

Cousin's clutch free throws win game for Houston

RENO, Nev. (AP) - Robert McKiver scored 22 points and Marcus Cousin made the winning free throw with 26.5 seconds left to lead Houston past Nevada 80-79 Tuesday night in the opening round of the inaugural College Basketball Invitational.

Dion Dowell added 19 points and 14 rebounds for the Cougars, whose 23-9 record is their best since the 1991-92 season. They advance to the second round March 24 against the winner of Wednesday's game between Washington and Valparaiso.

Armon Johnson missed a 3-point attempt at the buzzer for Nevada, which had trailed by as much as 10 points the second half and closed its sixth consecutive year of postseason play at 21-12. Marcelus Kemp led Nevada with 24 points. Johnson had 16 and Brandon Fields 15.

Tied at 71, Dowell followed a pair of free throws with a tip-in to put Houston ahead 75-71 with 3:10 left. The Cougars went up 79-75 on Kelvin Lewis' floater in the lane at 1:50.

JaVale McGee, who scored Nevada's first 6 points of the game on three slam dunks but fouled out with 12 points total, scored inside but missed the free throw when he was fouled at 1:33. After McKiver missed a 3-pointer, Kemp scored inside to make it 79-79 with 58 seconds left.

Houston led 43-36 at the half on Tafari Toney's 35-footer at the halftime buzzer.

The Cougars took their biggest lead, 50-40, on Lewis' 3-pointer with 17:44 remaining. But Nevada answered with a 20-5 run to take a 60-55 lead on Kemp's 10-footer at 10:55. That run included a 10-0 stretch started by DeMarshay Johnson's slam dunk off a behind-the-back pass from McGee in the lane.

McKiver's two free throws and 3-pointer pulled Houston to within 61-60 at 9:26, and Lewis' basket off a rebound tied it at 71 with 4:31 left.