

## **Brissett scores 20, No. 16 Syracuse beats Eastern Washington 66-34**

By Mark Frank

**SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP)** — With all five starters back, No. 16 Syracuse didn't figure to skip a beat defensively, and Eastern Washington found that out in a hurry.

Mixing in a full-court press with its normally stingy 2-3 zone, Syracuse shot just 39 percent from the field and 17 percent from 3 on Tuesday night and still nearly doubled up on the Eagles, beating them 66-34.

Oshae Brissett had 20 points and eight rebounds as Syracuse held Eastern Washington to 22 percent shooting. The Eagles' offensive output was the lowest since the Carrier Dome opened in 1980.

"I'm happy to be part of that record. Our defense is really what won us the game," Brissett said. "Our leader in steals (starting point guard Frank Howard) wasn't even playing. Once we get him back out there, it's going to be even worse for other teams."

Eight players scored for Syracuse. Bourama Sidibe and Tyus Battle each had eight points, while Marek Dolezaj, Jalen Carey and Elijah Hughes had seven apiece.

Tyler Kidd led the Eagles with nine points. Jack Perry, the Eagles' leading 3-point shooter a year ago, had three points and shot 1 of 4 from 3.

Syracuse had 10 steals and scored 33 points off 19 Eastern Washington turnovers. The Eagles were no match for the Orange in size, with no player taller than 6-foot-7.

"We've been pressing the whole time in exhibition games, and it's been fairly effective," Orange coach Jim Boeheim said. "That was really, I thought, the difference in the game. We got points off the press." Both teams were cold from 3. Syracuse, which ranked last in 3-point shooting in the ACC last season, hit 3 of 17 while the Orange defense held the Eagles to 6 of 35.

The game was tied at 5 when Syracuse went on a 23-5 run to end the first half with a 28-10 lead. Never threatened, the Orange continued to dominate with an 18-3 blitz to start the second.

The Eagles shot 4-of-23 in the first half and missed 11 field goal attempts in a row, going almost 10 minutes between makes. The Orange weren't much better, hitting 37 percent. The Eagles' 10 points in the first half marked the lowest in the Carrier Dome since Colgate scored eight in 2010.

"They did a great job of speeding us up, trapping us," said Eastern Washington coach Shantay Legans. "I didn't have us prepared for their press. If they can defend like this and contest a lot of shots, they're going to be really good."

Defense will have to carry the day for Syracuse as Howard continues his recovery from an injured leg. "It's like if the New Orleans Saints didn't have a quarterback that could pass, and they ran every time, and they had a guy that couldn't throw, they wouldn't be very good," Boeheim said.

### **MAKING A POINT**

Two of Syracuse's three injured point guards returned to action. Jalen Carey made his Syracuse debut after suffering an ankle sprain in a team scrimmage, while Howard Washington returned sooner than expected after suffering a torn ACL last January.

### **LOSING THE BATTLE**

Tyus Battle, Syracuse's leading scorer a year ago, struggled as he assumed point guard duties. He hit just 3 of 10 from the field.

#### BUDDY BALL

Boeheim's son, Buddy, made his first college start and it was a start he'd rather forget. An excellent outside shooter, the freshman was just 1 of 11 and missed all five tries from behind the arc.

#### BIG PICTURE

Eastern Washington: The Eagles knew they had huge shoes to fill with the graduation of leading scorer and Big Sky MVP Bogdan Bliznyuk, and that was reinforced against the Orange. The Eagles need someone to step up — and quickly.

Syracuse: The Orange had a double dose of good news with the return of two of their three injured point guards, but the offense struggled at times and eagerly awaits the return of Howard, who is a couple of weeks away from returning to the lineup.

#### UP NEXT

Eastern Washington: The Eagles have another tough test Friday at No. 14 Oregon.

Syracuse: The Orange host Morehead State on Saturday in what should be another easy tuneup before things get tougher next week with a contest against UConn.