



2012 CBI TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONSHIP: WSU Drops Decisive Game 3 To Pitt, 71-65

 by **Jeff Nusser** on **Mar 30, 2012 9:31 PM PDT** in **2011 WSU Basketball News**

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Lamar Patterson, shown here in the Big East tournament because apparently no photographers could be bothered to shoot the CBI, was the MVP of the tournament.

WSU didn't make it to the final game of the CBI on the strength of its defense, and it was that defense that let the Cougars down as the Pitt Panthers took the decisive game of the tournament, 71-65, bringing an end to WSU's season.

For the second time in the series, Pitt absolutely dominated the Cougar defense, scoring a robust 1.29 points per possession. The difference between this and game one was that Pitt didn't do it on the strength of hot outside shooting and strong offensive rebounding -- the Panthers did it by out-executing the Cougars in the half-court with a series of ball screens that continually befuddled WSU all night.

The Cougars' man-to-man defense appeared to have made great strides in this tournament, but ball screen defense had been an issue for WSU all season. It led to the Panthers making 61 percent of their twos, exemplified by **Talib Zanna's** 12 points on just six shots -- most of them dunks after slipping a screen.

There were a pair of critical errors that proved costly.

The game was tied about five minutes into the second half when WSU got a stop, only to give up an offensive rebound. **J.J. Moore** drew a foul on his three pointer and made two of three at the line. The third attempt was the miss, and WSU failed to box out -- who else? -- Zanna, who would eventually finish the possession with a shot in the paint. It began a 12-2 run that would extend the Pitt lead to 10.

Still, WSU continued to battle, eventually getting as close as six with just under four minutes to go. The Cougs again secured a stop that was rebounded by **Charlie Enquist**. But in his rush to advance the ball up the court, he passed it right to **Lamar Patterson** to begin a possession that would end with a pair of **Tray Woodall** free throws, and more or less put any thoughts of a comeback out of reach.

The Cougs fought until the very end, but it was clear they just didn't have a lot left in the tank by the end of this one after playing their third game in five days.

They were able to get to the line repeatedly, but missed a number of free throws that could have kept them in the game -- the Cougs were 15-of-25 (60 percent) on free throws at one point. Most of those misses were short, and even a good number of the makes hit the front of the rim before bouncing home.

Another piece of evidence for the tired legs? Pitt committed just three turnovers on their 54 possessions. The Panthers deserve some credit for that, but you've got to figure that the Cougars normally would get their hands on a few more balls.

There also was a good amount of questionable officiating -- again -- and while it didn't decide the outcome of the game, it did take away from the aesthetics of what was a well-played game.

The WSU offense was again better than anyone probably had any right to expect, as **Brock Motum** missed his third consecutive game. The Cougars posted an offensive efficiency above 1.13 for the third time in four games, powered by an exceptional 63 percent on twos and 72.5 free throw rate. That they refused to simply settle for threes despite tired legs is a testament to the resolve this team showed over the past few weeks.

Reggie Moore was again a stud, scoring a team-high 18 points on 5-of-11 shooting and 8-of-11 free throws. He also had five assists against just three turnovers. If WSU had somehow figured out a way to win the CBI, there's no doubt he would have been the MVP after averaging 16.7 points and 4 assists. He was absolutely the equal -- and probably then some -- of his more heralded counterpart, Woodall. If he channels this next year, the Pac-12 better watch out.

With that, the careers of **Marcus Capers**, Lodwick, Enquist and **Faisal Aden** come to an end. It was a roller coaster of a season, one that began with low expectations, saw those expectations elevated given

the relative weakness of the conference, then saw those expectations crushed with inexplicable losses to the likes of Utah and Arizona State.

But in the end, these guys were able to piece together a four-game winning streak -- their longest since December, with three wins against KenPom.com top 100 teams -- that took the Cougs to the brink of the CBI championship. They won a pair of games away from home in that stretch, and won a pair of games without Motum, two things you would have considered incredibly unlikely against even mediocre competition.

The CBI is a tournament that many ridiculed, but WSU put forth an effort in it that should make us all proud. Thanks for letting us end the season season with some fond memories, guys.

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Objectively, I'd call Woodall's performance "pretty good"

But at the end of it all, it seemed like he was the guy holding the bloody knife, killing Cougar dreams
by [ClosetCoug](#) on Mar 30, 2012 9:36 PM PDT [reply](#)

A fine effort

I'm glad the Cougs played in the cbi. I enjoyed the games and it was really great seeing Abe, Charlie and Marcus get a few more games to shine. Something to build on for next year.

by [coug79](#) on Mar 30, 2012 10:04 PM PDT [reply](#)

Solid Season

Props to Coach Bone and the Team. The finished with fight and class,. It was entertaining to the end and of course often frustrating. I see a lot of positives. Bone seems to have a better feel for his team. If our players and Coach Bone continue to improve, we can be in the top half of the conference. Thanks to the Seniors and Good Luck. Hope Ladd can pick up Capers next year and Simon can pick up Abe a bit.

Go Cougs

by [hbelvoir](#) on Mar 30, 2012 10:32 PM PDT [up](#) [reply](#)