

No. 10 Texas knocks off Iowa in NYC's 2K Classic semis

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NEW YORK, NY - NOVEMBER 20: Jonathan Holmes #10 of the Texas Longhorns celebrates after hitting a three-pointer against the Iowa Hawkeyes during the 2K Classic at Madison Square Garden on November 20, 2014 in New York City.



NEW YORK — Jonathan Holmes didn't hit much more than a table in the first half, crashing hard behind the baseline during one futile possession.

Once he got going in the second half, there was no slowing down Texas.

Holmes scored 17 of his 19 points after halftime, Isaiah Taylor added 15 and the No. 10 Longhorns beat Iowa 71-57 on Thursday night in the 2K Classic.

The Longhorns trailed by 12 points in the first half but outscored Iowa 47-27 in the final 20 minutes to advance to the championship game Friday at Madison Square Garden against No. 23 Syracuse or California.

"I think it starts with me just being the oldest guy on the team," said Holmes, the only scholarship senior on the roster. "I came out and I wasn't as aggressive as I should have been. I started slow and I think it starts with the older guys and we just can't let that happen."

Texas (3-0) didn't take its first lead until early in the second half following Holmes' blistering start out of intermission. Holmes and Taylor helped the Longhorns keep the tempo up and put it away a little over midway through the half.

"We just had the mindset and coach (Rick) Barnes just told us to attack," Taylor said. "No matter whether it was zone or man, just to attack the big man. We're a good driving team and that's something we do is penetrate to the basket. And that was something we had to focus on in the second half."

Aaron White scored 23 for Iowa (2-1), which shot just 29.6 percent.

"It was a struggle for us offensively," Iowa coach Fran McCaffery said. "You have to give their defense credit. We didn't get back because we were constantly struggling to get a basket and then they were flying at the glass. The reality is we didn't score the ball."

The Hawkeyes led 30-24 at halftime, but Holmes opened the second with a dunk, then later had a 3-pointer and a three-point play in a 16-second span to tie it at 32.

It was 43-all when Holmes and Taylor combined for the final four baskets in a 13-0 surge that provided the Longhorns a 56-43 cushion with 8:04 remaining.

In its fifth 2K Classic appearance, the Longhorns will have a chance for their first title. They lost to Pittsburgh in the 2010 championship game.

TIP-INS

Iowa: Gabriel Olaseni was ejected after being called for a flagrant foul 2 on Taylor with 2:06 left. ... Iowa reached the final of this event here in its only other appearance, beating defending national champion and No. 1 Connecticut in 1999 before losing to Stanford when it was known as the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic. ... The Hawkeyes also reached the championship game of the 2013 NIT here, falling to Baylor.

Texas: Taylor hurt his left wrist on the flagrant and was wearing an ice pack afterward. He said he was going to get re-evaluated. ... The Longhorns are making the first of two trips in two weeks to the East Coast. They visit reigning champion UConn on Nov. 30.

STRANGE START

Iowa raced to a 13-2 lead even though it didn't make its first 2-point field goal until 12:13 into the contest. The Hawkeyes missed their first 14 shots from inside the arc before Adam Woodbury's layup while being fouled with 7:47 remaining in the half.

ROARING 20s

Texas has held all three opponents below 30 percent shooting. North Dakota State made 27.4 percent, Alcorn State hit 29.7 percent, and Iowa finished at 29.6 percent (16 of 54) Thursday. For the season, the Longhorns are limiting opponents to hit 28.9 percent (52 of 180).

UP NEXT

Iowa: Against No. 23 Syracuse or California on Friday.

Texas: Against No. 23 Syracuse or California on Friday.