

Columbia Bows to Penn For First Ivy Loss, 86-85

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PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 11—Pennsylvania, the preseason favorite to win the Ivy League championship, barely escaped with an 86-85 victory over Columbia tonight in the noisy Palestra.

This contest brought the young Lions into a three-way tie with Penn and Princeton for the Ivy League lead, as each team now has six victories and one loss.

Although the defeat ended Columbia's best Ivy start in history (six straight victories in the league), it also indicated that Columbia would have a chance at the Ivy title. But the Lions must play Princeton, now the favorite to win the crown, tomorrow night. They get a chance at Penn on Feb. 28 on their own court.

'Anywhere But Here'

Ricky Free, the star of the four starting sophomores for Columbia, said after the game: "We wish we had Penn right away at our place. In fact, I wish we could have them anywhere on even a neutral court—anywhere but here."

Trailing by 15 points with 4½ minutes to go, Columbia charged back by racing, stealing and driving at high speed and held the Quakers scoreless for 4 minutes 8 seconds. Then, with Penn leading by 84-81, the Quakers' Tom Crowley hit on a rebound off one of his own missed free throws.

The Lions still tried, but they fell one short as Juan Mitchell, another of the Columbia sophomores, hit twice in the last 12 seconds, including a field goal at the buzzer.

It was a fast-paced game in which Penn appeared to gain command. But Columbia, which does not have any senior players, faced its biggest test

so far by controlling the tempo during most of the second half.

Free, who penetrated man-to-man and zone defenses at will in the second half, scored 20 points. Mitchell matched that total. Penn got 26 points from Keven McDonald, who made 16 in the first half. Penn led by 10 points at intermission.

Just 1 Point

Columbia ran just as it had planned and as Penn had expected. But in the early going, the issue may have been settled because the Quakers, bigger and supposedly more talented than the Lions, ran well enough, controlled the boards and forced Columbia into long-range bad shooting over a temporary zone defense. The Lions hit only 33.7 percent of their shots in the first half.

Tom Penders, in his biggest test as the Lions' coach, said he told his players at intermission to cut down the long shots and penetrate. Free was the man who did that and the Penn lead began to dissipate late in the game. But it turned out that Columbia had been just 1 point too far back.

Both Penders and Chuck Daly, the Penn coach, agreed that although Columbia had fallen from sole possession of the Ivy lead, the Lions would still have a big say in the outcome.

Daly said: "They're a hard team to handle. And they had everything to gain down here knowing they still have us up there. We couldn't put it away because we couldn't hit the free throws."

In the last four minutes, Penn went into its four-corner offense to stall and keep the ball from the Lions. Such maneuvering draws fouls as the trailing team tries to get the ball.

But Penn missed all six foul shots it got in that time, five of which were the first shots in one-and-one situations.

Now it is back across the Delaware River to Jadwin Gym in Princeton, the Tigers' home court. That is an even more difficult place for a visiting team than the home of the Quakers these days. Columbia's men ran so hard for 40 minutes tonight that their running game against Princeton might be hampered by exhaustion from the effort.

Penders said, "It'll make it tough for us to play 90-foot defense. We might get tired."

But Free, a 6-foot-5-inch swingman who doesn't seem to know how to slow down, said, "That's all we do is run. Our bodies are used to it. We can do it tomorrow. We can run all we have to. We've run two nights in a row before."

Columbia will be the underdog again tomorrow night.

The Lions have four other road games remaining in the league after tomorrow. They built their early league lead by beating Cornell at Ithaca, N.Y., and then Cornell, Yale, Brown, Dartmouth and Harvard at home.

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