

Beavers Overpower West Alabama, 93-60

box score

CORVALLIS, Ore. - Five players scored in double-figures, led by Jared Cunningham's game-high 17 points, as Oregon State defeated West Alabama, 93-60, Monday night in the opening game of the TicketCity Legends Classic at Gill Coliseum.

The win marked the Beavers first 2-0 start to the season since November of 2000 when it won its first four contests. Oregon State also scored 58 first half points, the most in 424 games dating back to a 67-point opening half on Nov. 25, 1997 against UC San Diego.

"I really like the way our team handled this game because this type of game is the hardest game to play," Oregon State head coach Craig Robinson said. "When you are expected to win, you get out to a big lead in the first half and you are not used to having big leads; you have to keep that lead. Everybody is out of the game, your starters are out, you are up by 20, the crowd is out of it and the staff is out of it, but you have to find a way to build on your lead. We did that today and we hadn't had much practice doing that so I was pleased to see that."

Angus Brandt tied a career-high with 13 points on 6-for-7 shooting from the field, while Joe Burton and Devon Collier each had 14 points and Ahmad Starks added 10. Eric Moreland led the team in rebounding for the second consecutive game with 10 and Rhys Murphy scored his first career points for the Beavers and finished with nine points on three three-pointers.

"This team really shares the ball," Robinson said. "There are a couple of things that work there. Number one, we are unselfish. There is a real unselfishness about the way these guys play. The second thing, you can't have that kind of unselfishness if you don't have great camaraderie. These guys are really starting to get to know each other and like each other. That helps in games like this where they could have cared less on who was scoring."

The Beavers methodically pulled away in the opening half, building as much as a 53-22 lead at the 4:05 mark on a Challe Barton jumper, which capped a 10-0 run. Oregon State hit 11 of its first 13 shots to build a 25-9 lead and opened it to 20 points on a Collier breakaway slam dunk at the 10:12 mark.

"It was a great team effort out there," Cunningham said. "Everybody played hard from the beginning. We just tried to start off early and hit them first, before they could hit us. We did a good job today and we're going to come to practice tomorrow and be prepared."

Oregon State built the lead to as many as 41 points in the second half at 87-46 when Burton, who added a team-high five assists and two steals, made a layup with 10:39 remaining.

The Beavers forced 21 turnovers against West Alabama after forcing 27 against CSU Bakersfield in the opener. They also had 21 assists on their 30 baskets and shot 55.6 percent (30-for-54) from the field.

"I think the part about identity is that we want to be a tough team," Brandt said. "I think to be a tough team you have to step up and take charges. Even if we're winning by 30, I think that's a good habit to get into."

Jared Woolfolk led West Alabama with 16 points, while Allen McGaha and Drew Faile each had 11 points for the Tigers.

"Usually, in situations like this, you are overmatched, which was the case today," West Alabama head coach Mike Newell said. "I thought Oregon State did a good job of passing and shot the ball well. They are much improved from last year. It was a blessing to come up to Oregon, which was a first for almost all of us. We have the chance to travel, which is great considering that two or three of our guys had never been on an airplane."

"Also, when you play teams that are much better than you, it shows you how much harder you have to work," Newell added. "There are a lot of players at this level that believe that they should be in Division I, and once you go play teams like Oregon State and get beaten badly, you realize that you are where you belong."

The Beavers return to action Wednesday in the final game of the TicketCity Legends Classic Regional Round against Hofstra, of the Colonial Athletic Association, at 7 p.m. at Gill Coliseum.

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