

Aboya Leads No. 4 Bruins Past Southern Illinois

[box score](#)

NEW YORK – Alfred Aboya had his best game for UCLA, and may have paid dearly for it.

The Bruins' senior forward had 22 points and eight rebounds, helping fourth-ranked UCLA rebound from a disheartening loss to beat Southern Illinois 77-60 on Friday night in the consolation game of the 2K Sports Classic.

Aboya helped lead a 20-2 run in the second half that put the game out of reach, but landed hard taking a charge in the closing minutes. Coach Ben Howland said Aboya may have broken his left hand and was headed to the hospital for X-rays.

"He played terrific tonight," Howland said, adding he hoped to know how long Aboya could be out before leaving for the West Coast. "I'm pushing to find out."

Darren Collison added 17 points and Josh Shipp 11 for the Bruins (3-1), who struggled in a semifinal loss to Michigan, turning the ball over 17 times and showing very little patience against the Wolverines' zone defense.

The Bruins had their own problems with Southern Illinois, a team known for its gritty defense, before their big run late in the game.

"I thought Southern Illinois was going to be a very good team, and they are a very good team," Howland said. "They're very much like us, very young with a blend of older guys."

Freshman guard Kevin Dillard scored 14 points and Tony Boyle had 10 for the Salukis, who tested No. 10 Duke in an 83-58 loss in the semifinals of the tournament benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer.

Southern Illinois (2-2) managed to tie this one at 48 with about 10 minutes left before wilting in the closing minutes for the second straight night.

"I don't know what it is," coach Chris Lowery said. "We melted down from there. We missed assignments defensively. We have to continue to play the young guys and get better. We can't let this dictate our season."

Nikola Dragovic started the Bruins' decisive run with a 3-pointer from the wing, and Collison hit two more in quick succession, the second time turning around after the wide-open shot from the corner and sticking his tongue out in a half smile to a small but loyal crowd of UCLA faithful.

Aboya converted a three-point play after a basket at the other end, Shipp hit a 3-pointer and Aboya made a pair of free throws to push the lead to 64-50 with 6:31 left.

Then all three of the Bruins' seniors got into the act on one dazzling play.

After forcing a turnover, Shipp swung a behind-the-back pass to Collison starting the break. The go-to guard then spun and delivered another behind-the-back pass to Aboya, whose slam made it 66-50 and put the game out of reach.

"I thought we were a little more patient in the second half," Collison said. "The two biggest things were our intensity and the fact that we were patient in the second half."

Shipp, who flirted with the NBA draft after last season, still struggled to get into a flow on the offensive end. After scoring five points on 2-of-9 shooting in that 55-52 loss to Michigan, Shipp was 1-for-4 from the field in the first half and scored most of his points when the outcome was decided.

The Bruins got off to a quick start, smoothly running their offense for the first time since arriving in New York and building a 24-13 lead midway through the first half.

Things seemed to be well in hand when Carlton Fay, the Salukis' leading scorer, went to the bench with a pair of fouls with 5 1/2 minutes left and UCLA ahead 31-23. But Wesley Clemmons hit an open 3 from the wing and

Boyle followed with an inside bucket to draw Southern Illinois close.

Dillard's 3-pointer with a little over a minute left cut the lead to 35-33 at the break.

But the Bruins were simply too much in the second half, forcing 13 turnovers over the final 20 minutes and shooting 48 percent from the field for the game - and finally resembling those UCLA teams that have camped out the past few years in the Final Four.

"This team is talented enough to get there," Collison said. "It's going to take a learning process to get there."