

Pitt Forces Game Three With 57-53 Win Over Washington St.

PITTSBURGH—Junior Talib Zanna tallied 14 points off the bench as Pitt held on for a 57-53 win over Washington State in game two of the best-of-three CBI Finals on Wednesday night at the Petersen Events Center.

The victory forces a decisive game three on Friday, March 30 at the Petersen Events Center. Tipoff is at 7 p.m. and the game will be nationally televised by HDNet.

Zanna scored 10 of his team-high 14 points in the second half, six of those coming from the free throw line. He recorded eight rebounds for the third-straight game.

Lamar Patterson had 12 points and five assists, while Nasir Robinson recorded 10 for the Panthers (21-17).

Tied at 9-9 early, Pitt used a 10-0 scoring surge to take its first double-digit lead of the game. A short jumper from Zanna started the four-minute run and John Johnson closed it with a three-pointer to lift the Panthers to a 19-9 lead with 10:02 on the clock.

Washington State closed the gap to five at 19-14 with scores on back-to-back possessions, but that would be as close as they would come in the half. Pitt, who shot 50 percent from the field in the first period, took a 29-20 lead at the break.

The 20 points were the fewest first-half points scored by an opponent this season and the lowest total since Villanova on March 5, 2011 (18 first-half points) at the Petersen Events Center.

The Panthers' lead ballooned to 11 points (31-20) to start the second half after a pair from the charity stripe by Patterson. The Cougars cut the deficit to five twice over the next eight minutes, lastly with 12:36 remaining.

A dunk from Zanna with 10:13 left closed a 7-2 run to give Pitt a 42-32 lead. WSU reeled off the next eight-straight points – four of those from DaVonte' Lacy – to pull to a basket at 42-40 at the 7:10 mark.

Pitt would score its next five points from the free throw line, moving to a 47-42 advantage. WSU, again, made it a two-point contest (47-45) with three from the charity line with 4:21 showing.

Robinson went to his left and drained a fade-away in the paint with 3:07 remaining for a 49-45 lead – Pitt's first field goal over a 7:06 span.

The Panthers held on, going 6-of-6 from the free throw line over the final 25 seconds en route to the 57-53 win.

Thirteen of Pitt's 28 points in the second half came from the free throw line. Senior guard Ashton Gibbs missed his first game of the season with an injured right ankle.

Reggie Moore paced Washington State (19-17) with 18 points, the only player in double figures.