

Relentless Tigers, with tough defensive play, timely offense, spank error-proned Gamecocks

Written by Levi Johnson, Sports Editor
Thursday, 06 December 2012 09:02 -



En route to seizing the opportunity in its annual hoops showdown versus arch rival South Carolina, Clemson was relentless in pursuit of its intended objective at Colonial Life Arena Sunday (Dec. 2).

Spearheaded by tough, in your face defensive play and timely offensive spurts, Brad Brownell's Tigers (5-2) spanked the Gamecocks 64-55, much to the chagrin of most of the 10,684 spectators that witnessed the proceedings at the aforementioned venue.

While sending the Gamecocks to their third lost in eight tilts, the Tigers, forcing the home players into 19 turnovers, held them to a shooting percentage of 34.8 from the field.

Meanwhile, on the offensive end, victory was assured for the visitors on the strength of two timely second half runs.

At the top of the final 20 minutes of play, the Tigers, facing a 1 point (28-29) deficit, with 18:30 remaining, utilized a 17-7 run over the next seven minutes to take a 45-36 lead, with 11:18 left in the game.

Then, thanks to a 13-8 run over the last three and a half minutes of action, the visitors from the

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Foothills of the Palmetto State ensured the near double-digit triumph over Frank Martin's Gamecocks, who have now lost two consecutive games. Last Thursday night (Nov. 29) in New York, South Carolina was routed by St. John's 89-65.

In assessing the effort of his participants, who played without the services of one of the Tigers most experienced players, in senior forward Milton Jennings, who was left home due to a violation against team rules, Brad Brownell lauded them for their intensity and toughness; especially while guarding the Gamecocks.

"For the most part, I thought we did a good job of doing what we had to do... especially defensively... to come out of here with a win," said the third year Clemson coach.

"The way they play, they make it hard to make passes," continued the Tigers mentor. "There are times you have to put your head down and make plays."

On the way to the Clemson locker room Devin Booker termed the road win a "confidence builder" for the Tigers, who halted a two-game losing streak opposite their arch enemies.

"This was big (for us). We had to play tough but we came here and got what we wanted," said the Clemson senior center/forward, who tallied 13 points and had two blocks in the non-conference encounter.

Discouraged by the production of his charges in their last two games, Frank Martin bemoaned their lack of team play against Clemson.

"When you try to score the basketball through individuality rather than team concepts; when you play good teams; you shoot a low percentage and you turn it over, "the South Carolina coach said. "That's the unfortunate trap we continue to fall into.

"But attitudes have got to change, if we want to become a winning basketball team."

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Added guard Brenton Williams, who, as the Gamecocks leading scorer, contributed 16 points, "We didn't play well; that's for sure. But you have to give Clemson credit; they played good defense against us and made us take a lot of tough shots."