

Maryland beats St. John's 92-60

The game was over by halftime

box score

NEW YORK (AP) -- Gary Williams couldn't stop talking about his team's quickness after Maryland's 92-60 victory over St. John's on Thursday night in the semifinals of the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic.

"We don't start big," the coach said, "we start quick."

The Terrapins started so quick the game was over by halftime as Ekene Ibekwe bettered his career high by outscoring St. John's in the opening 20 minutes.

The Terrapins (4-0) advanced to Friday night's championship game at Madison Square Garden against Michigan State, which beat No. 19 Texas 63-61.

Ibekwe, a 6-foot-9 senior who had 14 rebounds, scored all 22 of his points in the first half when he outscored St. John's (2-1) by one as Maryland took a 58-21 lead. His previous career best was 21 points, the last time against Boston College last season.

St. John's just couldn't handle Maryland's pressure defense and the Red Storm committed turnovers on the first three possessions of the Terrapins' 15-0 run that made it 25-6.

Maryland simply had to make layups after turnovers -- St. John's had 13 in the first half -- to build the big lead, and the Red Storm couldn't make a shot when they did handle the pressure, shooting 21.2 percent (7-for-33) in the half, including 2-for-11 from 3-point range.

"Our quickness showed up in our defense and in shot blocking," Williams said. "Then we got into our halfcourt offense. It was our rebounding and defense that got us off the fast start."

D.J. Strawberry, with his father, former New York Mets star Darryl Strawberry in attendance, had 13 of his 19 points in the first half when the Terrapins shot 53.7 percent (22-for-41) and had a 29-16 advantage on the boards.

"He's pretty good," the elder Strawberry said after the game. "I was impressed."

Mike Jones added 18 points for Maryland, which was never behind in the game and has trailed this season for a total of 1 minute, 23 seconds. James Gist had 12 points, 10 rebounds and five blocked shots for the Terrapins.

Anthony Mason Jr. had 12 points for St. John's, which seemed on the way to its worst loss ever. The Red Storm lost 97-55 to Duke on Feb. 24, 2002.

"We didn't play well. We didn't play defense, didn't rebound, were lackadaisical on the boards," St. John's coach Norm Roberts said. "We said this was going to be a barometer for our season and it sure shows we have a long way to go."

Maryland's biggest lead was 65-25 with 16:45 to play on a 3-pointer by Jones. The Red Storm scored the next six points, the last five by Mason.

The Red Storm finished with 17 turnovers, six off the number Maryland averaged forcing in its first two games.

St. John's was 20-for-43 from 3-point range in its first two games, but was 6-for-22 against Maryland.

"We didn't come out ready," St. John's guard Eugene Lawrence said. "It's pretty embarrassing to lose like this."

The tournament is sponsored by 2K Sports.

