

Dukes Tame Grizzlies to Advance to Second Round of CBI

MISSOULA, MONT. - Sean Johnson led five players in double figures with a career high-tying 19 points as Duquesne advanced to the second round of the College Basketball Invitational presented by Zebra Pen with an 87-76 win at Montana.

DU, the lone road team to win in the tournament's eight opening round games, will play at Oregon (17-17) on Monday, March 21 (game time TBA).

T.J. McConnell had 15 points and four steals, Bill Clark scored 13 and B.J. Monteiro and Damian Saunders had 11 each for DU. Saunders, who was playing despite a stomach flu, added five steals and five blocks as the Dukes (19-12) handed the Grizzlies (21-11) just their second home loss in 15 games.

McConnell's third steal broke the school's single season record of 89 set by Saunders last year.

Kareem Jamar led Montana with a game-high 22 points.

The win was Duquesne's first in post-conference tournament play since a 75-72 victory over Charlotte in the opening round of the 1994 NIT at the Palumbo Center. It was also DU's first post-conference tournament win on the road or at a neutral site since a 75-72 NCAA Tournament East Regional consolation game victory over St. John's at Cole Field House in College Park, Md. on March 15, 1969.

"We knew we had a tremendous challenge coming into this game," said Duquesne coach Ron Everhart, who notched his first career post-conference tournament win. "[Damian] Saunders has been really sick, so we decided to go with a platoon system to utilize our depth and maybe wear them down a little bit. We thought it would help if we could make it an up-and-down game.

"It was nice to see Damian play as well as he did. He had three or four deflections in the second half that were very key to the game."

Duquesne, which led by as many as 22 in the first half, shot 54.2 percent against a defense that entered the game ranked 14th nationally in scoring (60.1 ppg.) and 15th in field goal percentage (39.4%). DU's 87 points were the most given up by the Grizzlies this season. The Dukes were just the fourth team to score 80 or more against Montana this season.

There was one tie and three lead changes before Johnson put the Dukes up for good with a 3-pointer at the 14:31 mark of the first half. DU used its speed and quickness to up the lead to 22 on a Monteiro jumper before Montana closed the half with a 10-2 run to make it 49-35.

Nine of the 10 Dukes who played scored in the first half and all 10 had at least one rebound.

The Grizzlies cut it to six on a Gordon Wood follow with 9:14 left before Clark answered with a 3-pointer. The Dukes led by seven with 7:42 left before Clark began a 6-0 run with a pair of free throws. Andre Marhold, who scored all of his career high seven points in the second half, added a layup and Monteiro scored off a pass from McConnell to give DU a 74-61 lead. Montana would get no closer than 10 the rest of the way.