

St. John's Mounts Improbable Comeback vs Georgetown

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LJ Figueroa and Marcellus Earlington led a furious comeback as the St. John's Red Storm defeated the Georgetown Hoyas in the first round of the Big East tournament Wednesday night.

Down 62-52 with six and a half minutes remaining in what could've been the last game of their season, St. John's was running out of time to string together a comeback.

However, that is exactly what they did to the tune of a 23-0 run to end the game and advance to the Big East quarterfinals where they will match up with top-seeded Creighton tomorrow at noon.

The run was ignited by Marcellus Earlington, who scored 10 of the points by himself on route to the big win for the Johnnies.

"I work on my shot every day," Earlington said. "It didn't surprise me. It was a good job of my teammates finding me in my spots."

The win is the first conference tournament for first-year coach Mike Anderson, who knows all too well about how basketball is a game of runs.

"I'm proud of these guys," Anderson said. "We put together one of our best runs of the year. It's always tough coming out the first game, but they satisfied me by putting together a much better second half than the first half."

Georgetown ends its season 15-17 with a 5-14 record in Big East play. In head coach Patrick Ewing's three seasons with the team, they have still yet to win a game in the conference tournament.

However, there was no small effort by senior guard Terrell Allen in the loss, who scored 21 points on 9-of-15 shooting from the field. The stat line seems less impressive, though, when it's compared to what it looked like after the first 20 minutes: 18 points on 8-of-11 shooting from the field. The Red Storm made him a focus on the defensive side of the ball, and it ultimately helped them secure the victory.

"They played hard and they fought throughout the whole game," Allen said. "Credit to them."

The Hoyas were also without a fully healthy Omer Yurtseven, their leading scorer, who played sparingly, and Mac McClung entirely, their second-leading scorer.

The win propels St. John's to the Big East quarterfinals to face the top-seeded Creighton Bluejays, who have had their own struggles against this Red Storm team.

Back on March 1, St. John's defeated then-top-10 Creighton by 20 points. Other Johnnies like Earlington are not intimidated by the team next on the schedule or the number they have next to their name.

"I feel like as a team, we feel like we could beat any team in the country," Earlington said. "And you know we're just going to build off the momentum of this win. If we come out and play the style of basketball we've been playing all year, then it's a win."

This time, St. John's will have to win without their home faithful cheering them on as the Big East conference announced late Wednesday night that there would be a ban on fans coming to the tournament games starting Thursday.

The Red Storm and Bluejays were scheduled to tip off at noon from Madison Square Garden Thursday, March 12.