

Johnson Comes up Big as the Dukes Defeat Akron 81-76

Junior scores a career-high 24 in 2K Sports Classic win

[box score](#)

VALPARAISO, IND. - Sean Johnson scored a career-high 24 points, including four big free throws in the final 22 seconds, to lead Duquesne to an 81-76 win over Akron in the 2K Sports Classic Subregional at Valparaiso, Ind.

Johnson's two free throws with 12 seconds left sealed the win after Akron's Brett McClanahan hit the second of two 3-pointers in an 8 second span to pull the Zips within three at 79-76 with 17 seconds left.

The win snapped a six-game series losing streak for the Dukes who moved to 3-1. Akron dropped to 2-2.

Eric Evans had 15 points, 5 rebounds and 7 assists and B.J. Monteiro added 14 points for the Dukes who shot 54.5 percent. T.J. McConnell scored 12 points for DU.

Seven-foot center Zeke Marshall led Akron with 19 points. McClanahan, who went 4-of-6 from the 3-point arc, finished with 18. Akron, which shot 57.1 percent from the field, missed 14 of its 28 free throw attempts.

Duquesne forced 15 Akron turnovers in jumping out to a 38-30 halftime lead. The Dukes hit just one of their first six field goal attempts of the second half as Akron pulled to a 40-40 tie on a Marshall dunk at the 15:58 mark. There were five ties and six lead changes before Mike Talley gave the Dukes the lead for good on a layup with 9:53 left.

DU extended the lead to 75-67 on a McConnell 3-pointer with a minute left before Nick Harney answered with a 3-pointer to cut it to five. Evans hit a pair of free throws to make it 77-70 with 37 seconds to go before McClanahan sandwiched his two 3-pointers around two free throws by Johnson.

It was then that Johnson, who finished 8-of-8 from the line, calmly stepped up and buried a pair of free throws for the final margin.

"I loved the way our guys kept their composure," said Duquesne head coach Ron Everhart. "We stayed with it and kept executing. I thought our defensive effort was terrific in the first half. We were able to get ball deflections and get out and go.

"That changed in the second half and we were able to do a good job with our offensive execution. I like our team's balance and I like our ballclub's mentality right now."

Mike Talley and Andre Marhold, who were both scoreless in the first half, scored 7 each in the second. All three of Marhold's field goals came in the final 4:15.

"I like the way Andre is developing," said Everhart. "He scored some big buckets down low and Mike hit a big 3-pointer for us with a little over six minutes left that gave us a little cushion."

Duquesne outscored Akron 21-11 off turnovers.

The Dukes conclude play in the 2K Sports Classic against host Valparaiso on Sunday at 4:30 ET.

