



Maguire on fire, but Louisville survives upset bid



NKU's Dustin Maguire (5) poured in a game-high 33 points Saturday night as the Norse met Louisville in The Bank of Kentucky Center. The Cardinals, however, used the inside power of freshman Samardo Samuels (24) to pull out an 84-69 victory before a crowd of 8,408.

Pitino impressed by NKU's 3-point barrage, U of L wins, 84-69

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS, Ky. - University of Louisville coach Rick Pitino was puzzled about all the talk about Division I and Division II on Saturday night after his third-ranked Cardinals beat Division II Northern Kentucky University, 84-69, before 8,408 fans in The Bank of Kentucky Center's college basketball debut.

After all, sophomore guard Dustin Maguire scored 33 points on 12-for-16 shooting and the Norse, ranked No. 4 in Division II, gave the Cards all they could handle for the first 30 minutes of the game. NKU even held a four-point lead with about 12 minutes to play, teasing Norse fans with the idea that the first men's game in the arena would be an upset win.

"We would have an easier time defending a Big East team than we would Northern Kentucky," Pitino said, scoffing at the fact the Norse are Division II. "I know that sounds crazy, but when you play four or five guards, and Samardo



Dave Bezold

Samuels gave up about 15 points guarding a guy that fades for a 3, it's totally unorthodox."

The Norse made 12 of 28 3-point attempts, including 9-of-12 shooting by Maguire from long range.

"In a game like this, we have to look for mismatches some how, some way," NKU head coach Dave Bezold said. "We decided we had to take (Maguire) and move him down and when they were switching, take advantage of those switches, which would in turn free him up. It is harder for big guys to play in Division II than it is for these guys because



A'Daeron Duncan (35) battles Louisville for a rebound during the first half.

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they're not used to having to come out and guard these guys with all of this skill. So we were fortunate enough to find some mismatches, recognize them and for Dustin to hit his shots.



NKU's Leslie Malone (23) attempts to block Edgar Sosa's shot in the first half.

"If one or two other guys could make a couple threes, we could have been right there."

Pitino noted that most upsets in college basketball these days are the result of a failure to defend the 3-pointer.

"The three is the great equalizer of talent, and this team probably shoots more threes than any team that we'll face," Pitino said. "They run their offense in a five-man

spread, which gives a team like us trouble."

The coaching legend was pleased his team had the chance to face a team on the road in front of a hostile crowd, had a chance to play from behind and was able to execute in an unfavorable position in the second half.

But Pitino didn't like the idea of down playing the win because it was over a Division II team.

"The one thing I don't do is say this is (just) Northern Kentucky," Pitino said. "We don't underrate anyone. There are certain teams that may play a different style that's more conducive to us. But I'm real pleased. You'd have to be a snob to not be pleased. We're real happy with it, it's a good road win."

Senior forward DeAaron Williams added 12 points for the Norse, who only had two players score in double figures.

NKU shot 47.4 percent from the field, but Louisville shot an eye-popping 59.6 percent and pulled away over the last 10 minutes of the game.

"We knew when we had that lead that we were going to have to defend and make them hit some tough shots, which they did," Bezold said. "I was just proud of our guys and the effort and everything we did."

After seeing minimal action in two years at Division I Saint Louis University, Maguire was happy to play a large role Saturday for the Norse.

"It was exciting to finally open the season and going against one of the best teams in the country," Maguire said. "I think we're all proud of the way we played. Getting that lead was very exciting and like coach said, we knew we were going to have to defend it and unfortunately they hit it both times. We let them catch the ball a little closer to the basket than we would have liked to have had. Once guys like that get the ball down low, it is tough to do anything and I think that is kind of what hurt us toward the end."

Now NKU turns its attention to one more exhibition, this time across the Ohio River at the University of Cincinnati Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. before opening the regular season next Saturday when the Norse host Ferris State at 1 p.m.

"This can't be the highlight of the year," Bezold said looking toward the future. "This is just preparation for the season. I hope we understand that when we do certain things, how good we can be. It has been a really good group so far. With so many new guys, I'm still learning their strengths. They're still learning how to deal with us coaches. In these types of games, the number one thing that you want to do is to get something out of it."



Dustin Maguire buries a 3-pointer in the first half as Louisville's Edgar Sosa attempts to defend. Maguire made nine 3-pointers and scored a game-high 33 points in an 84-69 loss to the Cardinals.



Louisville head coach Rick Pitino reacts after watching NKU's Dustin Maguire make a 3-pointer in the first half. A complete photo gallery of the NKU/Louisville game will be on-line Sunday.