

Green Helps Florida Trip Up Wake Forest

Gators pull through in a close semifinal game

[box score](#)

NEW YORK – It was Taurean Green's turn to lead the Florida Gators.

Wake Forest's Trent Strickland puts up a shot against Florida's Al Horford.

The sophomore guard almost doubled his career high with 23 points and Florida upset No. 19 Wake Forest, 77-72, last night in the semifinals of the 2K Sports College Hoop Classic in New York.

The Gators (3-0) advanced to tonight's championship game against the winner of the semifinal between No. 16 Syracuse and Texas Tech.

"Taurean hasn't had that kind of game and he's not always going to score 23," Florida coach Billy Donovan said. "We're just a team that's going to have different people step up on different nights."

Green, whose previous best was 13 points as a freshman against Providence, hit a 3-pointer in the 8-1 run that gave Florida a 72-62 lead with 2:06 to play. His long jumper was the Gators' first field goal in a 5:36 span but Wake Forest had its own shooting slump at the same time.

Eric Williams scored down low for Wake Forest (2-1) with 1:49 left to make it 72-64. It was the Demon Deacons' first field goal in 5:54. What made it worse for them was that during the drought from the field they also missed four free throws, including the front end of two 1 and 1s.

"We couldn't stop the bleeding in that span when we missed free throws and had several empty possessions," Wake Forest coach Skip Prosser said. "That was the crucial point of the game. When we did get a stop we couldn't convert."

Justin Gray hit two 3-pointers in the final 25 seconds for Wake Forest, but Florida went 3 for 5 from the free throw line in that span. The Gators came up empty in just two of their final eight possessions.

Green, who had five assists and three steals, was 4 for 8 from 3-point range and 7 for 8 from the free throw line.

"It was like my old running days," Green said. "It just happened in the flow of the game. They were taking away the 3 from Lee Humphrey, so we just took what the defense gave us. It just happens."

Corey Brewer, who led the Gators in scoring in their first two wins, had 15 points and Al Horford added 11. Humphrey was 3 for 7 from 3-point range and had 9 points.

"They weren't going to let Lee shoot but he got a couple of looks and made three of seven," Donovan said. "Lee going 3 for 7 most nights would be good for us."

Williams led Wake Forest with 20 points, while Gray had 19 and Trent Strickland 18. The Demon Deacons shot 42.1 percent (24 for 57), well off the 62.1 percent they shot in their first two games, and committed 22 turnovers, seven by Gray.

"I didn't finish well," Williams said. "I was trying to adjust down the stretch. I shot too hard on a couple."

The loss ended a three-game winning streak at Madison Square Garden for Wake Forest, including the semifinals and finals of last year's Preseason NIT.

The first step toward what many project as a stellar season for Villanova begins tonight.

The No. 5 Wildcats host Stony Brook at the Pavilion in Philadelphia to end the hype and finally begin what they hope will be another special season.

"I think right now we're at the point where we're excited to play somebody," Villanova coach Jay Wright said. "We work so hard in practice. We look at it like this is our chance to play Villanova basketball. We do it against each other, and we're just beating each other up."