

Seattle U Defeats Colorado to Advance to CBI Semis

The Seattle University men's basketball team showed its tenacity Monday night, rallying from a nine-point second-half deficit in front of a sold out crowd at Connolly Center to defeat the Colorado Buffaloes, 72-65, in the quarterfinals of the College Basketball Invitational.

With the victory, Seattle U advances to the CBI semifinals, where it will face fellow Jesuit school Loyola Chicago at Gentile Arena in Chicago, Ill., Wednesday, March 25, at 7 p.m. local time (5 p.m. Central time). It is the third time in the history of the PROGRAM that Seattle U has reached the semifinals of a national Division I postseason tournament, previously accomplishing the feat at the 1951 National Catholic Invitation Tournament and the 1958 NCAA Tournament.

After Jarell Flora (Bremerton, Wash.) hit a three-pointer to tie the game at 31-31 one minute into the second half, Colorado hit three straight three-pointers to pull out to a nine-point advantage. A layup by Wesley Gordon reestablished that nine-point lead for the Buffaloes with 15:40 remaining in the second half, but the Redhawks responded with a 13-4 run over the next eight minutes, punctuated by back-to-back three-pointers by Flora, to tie the game at 49-49 with 7:50 left in regulation.

Two minutes later, Josh Scott made one of two free throws to give Colorado a one-point advantage, but on the ensuing Redhawk possession, Jadon Cohee (Langley, B.C.) hit a three-pointer to give Seattle U the lead for good. Two free throws apiece by Isiah Umipig (Federal Way, Wash.) and Cohee extended the Seattle U lead to five, and then Emerson Murray (Vancouver, B.C.) hit a three-pointer with 1:50 left in regulation to give the Redhawks a 64-58 advantage.

Two more free throws from Umipig and a traditional three-point play by Jack Crook (Manchester, England) gave Seattle U its biggest lead of the night at 69-58, but Colorado stayed in the game by scoring six unanswered points in the span of 29 seconds. Umipig made two free throws, and Colorado was unable to hit any more field goals, sending the crowd home happy thanks to another Redhawk victory, the 10th win in Seattle U's last 11 home games this season.

"There were a lot of gaps in the game where offensively we just were not producing, but our ability to stay with it defensively and keep fighting on the boards kept us in the game. Down the stretch, they (Colorado) missed some shots, and we rebounded them. The CREDIT goes to the guys for staying with it until the offense got rolling," Seattle U head coach Cameron Dollar said.

Flora shot 9-of-18 from the field, including 4-of-8 from behind the three-point line, as he led all players with 22 points, plus he earned two assists and three steals. Umipig also hit four three-pointers and was a perfect 6-for-6 from the free throw line to finish with 20 points, three assists, and three steals. Umipig has now converted on 32 straight free throw attempts over the past six games, last missing an attempt from the charity stripe with 12:38 remaining in the second half at Grand Canyon March 7.

Crook and William Powell (Huntsville, Ala.) both went 4-for-4 from the field, as Crook collected 10 points, three rebounds, and four assists, while Powell contributed nine points, seven rebounds, and three assists. Besides the three-pointer late in the second half, Murray earned five rebounds and five assists without committing a turnover, and Cohee added eight points, three rebounds, and two steals to the winning effort.

Powell scored the first basket of the game, but Colorado answered with a 9-2 run, with Scott scoring six of those points. Three-pointers by Umipig bookended around a Powell layup highlighted an 8-0 Redhawk run that put Seattle U on top, 12-9, seven minutes into the game, but the Buffaloes responded with their own 10-0 run over a three-minute span, capped by three-pointers from Eli Stalzer and Xavier Johnson, to pull ahead, 25-18, with about six minutes left in the first half.

Down 28-23 with three minutes remaining before halftime, Seattle U pulled into a tie thanks to a three-pointer by Flora and a jumper from Umipig. Xavier Talton was able to hit a three-pointer with 1:18 left to put the Buffaloes back on top, 31-28, and that would remain as the halftime score as each team missed scoring opportunities in the final minute of the first half.

Colorado (16-18) was led by Scott, who notched a double-double with 17 points and 12 rebounds, while Dominique Collier finished with 11 points and Talton and Tre'Shaun Fletcher earned nine points apiece. Gordon pulled down 10 rebounds as Colorado won the rebounding battle, 44-29, including 17 offensive rebounds for the Buffaloes that led to 17 second chance points.

As a team, Seattle U shot 46.2 percent (24-of-52) from the field, including 10-of-22 from behind the three-point line, and 63.6 percent (14-of-22) from the free throw line. The Redhawks committed just nine turnovers, their fewest in a game since committing just eight turnovers in back-to-back victories over Texas-Pan American and New Mexico State Jan. 15 and 17.

The Buffaloes shot just 33.9 percent (19-of-56) from the field, including 7-of-25 from behind the three-point line, and 66.7 percent (20-of-30) from the free throw line. Colorado committed 14 turnovers that led to 21 Redhawk points.

Seattle University (18-15) heads to Chicago, Ill., Tuesday to face the Loyola Chicago Ramblers Wednesday, March 25, in one of the CBI semifinals. Loyola Chicago has defeated Rider (62-59) and Oral Roberts (86-78) to reach the semifinals. Any links to live stats/audio/video will be posted on the men's basketball schedule page of GoSeattleU.com.