

Billikens Hold Off Indiana State in CBI First Round

ST. LOUIS – Kwamain Mitchell scored a game-high 19 points and Willie Reed added 17 points, eight rebounds and four blocks to lead Saint Louis to a 63-54 victory over Indiana State Tuesday in the opening round of the College Basketball Invitational at Chaifetz Arena.

The win puts the Bills (21-11) into next Monday's quarterfinals against the winner of Wednesday's Akron-Green Bay contest. The game will be played at Chaifetz Arena, with the starting time to be announced. Indiana State finished its season 17-15.

Reed did most of his damage in the first half, scoring 13 points to stake Saint Louis to a 37-24 lead, while Mitchell exploded for 13 points following intermission. Kyle Cassity dished out six assists. Five players scored eight points apiece for Indiana State, which shot just 32.1 percent from the field.

ISU's Carl Richard grabbed a game-high nine rebounds, followed by Rashad Reed with eight and Dwayne Lathan with seven. Lathan tied Cassity for game-high honors with six assists. Mitchell collected six boards for SLU, which earned a 39-36 edge on the glass.

The Billikens quickly took command. Mitchell buried a 3pointer seconds after SLU controlled the tip and followed a Cody Ellis free throw with another trey to put the Bills up 7-1.

Cassity's driving layup and an 18-foot Ellis jumper gave Saint Louis an 111 cushion before Indiana State recorded its first field goal, a Reed 3-pointer, at the 16:36 mark. SLU responded with Reed's up-and-under layup, a pullup jumper by Christian Salecich and Brian Conklin's layup to take a 174 lead.

The Billikens tallied just one point on their next six possessions, but the Sycamores reduced the Saint Louis lead by just four points to trail 189. SLU caught fire again, scoring on four straight and five of six touches to build a 28-12 advantage. Reed registered the first five points of the 10-3 spurt on a dunk, a short jumper and a free throw. Jon Smith made a layup, and Ellis punctuated the run with a 3pointer.

After Indiana State scored to narrow the gap to 28-14, Reed answered with a midrange jumper and a layup for a 32-14 Saint Louis lead, its largest of the opening stanza. The Sycamores enjoyed their best stretch of basketball the rest of the half, outscoring the Billikens 10-5 to make it a 37-24 game at the break.

All nine Billikens who played scored in the opening 20 minutes, which saw SLU shoot 51.9 percent (14-of-27) from the floor while holding Indiana State to 34.6 percent (9-of-26). Reed netted 13 first half points.

Each team suffered four empty possessions to start the second half before Indiana State sliced the SLU lead to 37-29 on Lathan's conventional 3-point play and two Richard free throws. But the Billikens restored order thanks to Mitchell, who scored 10 points including a fast-break dunk following a steal in a 13-5 flurry that put SLU on top 50-34.

The Bills later earned their largest lead of the game, 57-38, when Conklin tallied a free throw and a jumper from the left elbow and Reed followed with a pair of buckets. But Saint Louis suddenly went cold, and when Koang Doluony nailed 3-pointers on consecutive possessions, ISU was within nine at 57-48.

A free throw by Lathan whittled one more point off the SLU advantage, but that was as close as the Sycamores would come. Offensive rebounds on its next two possessions allowed Saint Louis to drain precious time off the clock, and the Billikens converted 6of8 free throws to build a 63-51 lead and render a late ISU 3-pointer meaningless.

SLU cooled down to shoot just 30 percent (9-of-30), including 0-for-10 from 3-point range, in the second half. Indiana State connected on just 29.6 percent (8-of-27) in the final 20 minutes.

The Billikens forced 17 Sycamore turnovers and capitalized nicely by scoring 23 points off those miscues. SLU also posted a 32-20 edge in points in the paint.