vs Cancer Classic with a second straight upset of a Top Ten team.

For the second straight night, Jason Gardner led Arizona with 23 points.

The junior forward, who sat out last season as a redshirt, scored Arizona's final six points and the Wildcats earned a 75-71 victory over Florida (No. 5 ESPN/USA Today, No. 6 AP) to win the season-opening event at Madison Square Garden.

On Thursday night, Arizona, which returned one starter from last season, shocked No. 2 Maryland 71-67. Maybe it wasn't such a shock.

"We're pleased to come in here and play two outstanding teams like this," said always low-key Arizona coach Lute Olson. "Tonight wasn't pretty, we didn't have the snap and fire we had last night but we competed hard and the one thing we learned in watching them for two nights, they are competitors."

Anderson, who finished with 11 points, hit an 18-footer as the shot clock expired with 1:41 left to give Arizona a 71-69 lead.

Orien Greene scored on a drive with 1:05 left to tie it.

Jason Gardner, who led the Wildcats with 23 points, was forced to call a timeout with 28 seconds left when he lost his dribble with 3 seconds left on the shot clock.

After three 30-second timeouts, two by Arizona, Gardner inbounded the ball to Anderson who took two strong dribbles and made a left-handed layup, again as the shot clock expired, and the Wildcats had the lead for good.

"I came out of the huddle and I thought I had could make the basket to win us this game," Anderson said.

Brett Nelson of Florida fell to the floor and was tied up with 14 seconds left. Playing under the experimental preseason rules, there was a jump ball instead of using the possession arrow.

The jump ball between Nelson and Luke Walton of the Wildcats resulted in a scramble at midcourt and another jump ball with 10 seconds left.

This time it was the centers jumping, Isaiah Fox of Arizona and Florida's Udonis Haslem. Florida controlled it but Matt Bonner fired a pass out of bounds.

Gardner was fouled with 4.9 seconds left and missed both, but he grabbed the rebound of the second, threw it high in the air and Anderson got it and made another layup as the horn sounded.

Gardner, who had 23 points in the opener and was selected as tournament MVP, wasn't his usual confident self as he went to the foul line.

"I was so nervous. My legs were shaking. My heart was shaking," he said. "I missed the first one. I missed the second and had a chance to grab it.

"Ricky hit the big shot and made the big layup. I think a lot of that is that he's a captain, a leader, a veteran."

The win in this tournament was sweet for Olson beyond the title and two big wins. His wife, Bobbi, died last January after a long battle with ovarian cancer.

"That was always on my mind and even though the freshmen didn't know her and how important she was to

this program, the veterans knew what it meant," Olson said.

Freshman Will Bynum finished with 16 points for Arizona.

Bonner had 15 points for Florida, while Haslem had 14 and Nelson 13.

"Those jump balls are like hockey faceoffs but we got the one we had to," Florida coach Billy Donovan said. "Matt Bonner was anxious with that pass and I feel bad for him for the pass he made. We had 10 seconds left. We could have got something.

"We were erratic. We had spurts where we played well and spurts where we played poorly, but we had the opportunities."

Nelson, who had seven assists, finished 5-for-15 from the field, 3-for-11 on 3s, after going 3-for-16 in the opener, including 2-for-10 on 3s. He shot 45 percent from 3-point range last season.

"I thought without a doubt after watching them play Maryland, Arizona was a top five team," Donovan said. "Anderson made a great play. I thought our guys psyche changed with 10.6 seconds left when that pass was thrown away. There was a change in our basketball team."

Maryland beat No. 16 Temple 82-74 in the third-place game.