

Replacements Carry No. 22 Pitt to Season-Opening Win

PG Krauser scores 21 and head coach Dixon earns first win in new roles

[box score](#)

NEW YORK (AP) -- Carl Krauser and Jamie Dixon both had to replace people who made Pittsburgh a prominent program in college basketball. They did pretty well Friday night.

Pittsburgh's Carl Krauser scored a career-high 21 points to lead the Panthers over Alabama in the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic

Krauser, replacing four-year starter Brandin Knight at point guard, scored a career-high 21 points and the 22nd-ranked Panthers beat Alabama 71-62 in the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic.

Dixon got the win in his first game as head coach of the Panthers. He replaced former boss Ben Howland, who went to UCLA after four seasons at Pittsburgh in which the Panthers went 89-40 and made consecutive trips to the NCAA tournament round of 16.

"It wasn't that much of a change," Krauser said of the coaching move. "We lost a great coach and we gained a great coach."

The same can be said of the transition at point guard. Krauser scored 19 points in the second half and was the first player to start hitting from the outside for the Panthers.

"I saw we were 0-for-11 on 3s in the first half but I thought they were good shots," Dixon said. "I told them to have confidence and they would hit them and they did."

The Panthers missed their first 13 3-point attempts before Krauser finally hit one from beyond the arc to give the Panthers a 39-35 lead with 11:08 to play. They didn't quite catch on fire from long range, but they did make three in a 2:40 span to go up 59-53 with 2:10 left.

The last of the 3-pointers was by Jaron Brown and that was Pittsburgh's last field goal of the game. The Panthers made the lead stand up by going 12-for-16 from the free throw line the rest of the way.

"In the huddle I told them they were winners and they went out and hit the three straight 3s to prove me right," Dixon said.

The win was Pittsburgh's fourth straight at Madison Square Garden, where it won the Big East tournament for the first time last March.

"Before the game the guys yelled 'Protect our house,'" Dixon said. "We consider this our second home and we recruit that way."

Chevon Troutman had 13 points for Pittsburgh, while Brown added 11 and freshman Chris Taft, like Krauser a native of New York, had eight points and 12 rebounds.

Krauser averaged 6.0 points last season as a freshman with a high of 14 against Georgia.

"It big being here for my first collegiate start," Krauser said. "I didn't feel pressure but felt I had to go and get Coach his first win. Maybe I rushed a little but we got it for him."

Chuck Davis, one of Alabama's young players looking to claim one of the four starting spots left open from last season, had a career-high 20 points. He averaged 1.5 points last season as a freshman with a high of five points against North Carolina Greensboro.

Antoine Pettway had 17 points for Alabama, which played in this event last season and upset then-No. 3 Oklahoma on the way to the school's first-ever No. 1 ranking.

"They made the big 3-pointers when they had to," Pettway said. "We're a new team. I wouldn't trade these

guys."

Alabama coach Mark Gottfried was impressed with Dixon.

"He made adjustments after we exposed them early on offense," Gottfried said. "We're going to be a fun to watch develop. We went toe to toe with them and I'm not into moral victories but I'm energized with what they did."

Pittsburgh, which won its seventh straight season opener, finished 4-for-20 from 3-point range and 21-for-33 from the free throw line.

Alabama was 3-for-14 on 3s and 15-for-23 from the foul line.