

Lady Terps BBall Gets a Modest 73-46 Win over Delaware State

Contributed by David Lovell
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COLLEGE PARK, Md. -- Although the final score was 73-46, you wouldn't have known it from watching the second half of the game, or from listening in on the post-game news conference. The Lady Terps thoroughly out-played the Lady Hornets from Delaware State in the first half, and led 37-17 going into the break. Coming out, they played like a team who knew they had won. They were capable and confident, but not tearing up the place the way Head Coach Brenda Frese wanted them to. This is the trick as a coach of a skilled team - how to handle a soft early schedule and develop player confidence, but also use some easy games to develop the skills, cohesiveness, and mad determination to win that are going to be necessary down the stretch. While the Terps came away with the win today, one gets the impression that the locker room was not so joyful and the upcoming practices are not going to be cakewalks either.

In the first half, both teams looked like early-season teams tend to - sloppy passes, not much touch on outside shots, poor free throw shooting, etc. Purely from a statistical point of view, Maryland trounced Delaware State in the first half, on a relative basis. However, none of the numbers were much to be proud of. They shot 0.417 from the field, and missed the only three-pointer they attempted. From the line, they were an impressive 89.5%. Comparatively, Delaware State shot only 0.25, went 0.429 on three pointers, and 100% for free throws. Granted, however, they only got two tries from the charity stripe.

In other categories, Maryland out-rebounded DSU in the first half 23-10. Coach Frese was happy with the rebounding advantage, but was quick to inject a reality check as well, pointing out that the DSU players gave up a lot in size, so it wasn't that difficult for the Terps to pull more balls off the boards. As a counterpoint, DSU blocked the ball twice in the first half, to only one for the Terps. The Terps committed 10 turnovers to the Hornets' 14, numbers that neither team is likely to be happy with.

Coach Frese got all of her players time in the first half, as did Coach Ed Davis of the Lady Hornets, a more difficult task because his roster carries 13 players compared to the 10 on the books for Maryland. Forward Marissa Coleman was on fire for the Terps in the first half, scoring 13 points, and adding 5 rebounds, 2 assists, and a steal in 18 minutes of play. She wasn't needed much in the second half, and spent only 8 minutes on the floor with no further scoring. Also hitting the boards was forward Demauria Liles, with 6 rebounds in the half.

Notably absent from Maryland's first half performance: three-pointers and fast break points. Despite voracious enthusiasm from their bench, the Terps couldn't be convinced to sprint down the court, choosing instead the half-court set where their size advantage allowed them to get easier looks. The story might be the same with the three-pointers. One can't get inside their heads, but perhaps with an easier go at one-on-one plays and easy rebounds, the more intricate penetrate-and-dish mechanics required to force open looks at three pointers weren't favored as much by the players on the floor.

Whatever Coach Frese's half-time speech was, it didn't work. In fact, the Terrapins scored roughly evenly with the Hornets in the second half, with only a 36-29 margin. Delaware State, on the other hand, obviously made some important adjustments, and while they still fell short, demonstrated at least to themselves that they could analyze what was lacking in their game and apply half-time fixes to shore up the problem.

Maryland's shooting percentage declined to 39.3% in the second half, although they did at least get up four attempts at three-pointers, converting on two of them. Their free throw production fell to 60% on 20 attempts. Maryland notched 2 fast break points to match their first half total, while DSU managed 6 in the second half. Perhaps most surprisingly, Maryland's turnover rate increased, as they gave up the ball 13 times in the second half, while forcing only 9 from DSU. This might be due in part to a heavy press applied often by the Lady Hornets, one in which point guard Kristi Toliver frequently found herself double- and triple-teamed without an abundance of mobile assistance coming from her teammates.

Notable scoring in the second half from the Terps came from Marah Strickland and Kristi Toliver, with 11 and 8 points respectively in the half. Yemi Oyefuwa added 6 points off the bench.

Leading the scoring for the Hornets was starting guard Keyhana Wakefield, who turned in 15 total points for the afternoon on 5-10 shooting from the field with 1-2 from three point range. She was perfect from the line on 4 attempts, and threw in 3 rebounds, 1 assist and a steal for good measure. She was a little shaky with the ball at times, however, committing a team-high 5 turnovers.

Maryland's next opponent is James Madison, at home at the Comcast Center on Thursday November 20 with tipoff at 7 pm. Delaware State returns home to host Kent State on Wednesday November 19, also at 7 pm.

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