

St. John's beats Navy 72-49

St. John's heads to Madison Square Garden

box score

The St. John's men's basketball team will head to Madison Square Garden a little earlier this year. The Red Storm fell behind early, clawed back into the game, and eventually surged to a domineering 72-49 victory over Navy on Saturday night, punching its ticket into the semifinal round of the 2K Sports College Hoops Classic Benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer.

With the win, the Red Storm earned a meeting with the Maryland Terrapins on Thursday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. at The World's Most Famous Arena, and is guaranteed two games on national television under the bright lights of ESPN2.

"I was really excited about our team tonight," said St. John's head coach Norm Roberts. "We didn't get off to a great start but we stayed tough and we executed well. We had a great team effort offensively and defensively, we pulled for one another and that's just the beginning of being a good team. It is exciting for us to have an opportunity so early in the year to play on national television and a great opportunity for St. John's University to play in such a prestigious tournament."

Junior transfer Avery Patterson once again had the hot hand from the outside, drilling 4-of-9 3-pointers for a game-high tying 15 points. Over the last two games, Patterson had made an incredible 12 3's and totaled 39 points, earning the newcomer 2K Sports Regional MVP Honors.

As a team, St. John's made seven 3-pointers on Saturday (20 in the last two games) but played a much more complete inside-outside game. Perimeter players Eugene Lawrence (10 points, five rebounds), Anthony Mason Jr. (eight points, five rebounds), Daryll Hill (nine points, four assists) and Larry Wright (seven points) were all extremely effective scoring within the offense and made the most of steals with fast-break opportunities. Senior forward Lamont Hamilton contributed 10 points to go along with seven rebounds, and fellow big man Aaron Spears scored six of his seven total points in the second half and swatted three shots. Reserve center Tomas Jasiulionis scored a career-high tying four points when it mattered most, during the Red Storm comeback run in the first half.

Finding his team down 21-12 with 10:13 to play in the first half, Roberts took a timeout that ignited the Red Storm offense. St. John's would hit seven of its next 11 shots and drain seven consecutive free throws to combine for a 20-4 run to close out the period, giving the Red Storm a 35-25 halftime advantage. Hill had eight of his points during the first-half run. Navy junior Kaleo Kina had 13 of his 15 points in the opening stanza.

For the second straight night, the Red Storm played before a raucous crowd of 4,000-plus at venerable Carnesecca Arena.

"The crowd has been great both nights," Roberts said. "We hope this building trend continues here at St. John's, and we can't wait to get to The Garden next week."

Championship Round tickets at Madison Square Garden are now on sale and can be purchased by calling Ticketmaster at 212-307-7171 or through www.Ticketmaster.com.

