

Big second half lifts No. 2 Duke past BC 90-80

By JOEDY McCREARY,

AP Sports Writer

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) Mike Krzyzewski had a feeling his Duke players were headed for a post-North Carolina letdown. Fortunately for the Blue Devils, it only lasted until halftime.

Behind 24 points and 11 rebounds from Kyle Singler, No. 2 Duke shook off some early uninspired play Saturday to beat Boston College 90-80, extended its winning streak to 11 and helped continue the momentum of its victory against the third-ranked Tar Heels.

"I was more worried about this game than (North Carolina)," Krzyzewski said. "Not that I was sure we were going to win on Wednesday, but I was sure we'd be ready, sure that we were going to be there. This one, the last two days I've been on them like crazy. We just weren't sharp."

DeMarcus Nelson added 23 points for the Blue Devils (21-1, 9-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), who turned 21 BC turnovers into 21 points and overcame a huge game from Tyrese Rice with a late 17-2 run.

Rice, the ACC's second-leading scorer, scored 18 of his 28 points in the first half for the Eagles (12-10, 3-6), the second straight game usually stingy Duke has allowed a 28-point scorer.

"He had the ball in his hands at all times," Nelson said of Rice. "He has the freedom at any time to create, and he can create. He's great off the dribble in creating shots, and he's crafty. ... He was hitting shots, and we didn't do a good job of defending him, myself included. We changed that in the second half."

BC shot 55 percent but allowed an eight-point first-half lead to slip away in losing its sixth straight and falling to 0-4 at Cameron Indoor Stadium. The Eagles have lost four straight on the road and are 1-4 in the league away from the Conte Forum.

"You've got to be able to compete in this environment if you're going to have any success in this league," BC coach Al Skinner said.

Still, Boston College gave Duke its tightest game of the season in its notoriously noisy arena. The Blue Devils entered having won their previous 11 home games by an average of 27 1/2 points, with their prior closest game a 93-80 victory against Clemson.

"People have to come against us because we've had a lead," Krzyzewski said. "It hasn't necessarily been a huge lead, sometimes it's been double digits, and we're able to dictate how the last few minutes of the game has been played. If we can do that, it lends itself to us winning."

Duke couldn't pull away in this one until midway through the second half, when Singler bookended the decisive run with 3-pointers from the same area of the court.

First, he put the Blue Devils ahead to stay and started the run with a 3 from the left corner to make it 66-65 at the 9:11 mark. Then, after Nelson's 3-pointer from the opposite corner with 6 1/2 minutes to play pushed it to 77-67 - Duke's first double-figure lead - Singler converted 35 seconds later from the left corner to give the Blue Devils a 13-point advantage.

Jon Scheyer added 11 points for the Blue Devils, who are on their longest winning streak in ACC play since the J.J. Redick- and Shelden Williams-led 2005-06 team started the league schedule 14-0.

"We come into every game expecting to win, and collectively as a group, we share something," Singler said. "We wanted to run through the ACC and win it, and to do that, we can't lose to teams."

Rice joined North Carolina's Tyler Hansbrough in scoring 28 points this week against the Blue Devils.

Biko Paris finished with 11 points and Shamari Spears added 10 for the bulkier Eagles, who were denied their first victory against Duke since the second round of the 1985 NCAA tournament.

"Any time you play, particularly on the road, and you're coming down the stretch, you've got to make sure that you take care of the ball and get the shots that you want, and execute," Skinner said. "We didn't consistently do that."

Quite possibly drained from its big victory three days earlier against the rival Tar Heels, Duke wasn't as crisp as usual for much of the first half. The Blue Devils missed 11 of their 14 shots from 3-point range and hit just 4-of-13 free throws, and Rice and the Eagles eventually took advantage.

Boston College - a 19 1/2-point underdog - led for most of the half, with its lead growing to 38-30 on Biko Paris' three-point play with about 4 1/2 minutes left. The Blue Devils closed to 42-41 at the break on Lance Thomas' stickback with 1 second left, the third time in five games they've trailed at halftime.

"I don't think that we had the mind-set of competing at the highest level as a team," Nelson said. "In the second half, (Krzyszewski) said some things to us, I said some things and we got our edge back, we got our fight back."