

## Loyola Races Past Louisiana-Monroe In Game One Of CBI Finals, 65-58

CHICAGO - Earl Peterson and Christian Thomas combined for 22 second-half points to help Loyola knock off Louisiana-Monroe, 65-58, in game one of the best-of-three College Basketball Invitational (CBI) Championship Series tonight at Gentile Arena. The Ramblers (23-13) can wrap up the tournament championship in game two on Wednesday night in Monroe.

Loyola got off to a good start, with Louisiana native Montel James and Ben Richardson each scoring four points as the Ramblers jumped out to a 10-5 lead less than six minutes into the game. However, Loyola went cold and ULM took advantage, using an 11-2 run to take a 16-12 lead at the 7:27 mark. Two hoops from Devon Turk, the second from downtown, gave Loyola the lead back but Monroe scored the next five to regain the lead before settling for a 26-24 advantage at halftime. Turk was terrific in the period, scoring 10 of the Ramblers' 24 points but the home team was hurt by the Warhawks' 7-0 advantage in second chance points.

The teams traded baskets over the first three minutes of the second half before Loyola found its rhythm. James scored inside and then powered down a thunderous dunk plus the foul to give the Ramblers a three-point lead. A dazzling, open-court bucket from Milton Doyle moments later made it a seven-point edge and the home team kept pushing, eventually opening up a double-digit lead (55-44) on a Richardson basket at the 8:08 mark.

A couple of ULM triples helped trim its deficit to five and a DeMondre Harvey tip-in later made it a 59-56 game with 4:33 to play. A strong put-back from Christian Thomas helped stem the tide and two James free throws and a basket from Doyle bumped the lead back to nine (65-56) with 2:38 to go and two Tylor Ongwae free throws were the only scoring the rest of the way.

Peterson led a quartet of Ramblers with 16 points. He was joined in double figures by Thomas (12 points, 6-7 FGs), James (11 pts, six rebounds) and Turk (10 points) as Loyola finished the game shooting 51% from the floor and owning a 34-18 advantage in paint points. Jamaal Samuels led ULM with 15 points.

Loyola looks to wrap up the tournament title on Wednesday night. Tip-off from Monroe is set for 7 p.m. You can catch the game live on CBS Sports Network.

