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KU Closes Strong, Downs UDM 63-43



KU's Julian Wright (AP Photo/Orlin Wagner)

By [Jim Williamson](#)
Phog.net
Posted Dec 29, 2006

The Kansas Jayhawks overcame a poor first half and a slowed-down second half to beat the University of Detroit-Mercy Titans, 63-43, in Allen Field House Thursday night.

[Mario Chalmers](#) continued his outstanding play, leading KU with 22 points. He was the only Jayhawk in double figures. [Brandon Rush](#) overcame a flu bug to score nine points, all in the second half, and grab five rebounds. [Russell Robinson](#) and [Sherron Collins](#) scored seven points each. Four other Hawks joined Rush with five rebounds.

KU got off to a quick start, taking a 19-5 lead into a media timeout with 11:17 left in the half. However, they went the next 9:26 without a field goal before taking an Iba-esque 26-16 lead into the locker room.

KU coach [Bill Self](#) said, "We actually played very good the first eight minutes of the ballgame. The last 12 minutes of the first half was stale. A lot of that was poor free throw shooting. We lost a lot of momentum because we came away empty numerous possessions, shooting free throws. We didn't play well, offensively. We played pretty good, defensively."

In the second half, the Titans tried to limit [Kansas'](#) possessions and had some success until the eight-minute mark, when the Jayhawks converted on several possessions and made a number of plays on the defensive end. However, Self was not overly enthusiastic about his team's performance.

"The last eight minutes, we execute very well and outscore them 22-6, so there were some good things that occurred there. It was just a pretty bland performance that was good enough to win by 20," he said.

Self said that Thursday night's game was the type of close, grind-it-out type of game his team needed.

"I've learned over time that you shouldn't apologize for winning by 20," Self explained. "We didn't play well, but from a coach's perspective, there were a lot of good things that happened, even though it wasn't artistic."

He continued, "We've got to get a lot better, and I thought we'd been practicing better. I'm not going to apologize for that tonight, but I do know we've got to get a lot better. You've got to win games where you don't play well. That's the key to having a good season."

The Jayhawks will take Naismith Court again this Saturday at 7 p.m. when [Rhode Island](#) visits Lawrence.

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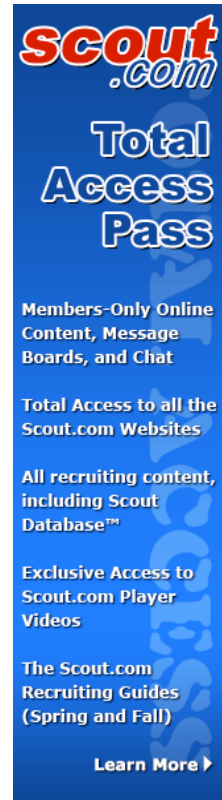
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