

Georgia Tech cuts in on Wisconsin's Big Dance

BOISE, Idaho - Lefty Driesell had made 12 previous trips to the NCAA Tournament and coached some of the biggest names in the biggest games in college basketball.

But even the ol' left-hander admitted this win was extra special.

Darryl Cooper hit a four-point play and made a steal in the final minute as Georgia State rallied from a 16-point deficit for an improbable 50-49 win over Wisconsin in the first round of the NCAA West Regional on Thursday.

"I told my team this might be the greatest win I've ever had," Driesell said. "We came back in the second half and showed what kind of club we have."

The win wasn't sealed until Mark Vershaw missed two free throws with 3.2 seconds to play for sixth-seeded Wisconsin (18-11), setting up an intriguing second-round possibility.

The 11th-seeded Panthers (29-4) advanced to play third-seeded Maryland, the school that fired Driesell 15 years ago. Maryland held off George Mason 83-80.

"I don't care who we play. We're going to win," Driesell said jokingly.

Georgia State's first tournament win seemed like the most unlikely of possibilities early, as the Badgers used smothering defense and the same slowdown pace that carried them to the Final Four last season.

Wisconsin led 28-12 late in the first half. Two free throws by Andy Kowske gave the Badgers a 49-44 lead with 59.7 seconds left, and they appeared in control.

But Cooper hit a high-arching three-pointer and was fouled by Roy Boone to get the Panthers back into it. Cooper's free throw made it a one-point game with 48.2 seconds to play.

"Roy is absolutely crushed," Wisconsin interim coach Brad Soderberg said.

On the Badgers' next possession, Cooper stepped in front of Boone to steal Travon Davis' pass and fed Shernard Long, who hit a bank shot with 12.3 seconds to play, giving Georgia State its first lead since the opening minutes.

Vershaw, a 73 percent foul shooter, then missed two free throws for the Badgers and Long got the rebound.

"I wish I could have made a few more shots," Vershaw said. "Not only did it end the game, it ended my career."

Long missed the front end of a one-on-one, but Kirk Penney's desperation halfcourt shot missed everything and the Panthers celebrated the biggest win in school history.

Georgia State had only three winning seasons in its first 35 years before Driesell came to the commuter school in Atlanta. He brought in transfers such as Long (Georgetown), Cooper (LSU) and Kevin Morris (Georgia Tech) to build a

winning program.

"It was a great win for Georgia State," Cooper said. "Nationally, I don't think we got the kind of respect we deserve."

Morris led Georgia State with 18 points, Long scored all 13 of his points in the second half, and Cooper finished with 11.

Vershaw led Wisconsin with 19 points and Kowske added 11.

The Panthers entered the game averaging 81 points per game and Wisconsin had allowed only 56.8, second best in the country. Both coaches thought the pace of the game would decide the winner, and it looked that way for the first half.

The Associated Press

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (March 16). Step out to the applause this year, and gather wealth, too. The status you achieve is not a gift; it's been earned. The thing you dread most in March pays best in April. Heed Grandpa's advice to succeed in May, and get the answer through prayer in June. Proceed on that path through autumn. Step up to the plate in December. The home run you hit isn't just luck. Give special thanks in February.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Today is a 7 — You and your team can forge ahead and win the prize, but don't minimize your doubts. One of them is an area that needs more attention. Fix that problem before it happens, and success is assured.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today is a 5 — An older person is coming around to your way of thinking, but don't get smug. Keep watching for ways to save, and you could get a bonus.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Today is a 7 — You've been learning a lot lately with the help of friends and your partner. You might get to take on more responsibility. Practice by looking at things from your boss's point of view.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) — Today is a 6 — You may be buried in work, but don't despair. This weekend is good for traveling and discussing commitments, and it might start as soon as tonight.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is a 7 — Your sweetheart finds it hard to resist your charms, and vice versa. However, you want to spend far more than you should. If you've got work lined up for this weekend, maybe you can.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is a 5 —

You won't have to concentrate so much on work for the next few weeks, and you'll be able to spend more time with your mate. Get your place spruced up. This will be a good weekend to entertain.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Today is a 7 — New skills could lead to new responsibilities. Even if you're heading in that direction already, it could be startling when it happens. You may make a few mistakes at first, but you'll get it right.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Today is a 5 — Playing by the old rules may not get you what you want. Stretch the rules, or invent new ones. Don't do anything illegal. Just cut through the red tape and increase your profits.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is a 7 — You've been hiding in the books long enough. It's time for you to put what you've learned into action. This is the real test, so no more procrastinating.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 6 — A surprising development could change your preconceived notions. Things will be different in the future, so don't stay stuck in the past. Adapt.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is a 7 — If you're so smart, why aren't you rich? You'll get the chance to do something wise that also increases your income. You may also get the chance to do something fun with friends. Find time for both.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 6 — By facing something you were worried about, you're becoming stronger. Others believe in you already, but you were slow in catching up. Now you're starting to believe in yourself.

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