

SUniG Bball (Men's): NTU overcome slow start to beat NUS 51-43

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Wong Wei Long (NTU #1) breaking past Samuel Ch'ng (NUS #22) on a fast break. He finished the game with 12 points. (Photo 1 © Joseph Lee/Red Sports)

NUS University Town, Thursday, September 12, 2013 — Nanyang Technological University (NTU) defeated the National University of Singapore (NUS) 53-41 in what was possibly the match that decided the runners-up at the Singapore University Games (SUniG) Basketball Championship. Both teams had gone down to Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) in their earlier games, putting SIM in pole position to claim the title.

NUS are now tied for the lead with SIM, with six points after four games. They beat Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and Singapore Management University (SMU) 70-44 and 44-28 respectively. Against SIM, they lost 43-55.

Defending champions NTU, having lost to SIM 64-74, will relish the win against NUS as they look forward to their remaining matches against Singapore University of Design and Technology (SUTD) and SIT.

NUS were the underdogs heading into the match, but they put up a defiant performance in the opening quarter. They took advantage of NTU's lax man-to-man defence for Tan Zeng Zhi (NUS #12) to score seven straight points without response.

NTU's offence moved the ball well but were let down by their finishing. Pek Jia Rong (NTU #9) ended their miserable streak by draining a three-pointer, after coming off the bench halfway through the quarter. At the buzzer, Andrew Zee (NTU #14) sunk an emphatic baseline jumper to keep his team within touch, three points adrift of NUS at 11–8.

NTU started to settle down in the second quarter. Wong Wei Long (NTU #1) started to marshal the offence and generated open looks. They were, however, again plagued by poor finishing. NUS made the most of NTU's lack of a physical presence in the paint, crashing the boards and securing a majority of the rebounds. This was crucial in keeping NUS ahead, as NTU's stifling defence started to bother their ball handlers.

The third quarter marked the start of NTU's comeback, as they raced to a 6–0 run, holding NUS scoreless for five minutes. At this point in the game, fatigue was evident on both sides, as players were unable to convert chances near the rim. The home crowd started to get more fired up, as they sensed an upset on their hands. The third quarter, however, ended 36 apiece.

Entering the fourth quarter, David Nevares (NTU #18), who had been having a relatively quiet game up till then, broke out in a big way. He scored four straight points to give his team a comfortable five-point lead.

He showed good anticipation on one play to intercept the pass and sprint downcourt for an uncontested layup. As much as NUS tried to fight back, NTU managed to hold them off. Wong Yong Kang (NTU #16) sunk a killer three near the end of the quarter to secure the game with a 51–43 victory for NTU. This bolsters their chances of a second-place finish at SUniG.

The captain of the NTU team, Yap Ching Poh (NTU #13), said: "I felt that in the first quarter, we were too frantic. We could not get a basket and our defence was too relaxed. The second half was better and we managed to contain NUS. This allowed us to get the lead back.

"We also realised we kept losing rebounds, so we made a few adjustments that proved to be effective," said Ching Poh, who led all scorers with 14 points.

Ching Poh's counterpart on the losing team, Samuel Ch'ng, said: "Our defense was good for the first half, we kept the pressure on them. However, they overpowered us towards the end and our defense didn't work out in the last quarter."



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Elaborating, he said: "I'm not too sure whether it was our defense that worked or their offense that didn't work during the first 3 quarters. But NTU really turned up their game in the last quarter and that was indeed the turning point."

Scoring by Quarter

NUS vs NTU

1st Q: 11–8

2nd Q: 15–14(26–22)

3rd Q: 10–14 (36–36)

4th Q: 7–15 (43–51)

Top Scorers

NUS

Tan Zeng Zhi (#12) — 11 points (1 x 3-pointer)

NTU

Yap Ching Poh (#13) — 14 points

Wong Wei Long (#1) — 12 points (1 x 3-pointer)

NUS Roster

Tan Tien Wei (#1), Choo Jun Min (#3), Choo Xing Ru (#4), Hong Kah Qi (#6), Zhou Xiangyu (#7), Gerrard Lai Changmin (#9), Gavin Goh (#10), Tan Zeng Zhi (#12), Kenneth Low(#13), Loh Wan Xin (#14), Ng Hui Wen (#17), Eddie Ng (#21), Samuel Ch'ng (#22), Thomas Chua (#34), Marcin Szydlowski (#79)

NTU Roster

Wong Wei Long (#1), Lim Wai Sian (#2), Choon Hao Wei (#4), Lim Yan Ming (#6), Chen Jia Hong (#7), Nai Chiau Kwang (#8), Pek Jia Rong (#9), Kelvin Yeo Chee Wen (#10), Donovan Tan Cheng Ye (#11), Chua Kian Kok (#12), Yap Ching Poh (#13), Zee Kin Meng Andrew (#14), Wong Yong Kang (#16), Koh Chee Siang (#17), David Nevares (#18)



Players from both teams all rushing for the loose ball, eventually with Gerrard Lai (NUS #9) getting the loose ball. (Photo 2 © Joseph Lee/Red Sports)



Kenneth Low (NUS #13) being guarded by Chen Jia Hong (NTU #7), Lim Wai Sian (NTU #2) and Andrew Zee (NTU #14) in the dying moments of the game. (Photo 3 © Joseph Lee/Red Sports)



Tan Zeng Zhi (NUS #12) passing the ball off to Gavin Goh (NUS #10) as David Nevares (NTU #18) stands in the way blocking the lane. Zeng Zhi finished with a team-high of 11 points. (Photo 4 © Joseph Lee/Red Sports)



David Nevares (NTU #18) taking the baseline shot as Kenneth Low (NUS #13) tries to stop him. (Photo 5 © Joseph Lee/Red Sports)



Wong Wei Long (NTU #1) going for the layup with Gavin Goh (NUS #10) trying to come from behind to block him. (Photo 6 © Joseph Lee/Red Sports)



Chua Kian Kok (NTU #12) getting his ball picked from behind by Choo Xing Ru (NUS #4). (Photo 7 © Joseph Lee/Red Sports)

N.B. Photos in the gallery will be deleted after some time.