

Michigan State beats Brown 45-34

Maurice Joseph scored 12 quick points

[box score](#)

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP) -- Maurice Joseph scored 12 quick points, then was quick to point out the difference between last season's opener and this year's ugly debut.

"Hey, we won this time," Joseph said after Michigan State beat Brown 45-34 on Wednesday night in the opening round of the 2K Sports College Hoops Classic. "We've got a better record now than we did last year in Hawaii."

After scoring just 16 points as a freshman, Joseph led all scorers with 12 -- all in the first half. The Montreal native was near-perfect in the first 20 minutes with 3-for-4 shooting from the field, a pair of 3-pointers and 4-for-4 work at the foul line.

Freshman Raymar Morgan had 10 points and six rebounds, becoming just the 12th Spartan to score in double figures in his collegiate debut. Goran Suton added eight points and five rebounds for Michigan State (1-0).

Drew Neitzel, the lone returning starter for Tom Izzo's team, was 1-for-8 from the field, scored just seven points and was scoreless in the first half.

"You've got to give Brown credit," Neitzel said. "That 1-3-1 matchup zone, that amoeba defense, was tough. We couldn't do a lot offensively."

Despite their lowest output since a 70-40 loss at Illinois in 2003, the Spartans did enough defensively to advance. Michigan State will meet Youngstown State on Thursday night for one of the four regional titles in the 16-team event, which benefits Coaches vs. Cancer.

"Before everyone panics, let's look at the positives," Izzo said. "There were none. Actually, our defense did a pretty good job against that Princeton-style offense. We didn't spend as much time on offense, and that's my fault."

Mark McAndrew had eight points to lead the Ivy League's Bears (0-1), who will play Central Michigan in the consolation game late Thursday afternoon.

"We couldn't match their physicality every step of the way," Brown coach Craig Robinson said. "It's like I have 13 freshmen the way I'm asking them to do something completely different from last year. But they lost three really good players, four if you count the football player, Matt Trannon, so they're starting over, too."

The Spartans led by 13 points late in the sluggish first half and were up 26-16 at the break. Michigan State shot 40 percent from the field before halftime, while Brown hit just 27.3 percent.

But the Bears cut a 12-point lead to five late in the game and missed a chance to draw within three when McAndrew missed the front end of a 1-and-1 opportunity at the foul line.

"We have to play a perfect game to have any opportunity to beat a good team," Robinson said. "We can't be down five and miss a free throw. I was pleased with the effort and disappointed with the outcome."

An 18-foot jumper by Travis Walton with 2:57 left and six late free throws allowed the Spartans to escape.

Michigan State had a 36-20 edge in rebounds but committed 18 turnovers and had only nine assists.

"Am I surprised?" Izzo said. "Not totally. Am I disappointed we didn't execute better offensively? Yes. But we'll be better in the next game. We'll have to be."

