



Howard holds off late run by Hampton in Big Apple Classic

After 41-41 halftime score, Bison stronger down the stretch

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NEW YORK, Dec. 2 – Eugene Myatt scored 18 of his game-high 22 points in the second half and Will Gant added 13 of his 15 after intermission to help Howard pull away to a 95-84 victory over Hampton in the Big Apple Classic at Madison Square Garden before 6,609. This Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) match-up is the only one between the two schools this season.

"This was a big win for the Howard University basketball program," said Howard head coach Gil Jackson. "To come to Madison Square Garden and play on this stage and to get a victory against one of the quality athletic programs in our conference means a lot to this program."

The two rivals battled to five ties and four lead changes as the score was tied 41-41 at the break. In the second half the Bison capitalized on some Pirate mistakes to seize control early. Howard (4-3, 1-0) freshman Curtis White knocked down a three- pointer and followed with a soft jumper in the lane to give his team some breathing room at 58-52 with 13:48 on the clock.

Four consecutive turnovers by Hampton (2-7, 0-2) keyed a 12-2 run, led by Myatt and Gant, midway through the second half that all but decided the outcome. Myatt, who hit on 5 of his 9 second half shots, capped off the run with a high-flying, electrifying dunk following a steal that brought the crowd to its feet and gave the Bison a 71-60 lead with 6:19 remaining.

Hampton responded with a mini-run over the next two minutes, fueled by free throws and a couple of three-pointers the last by Kevin Clark which pulled the Pirates to within 76-70 with 4:10 remaining. But that as close as the Pirates would get as the Bison would hit 14-of-18 free throws down the stretch to seal the victory.

"We were exhausted," explained Hampton first year head coach Kevin Nickelberry. "We played four games in seven days and it's tough playing like that. Howard did a great job of handling our pressure and once they got up, they hit free throws and we were playing uphill from there."

Demario Mattox led Hampton with 19 points. Both teams show close to 53 percent from the field, but Hampton turned the ball over 21 times.