Late Run Lifts Eastern Kentucky to 69-57 Victory

HACKENSACK, N.J. – The Eastern Kentucky University men's basketball team scored 15 unanswered points late in the contest to pull away from Akron for a 69-57 win Saturday night. This game was part of the 2008 Legends Classic produced by the Gazelle Group. EKU moves to 4-2 while the Zips fall to 3-2.

For the fourth time this season, senior Mike Rose reached the 20-point plateau. Junior point guard Dayvon Ellis added a season-high 11 points to go along with five assists. Junior Papa Oppong tied for the team lead with eight rebounds as the Colonels outrebounded the Zips, 32-22.

Akron reserve Brett McKnight came off the bench to connect on 8-of-12 field goal attempts on the way to 16 points. EKU held Akron's leading scorer and rebounder, Nate Linhart, to just six points and four boards.

Eastern Kentucky used a 12-0 run early in the first half to build a 26-14 lead. Sophomore Justin Stommes capped the run with a three-pointer followed by a lay-up. Akron cut the deficit to single digits at the half, 32-25, thanks to a trifecta by Anthony Hitchens 19 seconds before intermission.

McKnight scored the first 10 points of the second half for the Zips to help Akron creep within three points, 38-35. A three-pointer from Linhart on Akron's next possession then leveled the game at 38-all.

From there, the game went back-and-forth with three more ties. The last tie came with 4:17 remaining when McKnight recorded his final points of the night to make the score, 54-54.

EKU then took control of the game down the stretch with 15 straight points. Junior Josh Taylor gave Eastern the lead for good with two free throws. Following an Ellis lay-up, Rose converted a four-point play to extend the lead to eight points, 62-54. Rose netted his third three-pointer of the game and was fouled during the shot, allowing the senior to finish the rare four-point opportunity.

Oppong put the game out of reach with his only trifecta to make the score, 65-54, with 1:46 left.