Northwestern rolls past Bryant 86-66

EVANSTON, Ill. (AP) – Northwestern basketball teams aren't known for their swagger, but Vic Law and the Wildcats are making noises that times are about to change.

Law triggered a decisive 12-0 run early in the game on the way to a team-high 22 points and Northwestern rolled past Bryant 86-66 on Friday.

Scottie Lindsey contributed 20 points for the Wildcats, while Gavin Skelly pitched in 15 more off the bench. Dererk Pardon had a game-high 10 rebounds and two blocked shots.

"We're really good," Law said. "We've showed that we'll come out and compete no matter who it's against. This isn't the old Northwestern."

How good the Wildcats really are won't be known for a while, of course, but coach Chris Collins already was certain that this was the "most talented" of his four teams to date.

"As a coach, this game had a lot of trappings," Collins said. "We had three games on the road and one day to prepare for a game, and that day was Thanksgiving. We had the potential for a lot of distractions, but I was so proud of the way we started the game."

Northwestern (4-2) took a 38-23 lead into halftime, but Bryant top gun Nisre Zouzoua went off for 14 points to close the gap to 42-39 five minutes into the second half. After a timeout, the Wildcats were able to regroup for their second victory in the last four starts.

Zouzoua finished with a game-high 24 points and Adam Grant added 19 the Bulldogs, who shot only 39 percent in the field. Zouzoua came off career-high 30-point outburst in a 64-57 victory over Louisiana Monroe three nights earlier.

After Grant's jump shot tied the game 5-5, Northwestern seized control in the next 3:30.
Law drained eight straight points, including a pair of 3-pointers. Skelly followed with a pair of free throws before Pardon scored on a lay-up to cap the onslaught.

Bryant (2-4) started no one taller than 6-foot-6 and just one upperclassman in the loss, its third in the last four starts.

"We did some good things, especially at the start of the second half," Bryant coach Tim O'Shea said. "We have a young team and don't play in the Big Ten, so I think we had an impressive effort throughout the course of the game."

BIG PICTURE
Bryant: The challenge will be to find a consistent third scorer to complement the Grant-Zouzoua backcourt, which accounted for 52 percent of their points thus far. "We have (the talent)," O'Shea said. "But it's young talent that will take time to develop." The Bulldogs were picked to finish third in the Northeast Conference preseason coaches poll.

Northwestern: While the Wildcats have shot the longball well thus far, the jury remains out on their inside game. They entered the contest with a .451 success rate from beyond the arc, best among Big Ten teams. Law (.700) and Lindsey (.455) led the way among the regulars.

ALL FOR ONE
Paced by Lindsey and Skelly with six apiece, Northwestern had 25 assists on 31 field goals against an extended 2-3 zone defense. "That's a sign of good ball movement and guys who are willing to do it," Collins said.