

Irish Fall In Overtime

Written by Sean Stires
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The Notre Dame basketball team suffered its first loss of the season – a 79-70 overtime setback to St. Joseph’s – on Friday night in the semifinals of the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic at the new Barclays Center in Brooklyn, NY.

The 20th ranked Irish (2-1) held a 66-58 lead with four minutes remaining in regulation, but failed to score down the stretch to see the game go to the extra session.

“We had some really great looks,” Irish head coach Mike Brey said of his team’s shot opportunities. “If we hit one of them maybe we escape, but we couldn’t. We did some things good, but I’m disappointed in our toughness in the lane against their front line. They are a heck of a team. They are really good.”

The Fighting Irish were outscored 8-0 over the last four minutes of regulation and then 13-4 in overtime in the frustrating loss. They shot 42-percent in the second half, but just 25-percent (2-for-8) in overtime.

Jack Cooley was one of five Irish players to score in double figures in the game. The center had his second double-double of the season with 14 points and 14 rebounds in 32 minutes. He was 6-for-13 from the field.

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“They are really good and they are extremely athletic,” Cooley said of the Hawks afterward. “It was a challenge and a different look than we’ve seen in our first few games.”

Eric Atkins had a double-double as well with 12 points and 10 assists. Scott Martin scored 13 points, Pat Connaughton had 11 thanks in part to 3-of-6 three-point shooting, while Jerian Grant added 10 points, but shot just 4-of-17 from the floor. Grant was 1-for-6 from the field. Garrick Sherman, who was coming off a XX-point night in last Monday’s win over Monmouth, was held to seven points in 21 minutes.

“The three things we had written in our scouting reports were the mental preparation to be ready for a physical challenge, which it was,” St. Joseph’s head coach Phil Martelli began of his plan for the Irish. “A concentration challenge, which it was, and the shot clock. We thought the shot clock would be more of a factor.”

The Irish were narrowly outrebounded 40-38. They turned the ball over 12 times to St. Joe’s 10 turnovers.

Notre Dame plays one more game on Saturday before returning home. The Irish face BYU in the consolation game, while St. Joseph’s moves on to face Florida State in the Coaches vs. Cancer championship game Saturday night.