Johnson's 24 lead VCU past Radford

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) - Melvin Johnson and his VCU teammates saw enough on film to know Radford could be dangerous.

The Highlanders, after all, stunned Georgetown in double-overtime in their opener.

But what Radford had no answer for was Johnson, who hit six 3-pointers and scored 14 of his 24 points during a 19-2 run that broke open a close game as the Rams prevailed, 92-74, on Monday night.

Unlike their opener, when they played sloppily for long stretches against Prairie View A&M, the Rams "played pretty well for a pretty long stretch," first-year coach Will Wade said, building a lead as high as 27.

They will have to improve significantly again before their next game, against No. 5 Duke at Madison Square Garden on Friday night as part of the 2015 2K Classic benefiting the Wounded Warrior Project.

"We've got to be twice as good as we were on Friday to give ourselves a chance," Wade said, looking ahead to a few days of practice before the trip. "If we don't prepare we're going to get embarrassed on Friday night."

The Rams looked pretty sharp with the game on the line against the Highlanders.

JeQuan Lewis broke a 30-all tie with a 3-pointer for the Rams (2-0) late in the first half, and Johnson scored eight of their next 10 points to finish off a half-ending 13-2 run. When the second half started, he hit two quick 3-pointers, expanding the VCU lead to 49-32 and they cruised.

"They handled themselves for the first 16, 17 minutes and then just a little bit of a crack in the armor at the end of the first half really hurt us," Radford coach Mike Jones said. "All of a sudden, they ran away."

The Highlanders (1-1) helped, turning the ball over without getting off a shot on their first four possessions after halftime, and when Justin Cousin connected on a 3-pointer with 15:58 remaining, it ended a scoreless drought of more than 7 minutes and made the score 49-35.

They never got any closer until the final 2 minutes.

Johnson was 6 of 10 on 3-pointers, and the Rams were 13 of 24. Korey Billbury added 15 points and Lewis had 13.

Rashun Davis led Radford with 18 points and Cameron Jones had 12. The Highlanders committed 20 turnovers.

The game marked a reunion of sorts for Wade, in his first season as VCU's coach, and the Highlanders' Mike Jones. Both were assistants under Shaka Smart when the Rams made their improbable run to the Final Four in 2011.