

Mack leads No. 23 Texas over ULM 80-59

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) – Tevin Mack powered over two defenders for a tough layup, hit the floor and picked himself up to flex his muscles and smile.

Mack was back and so was No. 23 Texas.

The sophomore forward scored 14 points after returning from a one-game suspension, and the Longhorns used a big second half to roll over Louisiana-Monroe 80-59 on Monday night.

"I'm just glad we came back with a win," Mack said. "I had a little bit of nerves, but I fought through that real quick."

The Longhorns were back to full strength with the return of Mack and guard Kerwin Roach Jr. from one-game suspensions for offseason rules violations, giving Texas (2-0) some of the muscle, speed and depth it lacked in a sloppy season-opening win over Incarnate Word. Neither started Monday night but both were on the court within minutes of the opening tip.

Mack made four 3-pointers and Roach had 11 points and two assists.

"I was excited to be back on the court and not on the bench," Roach said. "We want to get out and run."

Louisiana-Monroe (1-1) cut Texas' lead to 46-40 on a 3-pointer from Jordan Harris before the Longhorns responded with a 16-4 run. Kendal Yancy scored five straight points, made a 3-pointer and threw down a dunk in transition that made it 62-44 with just under 8 minutes left.

Texas' defense took over from there. Louisiana-Monroe struggled to penetrate and the Longhorns' bigger players constantly pushed the Warhawks further out on the edge than they wanted to be.

Texas guard Andrew Jones said coach Shaka Smart pushed the Longhorns on defense after their season opener.

"Coach really encouraged us to be aggressive. Be dogs," Jones said.

Yancy finished with 12 points and Jones scored 12 and had a team-high four assists. Texas freshman forward Jarrett Allen followed a double-double in his debut with eight points and three rebounds. Marvin Jean-Pierre scored 13 for Louisiana-Monroe, which shot just 30 percent.

BIG PICTURE

Louisiana-Monroe: The Warhawks tried to punch above their weight in the Big 12 but missed their chance at an upset. Early 3-point shooting built a short-lived lead, but Texas' size and speed eventually took over.

"Our program has had length the last two years at our level, and after seeing the Longhorns tonight, I miss it," coach Keith Richard said. "They forced us out just a step or two from where we needed to be."

Texas: A much smoother performance after the struggle against Incarnate Word. Getting Roach and Mack back in the lineup gave Texas more options to attack both inside and out. Smart even used a four-guard, up-tempo attack that he'll want to build on before the start of Big 12 play.

POLL IMPLICATIONS

Texas slid down two spots in the AP Top 25 after its opener. This one should give voters more confidence.

INSIDE THE BOXSCORE

Texas was shaky from the free throw line (13 of 21) and got outrebounded (43-41). But the Longhorns shot 50 percent, blocked five shots and didn't give the ball away, committing just five turnovers.

The addition of Mack and Roach also kept Texas fresh. Four Longhorns played 32 minutes or more in the season opener. No one got more than 24 minutes against Louisiana-Monroe.

"They were able to get a break. You can play harder that way," Smart said.

HE SAID IT

Smart on getting players to focus on defense: "It's like my (5-year-old) daughter, I tell her it's really important you take a bath tonight, and she doesn't think it's important."