

Stevens leads Penn State to 70-57 win over Montana

By TRAVIS JOHNSON

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) — Although his nose was bloodied and swollen, smashed at the bridge and packed full of gauze, Shep Garner was all smiles on Wednesday night.

His nose, possibly broken in a collision with a teammate late in Penn State's 70-57 win over Montana on Wednesday in the Progressive Legends Classic, will heal. He's happier his shooting stroke appears to be on the mend, too.

Garner finished with 12 points and hit back-to-back 3-pointers to put the pesky Grizzlies away after they had pulled within three with 4:11 remaining at the Bryce Jordan Center.

"Talk about a kid that hasn't really been stroking the ball the first couple of games," Penn State coach Patrick Chambers said. "Misses two free throws then drills two 3s. That's what a senior does. That's what a leader does."

Lamar Stevens scored 15 of his 25 points in the second half and Josh Reaves added 12 apiece for the Nittany Lions (3-0) who led for all but 2:58.

Ahmaad Rorie led the Grizzlies (2-1) with 16 points and Michael Oguine chipped in 15, including a 3-pointer that cut Penn State's lead to 58-55.

The Grizzlies took advantage of Penn State's depleted lineup as they mounted their comeback. Penn State led by 10 with 13:06 left but was down two of its starting guards.

With Garner off the court for nasal repairs after colliding with Nazeer Bostick, Penn State was also without leading scorer Tony Carr who suffered a sprained ankle earlier in the second half. He did not return to the game.

Stevens took on the scoring load with most of his points coming while Carr rode a courtside stationary bike, trying to get loose.

"It just shows you, we have some players on this team," Chambers said. "On any given night, anybody's going to step up." The teams swapped the lead six times before the Nittany Lions went ahead for good on a Bostick dunk with 12:09 to play in the first half and Penn State led 34-29 at intermission.

"I think Stevens and Garner scored the ball in a timely fashion and that was the big difference tonight," Montana coach Travis DeCuire said.

SHEP'S SHAKY START

Garner, the team's top 3-point shooter last season, was struggling from all over the floor coming into the game. He had made just 2 of 16 field goals in the first two games.

"I was confident going into the game," Garner said. "But the shots down the stretch when we really needed them, they gave our team a boost and they gave me a boost so I felt great after making those shots."

OGUINE SHAKEN UP

Oguine appeared to hurt his right wrist after getting tangled up under the hoop with Garner early in the second. The Grizzlies' leading scorer was unable to shoot the ensuing foul shots but did return to the game with his wrist taped after a brief respite.

WATCHING CARR

Chambers said Carr probably could've played, though he admitted he wasn't sure of the severity of the sprain and would know more on Thursday.

Carr, who scored 53 points over the first two games, was bringing the ball up slowly, waiting for his offense to set up when he crumpled to the floor grabbing at his right leg. Rorie went the other way for an uncontested layup and Carr limped off with help.

Chambers said he'd meet with Carr and team doctors Thursday to determine if Carr can play on Friday.

"When Tony went down, everybody had to step up," Miller said. "And tonight my teammates found me in the right spots and I was able to make my shots."

BIG PICTURE

Montana: The Grizzlies have plenty of talent. Rorie and Oguine are going to keep putting up points and will give this team a chance to win the Big Sky conference if they play like they did against the bigger Nittany Lions.

Penn State: The Nittany Lions are off to the type of start coach Patrick Chambers wanted to see. Fueled by an aggressive defense, Penn State has held teams to an average of 63 points per game thus far.