

Rutgers Downs UMass 83-75 in Legends Classic Championship Round

[box score](#)

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (November 27, 2009) – The Rutgers men's basketball team dominated the first half and fought off a strong second-half effort from Massachusetts to come away with a 83-75 win Friday evening in the opening game of the 2009 Legends Classic Championship Round at Boardwalk Hall. Five Scarlet Knights posted double figures, including sophomore guard Mike Rosario (Jersey City, N.J.), who shot nine-of-15 to score a game-high 22 points.

Rosario tied his season-high in points, which including 18 in the first half. Hamady Ndiaye (Dakar, Senegal), Mike Coburn (Mount Vernon, N.Y.), Gregory Echenique (Guatire, Venezuela) and Jonathan Mitchell (Mount Vernon, N.Y.) all scored 10-plus points. Ndiaye registered 14 and Coburn 13, while Echenique and Mitchell each contributed 10 points.

Rosario also led the team in rebounds for only the second time in his RU tenure with seven, tying a career high.

Rosario scored RU's first 10 points on 4-5 shooting, including 2-3 from beyond the arc. With RU leading 12-6, UMass went on an 8-0 run, highlighted by two treys from Freddie Riley, to take its first lead of the game, 14-12, at the 14:21 mark.

The Minutemen would go scoreless for nearly six minutes as the Scarlet Knights scored the next 13 points and went on 18-1 run to storm to 30-15 advantage. UMass closed the gap to 30-20 but back-to-back treys from Rosario put Rutgers ahead 36-22. The Minutemen never got within more than 11 points the rest of the first half, as RU went into the locker room at the midpoint with a 46-35 lead.

Rutgers limited All-Atlantic 10 Conference First-Team selection Ricky Harris to two points in the first half.

Rosario hit a jumper from the left side in the first minute of the second half to reach 20 points for the 12th time as a Scarlet Knight.

With Rutgers going ahead by its largest lead of the season at 60-41, Harris led a UMass resurgence.

With the Minutemen beginning to crawl back in the game, David Gibbs hit a trey from the left corner to cut RU's advantage to single digits, 75-68, for the first times since the 10:09 mark in the first half.

Rutgers drove down the court and with a toss from Mitchell, Ndiaye slammed a thunderous dunk over Sean Carter to extend RU's lead to 77-68.

The Minutemen hit back-to-back jumpers to cut Rutgers' lead to 77-72 with 3:31 remaining.

Coburn nailed a 15-footer from the right side giving Rutgers a 79-72 lead at the 2:41 mark.

UMass quickly responded with a three from Harris at the top of the key, trimming RU's lead to 79-75 with 1:31 to go in the game.

UMass wouldn't score another basket, however, as Rutgers capped off the victory with five points from the charity stripe to ensure the 83-75 win.

The Scarlet Knights return to the hardwood tomorrow (Saturday) evening versus Florida, who defeated No. 2 Michigan state in the other semi-final contest.. The game will tip-off at 8:00 p.m. and will be televised live on HDNet.

