



It was anything but a work of art, but in the end the Notre Dame basketball team was able to scrap its way to a 79-71 overtime win over DePaul in Chicago's All-State Arena. Jack Cooley had another monster game, while Eric Atkins came up clutch in the extra session to propel the Fighting Irish to the hard-fought victory.

Cooley set a season-high with 26 points and tied his season-high with 16 rebounds for his 14<sup>th</sup> double-double of the season and his fourth in his last five games. Atkins scored 16 points, including seven of his team's nine points in overtime. The 103<sup>rd</sup>

meeting between the longtime rivals featured seven ties and 13 lead changes.

DePaul (10-11, 1-7 Big East) jumped out to a 10-3 lead thanks largely to Jamee Crockett. The forward scored eight of those 10 points, but picked-up his second foul with 14:31 and sat down. He did not score again the rest of the half and finished with 13 points. Notre Dame (18-4, 6-3) started 1-of-5 from the field before Cooley hit a hook shot in the lane. It started a string of three consecutive Irish baskets.

Notre Dame took its first lead on a Pat Connaughton layup at 11:32 to make it 13-12. DePaul went back up 16-15, but the Irish went on a 10-0 run to take a 25-16 lead. The Irish built a 33-22 first half lead thanks to 12 second chance points.

## Irish Dump DePaul

Written by Sean Stires

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The Irish outscored DePaul 22-8 in the paint in the first half, despite being even with 19 rebounds each. They finished the game with a much tighter 38-30 advantage in the paint.

Notre Dame led 52-51 with 11:00 minutes to go. Atkins hit a three to put them up 55-51, but Crockett answered immediately to make it a one-point game again.

Worrel Clahar went to the free throw line with 9:25 remaining to shoot a one-and-one after an offensive foul on Cooley. He hit both to give DePaul its first lead since the 10:13 mark of the first half. Atkins answered that with a basket, but missed a free throw after being fouled to make it 57-56 Irish.

The teams traded leads for the next few minutes. Cooley picked-up his third foul with 7:21 left in regulation. He stayed in the game and tied the score 62-62 with a pair of free throws at the 6:00 minute mark. Cooley set a screen on Notre Dame's next possession that allowed Grant to drive to the dish for a dunk and a 64-62 advantage.

DePaul led 66-64 at the final media timeout of regulation. Cooley again tied the game at 66-all just after play resumed. The Irish went back on top with 2:17 remaining when Atkins threw one through the hole while falling to the floor.

Grant went to the free throw line with 1:09 remaining with the Irish down 70-68 and hit a pair to tie the game for the seventh time. The Irish got the ball back and called timeout with a chance to play for the winning shot with 23.2 seconds left on the game clock and just 22 on the shot clock. A 20-foot shot by Grant bounced off the rim with about 3.0 seconds left and the old rivals headed to overtime tied at 70.

DePaul turned the ball over after winning the overtime tip and Atkins gave Notre Dame the lead with a three from near the same spot as Grant's miss just moments earlier. Atkins then hit two free throws with 3:06 to play for a 75-70 Irish lead – their most breathing room since midway through the second half.

Atkins made two more free throws before missing two after he was hit in the eye, but the Irish

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outscored the Blue Demons 9-1 in the extra session to hold on for their third straight win. DePaul has lost two straight overtime games and six consecutive games overall.

The win ties Notre Dame head coach Mike Brey with former St. John's coach Lou Carnesecca with 139 Big East wins. He is 139-92 all-time in his 13 seasons in Big East play. Brey is one of just 10 coaches in conference history with at least 100 career victories.

Notre Dame has won eight straight against the Blue Demons. DePaul's last win in the series was nearly six years ago - Feb. 8, 2007.