

Joseph, Blakely lead Vermont over Green Bay in CBI First Round

GREEN BAY, Wis. – Juniors Maurice Joseph and Marqus Blakely combined to score 45 points and senior Mike Trimboli hit a big three late to lead the Vermont men's basketball team to a 76-72 victory over Green Bay in the College Basketball Invitational First Round on Wednesday night. The Catamounts improve to 24-8 overall on the season with the win.

Joseph scored a career-high 23 points to lead the Catamounts, while Blakely earned his 27th career double-double with 22 points and a game-high 11 rebounds. Trimboli also reached double figures for Vermont with 17.

"I thought that was a great win for our team. We got matched up with the team with the highest RPI in this tournament and we were playing them on their home court where they had won 13 of 14 this season, so this was a tough matchup for us. I thought our defense was tremendous. We fought some foul trouble and made some big shots when we had to," said Vermont head coach Mike Lonergan.

Vermont led 71-70 after a tip-in from Blakely with exactly a minute to go and Green Bay's Troy Cotton missed the front end of a one-and-one on the other end. With the shot clock running down on the next possession Trimboli pulled up from the top of the key and gave the Cats a little breathing room with a three.

UWGB hit two free throws with 5.9 second left to cut it to two at 7472, but Trimboli put the game out of reach with a pair from the line with 4.5 ticks on the clock.

Vermont carried a 42-34 edge into the half after shooting a blistering 53.2 percent from the floor. Blakely and Joseph combined to score 26 of the 42, as Blakely went a perfect 7-for-7 from the field in the opening 20 minutes of play. Leading 32-30, the Catamounts used a 10-2 run to lead by as many as 10 in the frame, at 42-32.

The Phoenix (22-11) opened the second half with a 17-8 spurt to take a 51-50 advantage with 13:48 left in the contest. Green Bay would lead until 2:33 to go when Blakely had a put back that made it 69-68 Vermont.

Cotton led Green Bay with 17, while Rahmon Fletcher added 16 and Mike Schachtner chipped in with 14 points. Vermont held a 38-34 rebounding margin and held the Phoenix to shoot only 28.6 percent from three, after it entered the contest with the fourth-highest three-point shooting percentage in the nation (41.5).

Vermont advances to the quarterfinals, where it will play the winner of Oregon State/Houston on Monday.