

No. 12 Villanova survives Bucknell

VILLANOVA, Pa. - The No. 12 Villanova Wildcats scored the final nine points to outlast Bucknell 72-65 in a regional round game of the Progressive Legends Classic at the Pavilion. The `Cats improve to 3-0 overall while the Bison drop to 1-2 in the early stages of the 2014-15 campaign.

Chris Hass led all scorers with 32 points - just six points shy of the Pavilion record for an opponent. He finished the night 9-of-12 from the field, 3-of-6 from beyond the arc and 11-of-12 at the free throw line.

Junior Dylan Ennis scored 16 points and grabbed six boards for Villanova. Ryan Arcidiacono added 15 points while classmate Daniel Ochefu contributed 14 points, 10 rebounds and three blocked shots, including two critical ones in the final minutes of a tight game.

The Wildcats scored the game's first seven points as their defense caused Bucknell significant headaches. Villanova would go on to force the Bison into 13 turnovers over the first 20 minutes and that was the major reason the Wildcats took a 33-26 lead into the locker room despite connecting on 1-of-12 attempts from beyond the 3-point arc in the period. (.367 overall).

Yet the final minute of the half gave the Bison some life and set the stage for what would unfold after intermission. A 33-20 VU lead was cut to seven on back-to-back 3-pointers by Hass and J.C. Show.

The return of JayVaughn Pinkston to the floor - he had played only seven first half minutes after picking up his second foul - help VU rebuild its advantage to 39-30 but the Bison offense heated up after that. A 9-0 run, keyed by triples by Hass and John Azzinaro drew Bucknell even at 39 with 14:34 left. It would remain tight the rest of the way.

A Hass triple with just under two minutes to play gave Bucknell the 65-63 lead. But Villanova drew even after Arcidiacono sank two free throws after being fouled with 1:40 left. An Ochefu free throw gave the `Cats a 66-65 edge he swatted two blocked shots in the previous Bison possession. That set up the game's biggest defensive possession in the final minute.

Darrun Hilliard forced a Hass turnover near mid-court and the Wildcats gained possession. They inbounded the ball to Ennis, who was fouled and calmly sank both free throws. Hilliard picked off a pass near mid-court and went in for a slam dunk with nine seconds left to effectively settle matters.