Jags Hold Off South Alabama in Overtime, 71-65
Senior DavRon Williams leads Jags with 13 points, seven boards and three steals

box score

INDIANAPOLIS - The IUPUI basketball team got a much needed win in thrilling fashion, staving off South Alabama in game two of the Gotham Classic, 71-65 inside Indiana Farmers Coliseum on Saturday afternoon (Dec. 20). Senior DavRon Williams scored four of his team-high 13 points in overtime and Mason Archie, II added 12 points in the victory. Junior Marcellus Barksdale rounded out the Jaguars' double-digit scorers with 10 points, seven rebounds, four assists and four steals as the Jags stopped a six-game losing skid.

Ken Williams led three South Alabama (2-7) players in double-digits with a game-high 23 points and Indianapolis-native Taishaun Johnson finished with 18 points, six rebounds and six assists in the loss.

"It was a hard-fought game. South Alabama did a great job, they made some big time plays down the stretch but I was very, very pleased with our team as far as making plays down the stretch and making stops down the stretch," IUPUI Head Coach Jason Gardner said. "DavRon probably shouldn't have played today, his knee is banged up and he comes out and he makes a big time winning basket. He made some big time rebounds. He had a big time block. That just shows his senior leadership. As far as handling the pressure down at the end and not cracking and staying with the plan, staying together, it's one step in showing the maturity of the guys in growing up and sticking together."

IUPUI (3-8) came up with plays when they needed them most, including a key steal by Barksdale to help seal the game in the closing seconds. IUPUI scored the first six points in overtime, including an improbable spinning layup from Williams with 1:22 left and two free throws 36 seconds later. Williams cut the lead in half with a long trey with 38 seconds to play before South Alabama opted to play the foul game. Archie split a pair of free throws with 36 seconds left, but Johnson banked in a contested triple from the left side to make it 66-65 with 20 seconds remaining.

For the second time, Archie split a pair, missing the second of his two attempts. However, Barksdale picked off the outlet pass with 12.1 to play and was immediately fouled. The Lexington, Ky.-native hit both foul shots to end South Alabama's hopes and help the Jags improve to 2-1 in overtime games this season.

IUPUI (3-8) led by as many as 12 in the second half as Elijah Ray capped an 8-0 run with a short jumper, putting the Jaguars in front 44-32 with 13:58 left. However, South Alabama refused to go away quietly, thanks largely to the backcourt of Williams and Johnson. Williams turned a Barrington Stevens, III steal into a three-point play, cutting IUPUI's lead back to seven with 7:33 left. South Alabama used a 14-2 run to take a brief lead with 2:49 to play when Williams connected on a long three in front of his own bench.

After Gardner called timeout, Williams tied the game at 59 all when he negotiated his way to an easy layup after a number of fakes on the blocks. Both teams missed go-ahead opportunities late as Williams missed a trey and Aaron Brennan came up short on a baseline attempt with 1:18 to play.

IUPUI got another key stop when Dionte Ferguson missed a dunk attempt from the right side, giving the Jaguars possession with 1:00 to play. After a timeout, P.J. Boutte penetrated and pitched to Archie for an open three, but the Davidson-transfer misfired on left baseline look. Able to hold for the last shot, USA settled on a contested Stevens trey from the corner after the Jaguars successfully defender Johnson's initial drive.

The Jaguars led by as many as seven in the first half, including building a quick 6-0 lead, but eventually had to settle for a 30-30 tie at the halftime break.

All 10 Jaguars that played scored, including nine points, six rebounds and three assists from freshman D.J. McCall, who made his first career start. McCall made an early impression with a thunderous two-handed dunk from the left side and later trumped it with a two-handed putback of a Ray miss in the second half. Brennan chipped in seven points and five boards while Ray also tallied seven off the bench. Josh James added six, all coming in the first half. Williams hit 4-of-8 shots and 5-of-6 from the foul line for his career-high scoring output.

"We're just hungry," Williams said. "We were on a not so good losing streak and everybody was just hungry. It was really just a team finish. We all stuck together through the good times and the bad times and that's what helped us come out on top."

IUPUI forced 22 USA turnovers and converted them into 21 points. The Jaguars had a distinct advantage in the paint, outscoring the guests 36-18, despite being outrebounded 36-35.

IUPUI will continue the Gotham Classic on Tuesday, Dec. 23 when they Jaguars head east to play at Richmond at noon Eastern. That game will be heard on the iHeartRadio app as Will Flemming (pxp) calls the action from courtside.