



Virginia Union Rolls to convincing victory in MSG debut

Panthers dominate in all facets in win over Bowie State

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NEW YORK, Dec. 2 – For the first time ever Virginia Union and Bowie State played in New York’s Madison Square Garden in a match-up of CIAA opponents. It was also the first time that the two Eastern Division opponents met this early in the season. It was also the first time since Luke D’Alessio became the head coach at Bowie State that a victory between the two teams was so one-sided.

But it was not in his favor.

Greg Thondique led four Virginia Union players who scored in double figures with 19 points as the Panthers rolled to an 87-42 victory over Bowie State in the first-ever Big Apple Classic.

“Bowie State is much, much better than that,” said Virginia Union head coach Dave Robbins, whose Panthers teams have won three national championships. “The ball bounced our way tonight. I think it was a fluke but we were very happy to have played as well as we did.”

Virginia Union (2-0, 2-0) never trailed in the game. The Panthers jumped out to a 16-2 lead on a layup by Greg Thondique with 14 minutes, 31 seconds remaining in the first half. There were two stretches in the half where the Bulldogs went scoreless for four minutes or more. Poor shooting and turnovers by the Bulldogs were a result of outstanding defense by the Panthers, who recorded nine steals. Couple that with the fact that Thondique and senior Steve Miller combined to make 9-of-14 field goals and score 24 points in the half, resulted in Virginia Union’s 48-25 halftime lead.

Virginia Union cooled off from its 53 percent first half shooting but continued its tough defense in the second half. Bowie State’s Tyronne Beale and Gil Goodrich, who average 51 points per game between them, scored a total of eight points. Bowie State (3-1, 0-1) turned the ball over 26 times. Jamil Ab’dal-aliyy led the Bulldogs with 10 points.

In addition to Thondique’s 19 points, he also recorded 10 rebounds. Miller had 16 points, and Brandon Byerson and Chris Greene had 13 points a-piece.

Said Robbins, who has coached VUU alumnus Ben Wallace of the Chicago Bulls and former NBA players Charles Oakley, Terry Davis and A.J. English, of his experience playing in Madison Square Garden: “I’ve been here as a spectator but never as a participant. I’m sure it’s something our young men will remember the rest of their lives.”