

A trio of double-doubles pace Ohio over Brown

ATHENS, Ohio - Ohio's Bubba Walther, Leon Williams and Jerome Tillman all posted double-doubles to lead the Bobcats to an 80-74 victory over Brown in the first round of the College Basketball Invitational Tuesday night. Ohio improved to 20-12 overall and will advance to Monday's second round. Brown finished its season at 19-10 overall.

Ohio has now defeated 21 consecutive non-conference opponents at home.

Williams posted his 43rd career double-double with 20 points and 12 rebounds, while Tillman had his 17th with 21 points and 11 boards. Walther got his the hard way with 10 points and a career-high 12 assists. Freshman guard Tommy Freeman had 11 points, while junior guard Michael Allen had 10 to round out a starting five that all got into double-digits.

Williams, who made nine of his 11 field goals attempts, and junior guard Bert Whittington IV each had a game-high three steals.

The Bobcats needed a lot offense to offset a masterful performance by the Bears' Damon Huffman, who racked up 39 points on 13-20 shooting and 9-15 from the 3-point line. Huffman had 22 at the half and scored Brown's first 14 points of the game. Mark McAndrew had 15 points, six boards and six assists, while Peter Sullivan had 10 points. Chris Skrelja also had six caroms to lead a Brown rebounding effort that was beaten 35-24 on the glass.

Huffman's long-range bombs contributed heavily to Brown's 16-31 effort (51.6 percent) from outside, while Ohio made just 28.6 percent (8-28). Despite making at least half its field goals and 3-pointers, Brown was hurt at the line with a 57.1 percent effort (8-14).

The Bobcats did most of their damage in the paint (36-16) and on the fast break (10-0).

Led by Huffman's explosion, Brown controlled the game from the start, leading the entire first half. It built the advantage to as many as 10 (31-21) on a layup by Scott Fiske at the 5:45 mark before taking a 37-32 lead into the half on a buzzerbeating 3-pointer by Huffman from the top of the key.

Ohio took its first lead at 40-39 on a fast break layup by Allen at the 18:04 mark. The game stayed tight until Tillman put the Bobcats ahead for good with a layup at the 4:57 mark to make the score 62-60. Ohio salted the game away slowly by nailing 11 of its final 12 free throws over the game's last two minutes, nine seconds.

The Bobcats will play the winner of Cincinnati (13-18) and Bradley (17-15) Monday at a time and location to be determined in the coming days.