

ODU wins first-ever CBI game

NORFOLK, Va. - Old Dominion (18-15) held off Rider (23-11) to win the first ever College Basketball Invitational (CBI) game and advance to the quarterfinals against UVa, who dropped Richmond by two in the opening round. Redshirt freshman Frank Hassell notched a career-high in points with 14 and just missed a double-double with nine rebounds to lead the Monarchs in what proved to be an extremely balanced game.

ODU had a nine-point lead at the break as Hassell led the Monarchs with nine points on four of seven shooting and added four boards. Senior Brandon Johnson came out with solid defensive intensity as always and had two blocks, three rebounds and three assists in the frame.

The frontcourt for ODU held MAAC Player of the Year and two-time Defensive Player of the Year Jason Thompson to just four points and three rebounds in the first, but his brother, Ryan Thompson, led the team and had ten points on three of six shooting.

In the second half, ODU would have to hold off what turned into an extremely potent attack for Rider. Jason Thompson would reverse his fortunes and went off in the second, breaking the Constant Center record for total rebounds with 17. He would add 11 points in the second for a total of 15 on six of nine shooting, giving him a double-double.

Helping lead the comeback was Ryan Thompson, who never cooled, and put 24 points on the board for the Broncs. However, the Monarchs would play an unbelievably disciplined game in the second and had only been called for two fouls when the game was in its final thirty seconds.

The Monarchs were up ten (66-56) with 5:11 to go when the Broncs would make their final surge, but the discipline would pay off as ODU forced tough shot after tough shot. Still, Rider was able to cut it to three in the final minute, forcing Johnson to make a clutch runner in the lane with 32 seconds left to extend the lead back to five.

With only two fouls committed, head coach Blaine Taylor called for ODU to foul on two straight inbounds plays, cutting the clock down to 17 seconds. Rider would get a layup from Justin Robinson off a Monarchs missed free throw to cut the lead back to three, but the Monarchs got a stop on the Broncs final possession to win the game by three.

Hassell's career-high led the Monarchs with 14 points. Johnson added 10 points with seven rebounds, six assists, three blocks and a steal. Fellow senior Brian Henderson had four thefts in the game, to go with eight points and four dimes.

All 63 points for the Broncs came from the starting five as the Monarchs reserves outscored the Broncs bench 30-0 in the game.

ODU moves on in the CBI and will play UVa on Monday, March 24 at a time to be determined.