

Five in Double-Figures Lead VCU to 79-73 CBI Win

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Early this morning, junior Joey Rodriguez of the Virginia Commonwealth University men's basketball team posted "glad to have the opportunity to play another game tonight" on his Twitter page.

Well, Rodriguez and his teammates can post that statement at least one more time as five players in double-figures helped the Black & Gold pick up their second postseason win in the past 20 years, 79-73, over George Washington in the first round of the 2010 College Basketball Invitational.

"I'm sure it was a fun game to watch with the up-and-back play, I guess I'll have to ask my wife" Head Coach Shaka Smart said. "I'm proud of the way our guys fought through some adversity and really showed resolve in the win tonight. Any time you get to extend your season, it's a great thing."

Rodriguez led the Rams with 16 points and six assists, while classmates Jamie Skeen and Ed Nixon tallied 14 points apiece. Junior Larry Sanders and sophomore Bradford Burgess rounded out the double-digit scorers with 11 points each.

"We knew all year that we have seven or eight guys that can lead us offensively each night," Smart said. "Tonight, you saw a lot of those guys shine at different periods of the game."

The Rams led for nearly the whole game, but the Colonials would keep it close early until four different players knocked down a three-pointer to ignite a 16-1 run midway through the first half to grab a 37-20 advantage with 5:22 left before halftime.

GW would get it the lead into single-digits before freshman Troy Daniels knocked down a three-pointer with under a minute left to send VCU into halftime with a 45-33 lead.

Colonials' Head Coach Karl Hobbs must have delivered one heck of a halftime speech as GW ripped off a 16-6 run with Damian Hollis and Lasan Kromah each scoring six points apiece during the run to get within two at 51-49 with 10:56 to play.

"In any games, there are runs for both teams. When George Washington went on its run, our guys were able to do just enough in terms of getting stops." Smart said. "The thing about the outside shot is, sometimes it's going to fall, sometimes it's not. We made 10 3-point shots in the first half, and things were going well. It's hard to tell your guys to get the ball inside when they're making all those 3s. When the second half came around and we weren't making shots, that affected us a little bit. We needed to do a better job of attacking the basket. But what allowed us to win was, when we needed it the most, we got some stops."

That was the closest GW would get the rest of the way as Sanders and Burgess combined for 17 second-half points and Daniels and Nixon went a perfect 4-of-4 from the charity stripe down the stretch to preserve the 79-73 win.

The Rams knocked down a total of 11 three-pointers in the game, 10 of which came in the first half, while shooting 41% from beyond the arc in the contest.

Hollis was outstanding in his last game as Colonial, scoring a career-high 30 points, while Kromah added 18 in the losing effort.

VCU will now come home for a postseason game, hosting the winner of Eastern Kentucky/College of Charleston on Monday evening.