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Wildcats Pull Away from UDC in 78-58 triumph Sutton set the pace with 12 points

[box score](#)

VILLANOVA, Pa. - Strong starts in both halves tonight helped Villanova down the University of District Columbia 78-58 in the 2K Sports Classic benefiting Wounded Warrior Project at the Pavilion.

Senior [Maurice Sutton](#) led a balanced attack with 12 points for the Wildcats, who are 1-0 after taking the season opener. Six different `Cats tallied between nine and 12 points on the evening. "For a first game, I thought this was a pretty good effort for us," stated Villanova head coach [Jay Wright](#). "We got off to a great start and I thought they were very scrappy in fighting their way back near the end of the first half. But we did a better job defensively in the second half and we were able to wear them down a little bit."

The Wildcats jumped out to an early advantage by scoring 15 of the game's first 17 points. The tandem of freshman [Ryan Arcidiacono](#) and [Mouhptau Yarou](#) did most of the offensive damage, scoring 12 of those points to give VU the 13-point edge at the first official timeout a little over four minutes into the contest. "I liked the way we started," Wright noted. "You have to come out with intensity and I thought we did that. That's important."

Points were harder to come by for the Wildcats over the next 11 minutes, which forced VU to lean on its defense. UDC drew to within 28-20 after a pair of free throws from Quasim Jones with 3:24 left in the first half.

Some of those points which kept VU in the lead were provided by Sutton and sophomore [Achraf Yacoubou](#), who entered the game as reserves. Yacoubou made a pair of first half triples and added a third in the second half.

"I thought both Mo and Ash gave us a nice lift," stated Wright.

The Firebirds drew to within 33-28 at the half. Villanova's offensive production was hampered by a 7-of-15 effort at the free throw line and eight turnovers. Both teams collected 18 rebounds in the first 20 minutes.

Arcidiacono paced the `Cats with nine points in the period while Yarou added seven. Ziad Ashmawy led the Firebirds with eight points.

A 3-point goal by UDC's Quasim Jones on the second possession of the second half brought the Firebirds to within a basket at 33-31. "You don't want to be in that position but I do like the way we responded to that," said Wright.

Over the next eight minutes Villanova regained control possession by possession. They assumed control of the boards - they would out-rebound the Firebirds 23-11 after intermission - and capitalized on some fast break opportunities. The lead slowly grew to 45-34.

The Wildcats got an offensive lift from [JayVaughn Pinkston](#) (10 points on the night) and consecutive low post scores from [Maurice Sutton](#) to craft the largest lead of the evening 56-37 with just under 11 minutes to play. VU outscored the Firebirds 21-9 over that nine minute span of the half.

The lead grew to 64-39 with 7:50 to go in the second on the strength of outstanding rebounding on the defensive glass and opportunism on the fast break. The run was capped by a terrific long pass from Arcidiacono to Bell for a layup.

For Arcidiacono, the night was productive. The product of Neshaminy High School contributed 11 points, four assists and three rebounds in 28 minutes. "No surprise," stated Wright. "He's been great ever since he walked on campus and has had an outstanding pre-season. I thought this was a good floor game from him and we'll see a lot better as time goes on." "I thought it was an OK start (for me)," added Arcidiacono. "I've got a lot of things I can improve on. All that matters is that we got the win."

Villanova resumes action in this event on Sunday afternoon when it hosts Marshall at 1:00 p.m. at the Pavilion.