

Pitt Takes Care of Akron 86-67

Sam Young finished with 26 points

[box score](#)

PITTSBURGH, Pa. – Sam Young gave Akron problems no matter where he was on the floor, scoring 26 points and taking control during a Pittsburgh surge late in the first half that carried the No. 6 Panthers to an 86-67 victory on Friday night.

Levance Fields had 19 points and seven assists and DeJuan Blair added 16 points and 13 rebounds for the Panthers (3-0). Young scored 11 of Pitt's final 15 points in the first half as the Panthers doubled their lead from 28-19 to 45-27.

Brett McKnight had 23 points on 9-of-15 shooting, but Akron (2-1) lost its 20th consecutive game against a Top 25 opponent. The Zips haven't beaten a ranked opponent since moving into NCAA Division I in 1980-81 -- though one of their near misses came in their previous game in Pittsburgh, a 67-65 loss to then-No. 14 Pitt in January 1987 in which they led by nine in the second half.

Akron has nine freshmen on its roster and seven freshmen or sophomores in its rotation, and lacked the experience and the size to compete with Pitt's front line. Blair had more rebounds at halftime (10) than the nine the Zips had as a team, and Pitt ended with a 41-24 edge as Tyrell Biggs added 11 rebounds.

The Zips especially didn't have an answer for Young, who was chosen the Big East Conference's most improved player last season after increasing his scoring average by more than 10 points per game to 18 points. He has further expanded his game this season.

The 6-foot-7 Young, a power forward who also can play on the wing, showed his versatility during the closing minutes of the first half. Young dunked twice, and missed a third on a breakaway, before making four free throws and moving into the corner to hit a 3-pointer.

Fields, the point guard who is recovering from two foot fractures since last December, has 27 assists and only two turnovers in three games although he said he is not yet in game shape.

Pitt has won its first three games by 71 points, beating Mid-American Conference schools Akron and Miami (82-53) by a combined 48 points. The Panthers have won their past seven games against MAC schools and are 27-0 in November games under sixth-year coach Jamie Dixon.

The game was part of the Legends Classic, a 12-team tournament being held at eight sites with a predetermined bracket in which Pitt, Texas Tech, Mississippi State and Washington State are guaranteed of being in next weekend's semifinals in Newark. Akron is playing four games at three sites in the event but had no route to the semifinals.

