

No. 2 Duke Rolls Past Central Arkansas 105-54 For 3-0 Start

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) -- Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski is pushing his young Blue Devils to worry about defense above all else, both in the intensity of their fullcourt pursuit and their ability to attack the right matchup.

That approach, he said, is "how our team is going to be built."

And the second-ranked Blue Devils are showing the ability to meet the Hall of Famer's expectation in their first games together.

Freshman Matthew Hurt scored a season-high 19 points to help Duke beat Central Arkansas 105-54 on Tuesday night in the 2K Empire Classic benefiting Wounded Warrior Project, winning easily with overwhelming defense despite seeing starting point guard Tre Jones exit after being shaken up on a first-half collision.

Fellow freshman Vernon Carey Jr. added season highs of 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Blue Devils (3-0), who ran off 19 straight points to build a 25-5 lead by midway through the opening half. That margin reached 57-20 by halftime, with Duke shooting nearly 57% and scoring 26 points off turnovers for the game.

"I'd have to say our defense is probably the best part of our offense right now," senior Jack White said. "We're forcing turnovers and getting out in transition and really just getting some easy buckets to start the game so guys can get in a groove."

Jones - the returning floor leader for a team that has turned over its rotation with another recruiting wave - played 9 minutes. He left after colliding with Central Arkansas' Aaron Weidenaar as the two chased a loose rebound with 7:57 left before halftime.

Jones laid on the court holding his head then rolled over onto his stomach while being attended by team medical staff, though he was able to eventually walk slowly to the bench. He spent the second half on the bench talking with coaches and teammates wearing a warmup shirt over his jersey.

Krzyzewski said Jones appears to be fine.

Rylan Bergersen scored 13 points for the Bears (1-3), who were overwhelmed from the start with long stretches between baskets and a series of throwaways and deflected-pass turnovers. Central Arkansas shot just 5 of 23 (21.7% with 15 turnovers in the opening half.

"You fight pressure at the rim," Bears coach Russ Pennell said. "And I thought we did the opposite. ... We have a rule: we don't throw bounce passes on the perimeter. We threw like four that got intercepted. And I think that's what pressure does to you. It makes you do things that are kind of uncharacteristic."