

Memphis Holds Off Syracuse, 70-63

Freshman Carmelo Anthony debuts with 27 points for Orangemen

[box score](#)

NEW YORK (AP) - For openers, Memphis and Syracuse put a couple of hotshot freshmen in the Madison Square Garden spotlight in the first major college basketball game of the season Thursday night at the AT&T Wireless Coaches vs. Cancer Classic, and Jeremy Hunt and Carmelo Anthony shrugged off the pressure.

Memphis' Duane Erwin (11) and Syracuse's Jeremy McNeil battle for a rebound..

Hunt and Memphis won the freshman showdown 70-63 after letting a 17-point lead melt away when Anthony put on a one-man show, scoring 15 straight first-half points.

"Once we blew the lead, we looked at each other and said `Wow, we lost the lead,' " Hunt remembered. "We regrouped and that got us going."

Hunt and Anthony Rice were the main men in a 12-0 Memphis run that put the Tigers back in front to stay. Meanwhile, Anthony, who scored 21 points in the first half, finished with 27 and 11 rebounds. But he missed five free throws down the stretch that hurt Syracuse.

"I got a little fatigued," he said. "I'm not used to playing 40 minutes. I've got to work on it."

John Calipari, who coached Memphis to the NIT championship at the Garden in the final game of last season, knew his team would be nervous on this floor to open the season.

"I've been beating on my guys for 25 days," he said. "I wanted them to compete at Madison Square Garden, not be afraid."

Hunt admitted to a case of nerves.

"I was nervous on the ride over," he said. "It was everybody's first game, my first in college. You should know I'd be a little nervous."

It was Syracuse that came out looking shaky, and Memphis constructed a 30-13 lead in the first 10 minutes. Then Anthony went on his one-man run and by halftime, Syracuse's deficit was down to a more manageable 43-34.

Gerry McNamara, another freshman, hit three straight 3-pointers for the Orangeman, and suddenly Memphis was behind, trailing by as six points as Syracuse went on a 22-5 run.

But Memphis wasn't done, and Hunt, Rice and John Grice brought the Tigers back with a 12-0 run. Syracuse made just one basket in the final 8 minutes. Hunt finished with 19 points and Grice had 17 for the Tigers.

The Orangemen lost a November game for the first time since 1996, having won 26 straight in the month since losing to Kentucky in the Great Alaska Shootout that year.

Anthony finished the first half with 21 points, the most any Syracuse freshman has ever scored in his first game. It broke the record of 17 set by John Wallace against Cornell in 1992.

Syracuse got some bad news before the game when it learned that the NCAA had suspended freshman point guard Billy Edelin for the season's first 12 games. Edelin violated a rule covering playing in outside games.

The Classic is sponsored by AT&T Wireless.

