

Roach's buzzer beater lifts Baylor over St. John's in 2OT, 99-98

Written by Sean Murawski // SM Sports

In likely one of the games of the year so far through this young college basketball season, Baylor defeated St. John's on a last-second three pointer from Jeremy Roach in the Bahamas.

It was a back and forth affair from the second half onward, and there were several times throughout the tail end of the game where it felt both teams had assumed control. St. John's led by as much as 5 in the final 10 seconds of the second overtime, and some costly free throws missed led to an outstanding game winner from Duke transfer **Jeremy Roach** (20 pts, 4 ast, 3-5 3pt).

Baylor's other big transfer fish, **Norchad Omier** from Miami (FL), dropped a great line as well, with 24 points on 10 rebounds, as well as 3 steals and 1 block on the defensive end. Baylor went about two deep on the bench, but they got what they bargained for. Freshman guard **Robert Wright III** continues to be a great weapon off the bench, with 17 points and three three-pointers. **Jalen Celestine** also went 4-5 from beyond the arc, scoring 14 for the game.

St. John's had several opportunities to put this game to bed, and at times it felt like it was in their hands. Big man **Zuby Ejiofor** will be remembered for his two missed free throws in the second overtime, but that came after a fantastic performance: a double-double with 22 points and 10 rebounds, missing just two shots from the field all game. **Kadary Richmond** (14 pts, 7 ast, 4 rebs) found the ball in his hands in big moments down the stretch, battling through some cramps to send the game to the initial overtime with a driving layup. **RJ Luis Jr.** (16 pts, 6 rebs, 3-5 3pt) continued to impress in the backcourt, while Aaron Scott hit 5 threes and scored 20 points off the bench.

Rick Pitino's squad will be disappointed in dropping a game during which they led by 18 points at halftime. Both teams shot magnificently from three, going a combined 29-53 (54.7%) from beyond the arc. For St. John's, they had their chances, and could not get it done. They won the turnover battle, shot better from three, nearly matched points in the paint, and hit two more free throws than Baylor. Despite all that, it came down to a buzzer beater in a great resumé boosting win for Scott Drew's Bears.

Baylor's Bahamian-born star freshman **VJ Edgecombe** (10 pts, 4 rebs, 3 ast, 4-15 FG) had a quiet night all around, but hit a huge (and somewhat miraculous) three pointer to cut the lead in the second overtime. For a guy whose NBA draft stock has been bought very high since he stepped on campus this summer, he has had a relatively tame start to his college career, at least compared to the nation's other touted freshmen. However, Edgecombe's sheer athleticism and confidence showed prominently in this game, as he too battled through injury and fatigue in the two overtime periods.

The game had magnificent ball movement, particularly from St. John's in the first half. Their sets carved Baylor up early on, and Baylor's defense continued to be a question mark, as it has been to begin the season. They are 246th in the country for points against so far this season, and St. John's quick passing across the court diced them up quite a bit. Ejiofor had some easy buckets down low, and they were hitting threes all night. While it could be a concern for Baylor, Norchad Omier continued his prolific start to the season. Omier, who is averaging a double-double with 15.4 ppg and 10 rpg so far, is a unique frontcourt option for Baylor. While not necessarily a shooting threat, his movement on the perimeter and delicate touch around the rim gets him lots of defensive attention. His threat at the center of Baylor's offense gives them plenty of depth, as Edgecombe and Roach also sit at the top of the scouting report. **Jayden Nunn** (12 pts, 4 ast, 8 rebs vs. St. John's) also sits in the middle of a very potent Baylor lineup, who have bounced back quite nicely since being mauled by Gonzaga on opening night.

Rick Pitino's charge with St. John's has looked up since he took the role, and so far this season, they have performed admirably. Their first loss of the season took a game-winning, contested three pointer to come through, and they will take on Virginia in the third place game for the Baha Mar Championship. Baylor, who like St. John's will be battling fatigue, play SM sixth-ranked Tennessee in the championship tonight. Both teams will be reeling, but they played a fantastic, March-like game in November. With "Feast Week" next week, the season will only get more enticing in the coming weeks.

Baylor's next game: Friday 11/22 (tonight) vs. (6) Tennessee, 9:30 pm EST, CBS Sports Network

St. John's next game: Friday 11/22 (tonight) vs. Virginia, 7 pm EST, CBS Sports Network

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