

## Ojeleye leads SMU past Pittsburgh 76-67

**NEW YORK (AP)** - Until last week, Semi Ojeleye had not appeared in a game for nearly two years and even when he played at Duke, the minutes were limited.

Since then, Ojeleye has been putting in the work away from the court and so far it is paying off much to the delight of SMU coach Tim Jankovich.

Ojeleye continued his torrid start by scoring 20 of his 24 points in the second half and SMU defeated Pittsburgh 76-67 in the first semifinal of the 2K Classic at Madison Square Garden on Thursday night.

"Of course, it's enjoyable when a guy sits out, (is) a transfer and you hope he has success," Jankovich said. "But I'll triple that because Semi's one of the most outstanding young men that you could ever be around your entire life and on top of that he is arguably the hardest worker away from practice time in terms of the time he puts in.

"He's a machine, literally, and we're like blown away. We've been around a lot of hard-working guys. I have not been around a guy you set your clock by this guy. It's each and every day and he can't get enough."

Ojeleye scored 46 points in 23 games in two seasons with Duke before transferring to the Mustangs following the 2014-15 season. The junior forward surpassed his point total from Duke in the first half when he shot 2 of 7 and then surged past it with several outstanding athletic plays during the second half.

"Just staying confident," Ojeleye said. "Nothing changed in the locker room. I didn't think about what the stats were. I kept trying to do the same stuff I was doing in the first half."

Ojeleye missed his first two shots of the second half before starting to roll. He made a 3-pointer about 3½ minutes into the half to give the Mustangs the lead for good and capped his 9-for-17 showing by converting a transition layup in the final minute.

Ojeleye's 7-for-10 showing in the final 20 minutes was part of a second half when the Mustangs shot 57 percent after missing nine straight shots to end the first half.

Besides Ojeleye's impressive showing, Shake Milton added 14 points while Ben Moore contributed 12. Michael Young scored nearly half of his 22 points at the foul line for Pittsburgh. Jamel Artis added 20 for the Panthers, who had averaged 96 points in home wins over Eastern Michigan and Gardner-Webb.

"He's athletic," Young said of Ojeleye. "He can really get up vertically and he can make some shots. We knew that going in. He got it going in the second half and guys like that we got to take away air space and make them uncomfortable."

### BIG PICTURE

**SMU:** The Mustangs came into the game playing effective defense by allowing 54 points per game and for the most part they continued it. Their defense forced several traveling violations, including one with about 13½ minutes left which resulted in an unsportsmanlike technical and ejection for Sterling Brown. Brown was handed the technical for emphatically applauding in the face of Artis after his defense resulted in a traveling violation.

**Pittsburgh:** The Panthers have struggled defensively and other than the final five-plus minutes of the first half, their defensive issues continued. The Panthers have allowed an average of 82 points so far and even when Stallings started instructing his players to press, it was unsuccessful. Turnovers also continued to be an issue as Pittsburgh committed 13, resulting in 11 fewer field-goal attempts.

### FAMILIAR COACHING MATCHUP

Jankovich and Stallings worked together at Vanderbilt. Jankovich was an assistant under Stallings from 1999 to 2002 and the Commodores made two NIT appearances. Jankovich also coached at Illinois State from 2007-2012 over a decade after Stallings coached there.

#### ANOTHER JETER IN NEW YORK

For the second college game at Madison Square Garden, there was a Jeter on the court. Unlike Duke's Chase Jeter, who wears the number two - the same as the former Yankees captain - Pittsburgh's Sheldon Jeter wears number 21, the same as Pirates Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente. Jeter had averaged 13 points in his first two games but was held to five points on 2-of-8 shooting.