

Manigault Closes Strong, New Mexico Stops McNeese 90-80

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) -- Corey Manigault scored a career-high 24 points, including six straight points for New Mexico in the closing minutes Saturday in a 90-80 win over McNeese Roman Legends Classic presented by Old Trapper.

Fittingly, it was Manigault's steal - his third - with 25 seconds remaining that finally sealed it for New Mexico (4-0).

With the game tied at 78-78 and 2:26 left, Manigault hit two foul shots, a short jumper then a dunk off a steal from J.J. Caldwell – who had 10 assists – to put the Lobos up 82-78 with 41 seconds left.

“It's so hard late in games trying to figure out which five to have out there,” New Mexico coach Paul Weir said. “Those are really hard decisions to make as far as who's in and who's out. (Caldwell) was one of the ones we were talking about but man, he made a big-time play there to kind of open it up a little bit.” After three blowouts, the Lobos needed a game like this, he said.

“This was a good test for us, to get in a close one, where maybe we needed a game like that,” Weir said. “That's not saying that we didn't want to win by more or that we should played better, but in the long run, hopefully a game like this will serve us well.”

JaQuan Lyle added 18 for New Mexico and Carlton Bragg snagged 18 rebounds.

Shamarkus Kennedy had 26 points, nine rebounds and six blocks, Dru Kuxhausen had 24 points and Leondre Washington added 15 for Cowboys (1-4).

The Lobos appeared ready to take control several times, only to have McNeese rally.

“I thought we were able to consistently score,” Cowboys coach Heath Schroyer said. “Being able to consistently score in this building is very, very underrated. You spend a lot of time on how to stop them and that's a chore itself, but you have to score in this building so instead of an 8-0 run it's an 8-4 run. Then you can kind of stay within striking distance.”

New Mexico had a field day when it came picking pockets, snaring 17 steals while forcing 22 Cowboys turnovers. Bragg led the way with five and Caldwell added four. It helped lead to a 32-10 New Mexico advantage in fast break points.

“Playing here, the key is not to give up pick 6s,” Schroyer said. “And we gave up a couple too many.”

The Lobos also went 26-for-35 from the foul line compared to 11-14 for McNeese.