

JMU WINS SECOND STRAIGHT, DEFEATS NCCU 79-66

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[box score](#)

MIAMI, Fla. – Freshman guard Darren White (Danville, Va./Dan River) posted 20 points and nine rebounds to lead James Madison past North Carolina Central 79-66 on Monday afternoon in the final contest of the 2009 2K Sports Classic benefitting Coaches vs. Cancer at Florida International's U.S. Century Bank Arena.

JMU won its second in a row to improve to 2-2 for the season and 2-1 in the three-game Miami Regional in the 2K Sports Classic. NCCU fell to 1-5 for the season after going 0-3 in Miami.

The Dukes trailed 15-11 through the first five minutes of the opening half. However, a layup by senior forward Dazzmond Thornton (Denver, Colo./East) ignited an 18-1 outburst that put JMU ahead 29-16 with eight minutes to go. Thornton keyed the run with seven of the first nine points.

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White posted 20 points for the second straight night. He made seven of his 14 field-goal attempts with a trio of three-pointers and nine rebounds, including seven in the second half. White averaged 16 points in the three games in the classic.

Senior guard Pierre Curtis (Denver, Colo./East) tallied his best overall performance of the young season, converting every shot attempted to go with six assists and seven rebounds. He was 3-for-3 from the field with a pair of treys and made all eight free-throw attempts. That included six free throws in a stretch of 12 seconds in the second half when the Eagles were whistled for a personal foul, a technical foul for a player not reported in the scorer's book, and a technical foul on the bench.

Thornton finished with a season-high 14 points on 6-of-7 shooting from the floor. Sophomore forward Julius Wells (Toledo, Ohio/Libbey) had 13 points, four boards, and three assists. Junior guard Ben Louis (Melbourne, Australia/St. Francis Xavier) had a solid all-around game with eight points, five assists, three steals, and three boards.

NCCU guard C.J. Wilkerson led all players with 21 points, including 11-of-12 shooting at the free-throw line, along with seven boards and five assists. Nick Chasten added 12 points and six boards while Dami Sapara contributed nine points and eight rebounds.

Following the 18-1 run, the Eagles cut the lead to as low as eight at 34-26. However, the Dukes followed with another 9-0 run with dunks by White and senior forward Matt Parker (Charlotte, N.C./Statesville Christian) to go along with a three and a pair of free throws by Curtis.

JMU led by as many as 21 in the second half while NCCU got no closer than the final margin of 13. The Dukes shot 54.7% from the floor for the game despite making just six of their 21 attempts from long distance. The Eagles shot 37.7% from the floor while making five of 13 three-pointers.

Curtis advanced in several career statistical categories, including moving into 24th in career points with 988 to pass former teammate Kyle Swanston's 981 (2005-09). Curtis also moved into the top 10 in career minutes with 3,159, passing David Fanning (1999-2003) and Darren McLinton (1992-96). He passed Derek Steele (1980-84) for fifth in career assists with 344, tied former teammate Juwann James (2005-09) with 132 career steals, and tied Eugene Atkinson (1995-96) for seventh in career starts with 96.

After completing the 2K Sports Classic, JMU will play its home opener on Saturday, Nov. 28 at 7 p.m. against Maryland-Baltimore County.

UPDATE: Following the completion of the tournament with Murray State's 84-71 win over FIU, the 2K Sports Classic Miami Regional All-Tournament Team was announced. Both Julius Wells and Darren White represented JMU on the All-Tournament squad. White averaged 16.3 points and 6.0 rebounds in three games while Wells was nearly identical with 15.7 points and 5.7 rebounds.