

Smiths Lead Volunteers over Weevils

box score

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) -- It was a case of too many Smiths for Division II Arkansas-Monticello.

No. 7 Tennessee's three Smith, JaJuan, Ramar and Tyler -- all of whom start and none of whom are related -- combined for 41 points in the Volunteers' 101-44 in the first round of the StubHub Legends Classic.

The Boll Weevils could muster just one double-digit scorer in Deron Brown, who contributed 11 points before fouling out.

Tennessee smothered Arkansas-Monticello defensively, holding them to just 25 percent from the floor while shooting 60 percent. Coach Bruce Pearl, who bemoaned his team's lack of intensity in its season-opening win over Temple, seemed a bit more satisfied this time around.

"Our defense was good from start to finish," Pearl said. "The way we played was a testament to our depth. We were unselfish in shooting. We passed up some good shots to get some better shots."

Meanwhile, the learning process continued for Arkansas-Monticello, which played the last of two exhibition games before opening its regular season against West Virginia on Nov. 16. The team returned just one starter and 3.3 points per game from last season's 9-17 squad. The Boll Weevils dressed just 10 players for the game.

"One of the things we wanted to work on was not turning the ball over and I thought we did a really good job of that in the first half," said Boll Weevils coach Mike Newell. "This is our first real game and we do not have any real experience back. Tennessee has an excellent basketball team. They are deep and they are going to be tough to contend with."

Tennessee added to its backcourt depth by bringing in Tyler Smith, who returned to his home state after a year at Iowa. He was granted a waiver by the NCAA allowing him to play this year instead of having to sit out a season, as is usually the case with transfer athletes, due to illness in his family. He scored nine points against Temple in his Vols debut and was the team's high scorer with 15 points.

"It feels great to be home," Smith said in an interview. "My family can come to every game and I can see my son more often than I could when I was at Iowa. The coaches let me go home any time I need to. It's totally different here."

JaJuan Smith scored 14 points and Ramar Smith had 12 for Tennessee, which won again without a major contribution from preseason All-American Chris Lofton. After averaging almost 21 points last season, the defending Southeastern Conference player of the year has just 15 points in two games on 3-of-15 shooting.

"Chris Lofton, when we need him, will be there," Pearl said. "We ran a lot of set plays for him, but they were in situations where we did not really need the shots. Against tougher competition we will have to be running more set plays."

Tennessee used a 20-5 run to start the game and put it out of reach, leading much of the second half by more than 40 points. The Vols are now 17-0 in non-conference home games under Pearl and improved to 31-4 under the third-year coach when scoring more than 80 points.

Tennessee will host Prairie View A&M on Friday before moving on to play West Virginia in the tournament semifinals.

