Biola Knocks MSU-Northern Out of MBB National Tourney

Published: Thu, Mar 17, 2011

Kansas City, Mo. (box score) No. 13 Biola University (Calif.) never trailed as the Eagles defeated Montana State University-Northern, 59-48, in first-round action Friday at the 2011 Buffalo Funds-NAIA Division I Men’s Basketball National Championship at Municipal Auditorium. Senior guard Curtis Eatmon led three Eagles in double figures with 16 points as Biola advances to the second round play for the second straight season, now 27-5 on the year. The Eagles will face Louisiana State University-Shreveport on Friday at 9:45 p.m. CT.

Biola kicked off the game with a 9-2 run, capped by an Eaton basket. Montana State-Northern answered with five straight points before the Eagles seized control of the opening period with a 15-2 run, capped back to back three-pointers by senior guards Shane Mahoney and Nate Rakestraw to give Biola a 24-9 lead with 6:14 remaining in the period. The Eagles maintained the double figure lead into the break, 30-17.

Montana State-Northern fought back with 12-3 run to cut the deficit to 41-39 with 7:02 remaining in regulation. The stretch was highlighted by four points from junior guard Shaun Tatarka and a three-pointer by sophomore guard Devin Jackson. However, Biola outscored Montana State-Northern 18-9 down the stretch en route to the 11-point victory.

Rakestraw and senior guard Dwight Gordon joined Eatmon in double figures for the Eagles with 10 points apiece. Gordon tallied a team-high three assists. Senior forward Andrew Schroeder grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds, despite Biola being outrebounded 33-27.

Montana State-Northern was led in scoring by junior guard La Von Myers, who registered 13 points on 4-of-8 shooting from the field, including a pair of three-point baskets. Junior forward Joe Simpson was the only other Montana State-Northern player in double figures with 10 points, as the Lights end the season with a 24-9 record and fall to 2-3 in national tournament first-round contests.

Game Notes:
Montana State-Northern: The 17 first-half points is the second-lowest output this season for the team - the Lights only netted 16 in the first half of a 55-44 loss against Westminster (Utah) on Jan. 29... Ends its season with a 9-2 record in its last 11 contests... With a team-high 13 points, junior guard La Von Myers posted his 19th game this year of at least 10 points... Leading scorer Shaun Tatarka was held to five points, which tied for his fourth-lowest total this season... As a team, the 48 points is the lowest in this year's National Championship and fourth time a team was held under 60 points in the 2011 event.

Biola: The Eagles went on a 13-0 run in the first half and held the Lights scoreless for 8 minutes and 23 seconds... Coming into the game, Biola was ranked second in the NAIA in scoring defense (56.9 ppg)... Senior forward Andrew Schroeder tied a career-high in rebounds with 11 (last time Feb. 12 vs. San Diego Christian (Calif.))...the last time a team won with under 60 points was in the 2010 quarterfinals when Oklahoma Baptist defeated Biola 59-54.

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