

Howard, Dickinson lead No. 20 Michigan to 91-60 rout of Pitt

NEW YORK (AP) — Jett Howard scored 17 points as No. 20 Michigan pulled away in the second half for a 91-60 rout of Pittsburgh on Wednesday night in the Vivid Seats Legends Classic presented by Old Trapper semifinals.

After struggling to get past Eastern Michigan on Friday, the Wolverines (3-0) struggled at times during the first half before seizing control early in the second.

“It’s nice to see how everybody contributed,” Michigan coach Juwan Howard said.

Howard made 6 of 8 shots, including two early 3s to help Michigan start pulling away and returned after a lengthy rest with the Wolverines holding a 25-point lead before fouling out.

Joey Baker and Kobe Bufkin added 14 apiece for Michigan. Hunter Dickinson totaled 11 points, seven rebounds and five assists as Michigan shot 72% in the second half and 58.3% overall.

Jamarius Burton led Pittsburgh (1-2) with 14 points and Blake Hinson added 13, but the Panthers shot 42% and struggled defensively again, allowing 38 points in the paint and 18 layups and dunks while mixing in a zone defense at times.

“We have to get better, especially on the defensive side of the ball,” Panthers coach Jeff Capel said. “There’s a glaring hole there and we collectively have to work to get better on that end.”

Dickinson did not dominate but constantly did things to set up Michigan’s offense, including a nifty skip pass to Howard, who hit a 3-pointer and completed a four-point play for a 42-33 lead early in the second half. He then used his size to clear the lane for consecutive drives to the rim by Jaelin Llewellyn that opened a 54-41 lead a few minutes later.

“I think it just speaks to him as a player,” Baker said of Dickinson. “He’s obviously a really good post player and attracts so much attention.”

“I’m not surprised by that because Hunter’s been like that from day one,” Howard added.

The Wolverines began finishing it off when Bufkin and Dickinson converted 3-point plays on consecutive possessions for a 62-44 lead with about 12 1/2 minutes to go. Dickinson took a seat for good with 10:44 to go and Michigan holding a 65-46 lead.

BIG PICTURE:

Michigan: The Wolverines showed its offense can get going even in the few minutes Dickinson sits. In the first half, Dickinson rested for around four minutes. It was during his break when the Wolverines expanded a one-point lead into a five-point margin, as others seamlessly made shots from inside the paint before the Wolverines missed seven of their final eight shots and settled for a six-point halftime lead.

Pittsburgh: John Hugley IV experienced mixed results in his season debut after missing the first two games with a knee injury. In 22 minutes, Hugley scored nine points, but also struggled on the glass, finishing with one rebound. “I thought he did some good things,” Capel said. “It was good to have him back out there.” Last season, Hugley started 30 of 31 games and averaged 14.7 points and 7.9 boards.