Averette, Oklahoma State crush Oral Roberts 91-48

By JOHN TRANCHINA

STILLWATER, Okla. (AP) — Brandon Averette has put in a lot of time in the gym working on his 3-pointer, and it showed Thursday night.

Averette scored a career-high 21 points, hitting 4 of 6 shots from 3-point range, and added nine assists and four rebounds to lead Oklahoma State to a dominating 91-48 victory over Oral Roberts in the Progressive Legends Classic.

Mitchell Solomon had 12 points — all in the first half — along with seven rebounds and three assists, and Thomas Dziagwa and Zack Dawson each scored 11 for Oklahoma State (3-0).

"He's a kid who's earned this," Cowboys coach Mike Boynton said of Averette. "He truly embraces the 'Let's work' mentality that we've had since Day One. He spends as much time in that gym as any basketball player I've ever been around. No one spends more time working on their game and he's starting to bear the fruits of his labor."

The Cowboys continued to employ their stifling, pressuring defensive style, limiting Oral Roberts to just 33.3 percent shooting (20 of 60), including 16.7 percent (3 of 18) from 3-point range. This marks the first time since the first three games of 2014-15 that Oklahoma State has held opponents under 35 percent in three consecutive contests.

"Coach Boynton's instilled in us that we can win games even if we don't shoot well, if we play well on the defensive end," said Solomon, who also had three blocks and one steal in 25 minutes of action. "We've been putting a lot of focus into that and practicing it every day, and it's shown."

Albert Owens had 16 points and six rebounds to lead Oral Roberts (1-2).

"We didn't shoot it well," said Oral Roberts first-year head coach Paul Mills, "with 3 for 18 from the 3-point line, and 2 for 12 from one of our better shooters (Austin Ruder). Those things add up. (Oklahoma State) had a lot to do with that." Oklahoma State is still without its best player, senior guard Jeffrey Carroll, who has not suited up yet this season "pending the ongoing review of the men's basketball program," according to a school press release.

The matchup featured Cowboys assistant coach Scott Sutton facing his former team, where he was head coach for the previous 18 seasons and set the Golden Eagles record with 328 wins.

"Scott's terrific," said his replacement, Mills, who was a longtime Baylor assistant. "He's a fantastic coach, he is a fantastic person and he's gone over and above in regards to helping me in the transition at ORU."

The game was part of the Progressive Legends Classic tournament, which includes many teams throughout the country and continues over the next eight days.

BIG PICTURE
Oral Roberts: Owens looked good in the first half, playing like the pre-season All-Summit League first-teamer he is, but had just two in the second until the game was well out of hand in the final four minutes. His basket early in the second half game gave him 1,000 career points, becoming the 34th ORU player to hit that mark. Owens reached the milestone in his 98th career game, the 28th fastest in Golden Eagles history.

Oklahoma State: As strong as they've looked on the court, Oklahoma State continues to deal with disciplinary issues. In addition to Carroll's absence, the Cowboys have not utilized the services of junior guard Davon Dillard, who averaged 5.7 points and 3.2 rebounds in 13 minutes per game last season. Dillard sat out his third straight contest for "failure to meet team standards," according to the school. Sophomore forward Cameron McGriff was also held out of the first half as a disciplinary measure for being late to the morning shootaround. He finally entered the game with 17:31 remaining and played the rest of the contest, totaling eight points and seven rebounds.

"We have standards and rules," Boynton said. "He was late today and that's part of the deal. It's a lesson learned, certainly something we want to try to nip in the bud. Cam's a great kid . but the standards don't get lowered in this program for anybody. Everybody has to follow the same rules."

TURNING POINT

Austin Ruder's 3-pointer with 7:28 left in the first half pulled Oral Roberts to within 30-24, but Oklahoma State reeled off a 14-3 run over the rest of the half, including nine points in a row to close it, to take a commanding 44-27 advantage into the break. The Golden Eagles didn't get closer than 15 points the rest of the way.

DELAY
With 11:54 remaining in the contest and Oklahoma State leading 61-34, action was delayed for 17 minutes because of a scoreboard malfunction. First, the buzzer stayed on for about a full minute straight, then the shot clock and scoreboard shut off. Arena personnel were unable to repair the system and eventually play continued with it off. The PA announcer alerted everyone when 10 seconds were left on the shot clock, and reported the score and overall time remaining during stoppages.