

Bucknell Dials Long Distance in 87-50 Rout of West Alabama at TicketCity Legends Classic

Johnson Scores 27, Hitting Nine of Team's School-Record 17 Threes

[box score](#)

LEWISBURG, Pa. - Bryson Johnson drained nine of Bucknell's school-record 17 3-pointers and scored 27 points, lifting the Bison to a runaway 87-50 victory over West Alabama on Saturday at Sojka Pavilion as part of the TicketCity Legends Classic. Cameron Ayers scored a career-high 20 points and Ben Brackney a career-high 12 off the bench as Bucknell won its fourth straight game overall and 16th in a row at home.

Joe Willman scored 10 points for the Bison, who are now 4-2 on the season and can make it a clean sweep of this Legends Classic subregional with a win over Morehead State on Sunday. The Eagles are also 2-0 this weekend after downing Princeton 68-56 earlier in the day.

In Bucknell's win over Princeton on Friday, the key to victory was a dominant effort from center Mike Muscala (25) inside and the dribble penetration from guards Bryan Cohen and Steven Kaspar. This time West Alabama tried to clog the lane with a tight zone defense, but that just left Bucknell's shooters open time and time again for wide open looks, and Johnson and Ayers made them pay.

Johnson had been mired in a bit of a shooting slump, coming in with seven made 3-pointers in 23 attempts after shooting 46 percent from the arc last season. But on Saturday he broke out in a big way, making 6 of 8 triples the first half alone, and he finished 9-for-15 from long range. Johnson's previous high-water mark for threes in a game was seven against Boston College last season, and he fell just two shy of Kevin Bettencourt's school record of 11 3-pointers in a game. Johnson might well have gotten there had he been needed for more than 24 minutes in the one-sided contest. He left the game to a standing ovation with 13:45 remaining and did not return.

Ayers had 15 of his 20 points by halftime, hitting all three of his long-range attempts. He hit another one in the second half and finished 4-for-5 from the arc and 7-for-10 overall.

Bucknell's other four 3-pointers came from Brackney, who went 4-for-6 from long distance and compiled 12 points and four rebounds in 13 minutes of action.

With a third game in three days coming up against a fast Morehead State team that presses full-court for 40 minutes, Bucknell was able to limit its minutes against West Alabama. Only two players saw more than 20 minutes of action, and none played more than 24.

As usual, Willman got Bucknell going offensively with three mid-range jumpers in the first 3:33. After the first media timeout Johnson buried his first four 3-pointers in a span of only 3:30, helping the Bison take leads of 16-3 and 22-7.

It was just a 10-point margin at 32-22 when Johnson sandwiched two more treys around a pretty no-look pass to Brian Fitzpatrick for a reverse layup. That keyed a 10-0 run, stretching the led to 42-22, and then Ayers closed the half with back-to-back treys to make it 48-25 at intermission.

Johnson had a 3-pointer rim in and out on the first possession of the second half, but then he made his seventh of the night on the very next sequence to grow the lead to 51-25.

After the starters earned a well-deserved early dismissal, the bench kept up the scoring frenzy for awhile. Brackney's 3-pointer with 11 minutes to play stretched the lead to 70-39, and later Brackney hit Bucknell's school-record 16th trifecta of the day to make it 82-44. Yet another Brackney trey gave the Bison their largest lead of 39 points at 85-46 with 4:01 to play.

Freshman Joshea Singleton put an exclamation point on the evening with a skywalking follow-up jam with 1:41 to play. Singleton finished with three points, four rebounds and three blocked shots in 15 minutes.

Bucknell outrebounded West Alabama 46-33, with seven different players grabbing at least four boards. Cohen led the way with six rebounds, while Muscala finished with five points, five rebounds and three blocks in only 16 minutes.

Kaspar backed up his terrific performance from the Princeton game with seven assists and four rebounds in 14 minutes. Ryan Hill added four assists and five rebounds off the bench in 16 minutes. Ayers also had five helpers, as Bucknell recorded assists on 23 of its 30 field goals.

The previous team record for 3-pointers in a game was 15, set at Villanova in 2007-08 and at Boston College last season.

Bucknell tied its school mark for 3-point attempts with 34. That record was previously set at Colgate in 1991-92. Johnson's nine threes and the team's 17 were both Sojka Pavilion records.

Bucknell and Morehead State, two NCAA Tournament teams from a year ago, will tip off at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday. The contest will be preceded at 2 p.m. by Princeton and West Alabama.