

**NEW YORK POST**

## **No. 23 Syracuse stunned by California in 2K Classic semifinals**

By [Zach Braziller](#)

November 21, 2014 |

3:16am



Golden Bears guard Jordan Mathews drives to the basket during No. 23 Syracuse's 73-59 loss Wednesday night at Madison Square Garden. Photo: Anthony J. Causi

Syracuse fans might not have to worry about another disappointing March this season, and they certainly shouldn't be concerned about the 23rd-ranked Orange gelling too early.

Syracuse, relying on two freshmen starters and a host of other underclassmen, wasn't ready for primetime Thursday night and were outclassed by California, 73-59, in the 2K Classic semifinals.

"You can't lose guys like we lost and come out playing the same way we played last year," Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said, referring to leading scorer C.J. Fair and point guard Tyler Ennis. "We made some really bad decisions and some bad mistakes."

The 3-0 Golden Bears will face No. 10 Texas in Friday night's title game at 7:30 p.m., and Syracuse (2-1) meets Iowa in the consolation game at 5 p.m.

Afterward, Boeheim appeared to be getting wistful about Ennis, the freshman floor general from Canada who left for the NBA following last season, while discussing his current freshman point guard, Kaleb Joseph.

Led by Ennis, Syracuse started 25-0 a season ago. Joseph, meanwhile, struggled mightily in his third college game, committing four turnovers and scoring 13 points, most of them coming in the final minutes after the result was in hand.

“We got spoiled a little bit last year,” Boeheim said. “We had an unusual freshman point guard. That’s a once in a coach’s career that you get a freshman that can play with that kind of understanding of the game. Kaleb is a very good freshman point guard, very talented, but he has got a lot to learn about the game.

“He’s got to make better decisions. He shot when he should’ve passed and passed when he should’ve shot.”

Fellow freshman Chris McCullough of The Bronx flashed his immense potential, scoring 12 points to go with seven rebounds and five blocks, but Boeheim said he also has a way to go, citing his lack of stamina and rail-thin 6-foot-10 frame.

Boeheim was preaching patience after the uneven performance. When asked what he could do between his postgame press conference and the consolation game against Iowa, he cracked: “Merlin couldn’t do anything by five o’clock tomorrow.

“We’re going to have to spend the month of December getting better.”

It was a frustrating night full of bad and forced shots, missed defensive assignments, missed free throws and ill-advised turnovers for Syracuse, which shot just 36 percent from the field and made only 4-of-17 3-point attempts. California, a veteran team with three returning starters, took advantage, punishing the Orange’s porous 2-3 zone on the baseline and beyond the 3-point arc.

Jordan Matthews scored 22 points and Jabari Bird added 16 for Cal.

---

**Texas 71, Iowa 57:** Senior Jonathan Holmes scored 19 points, 11 coming in a game-turning 19-7 run to start the second half, as No. 10 Texas improved to 3-0.

Syracuse trailed 22-20 with 4:00 left in the first half, but California closed the half on a 12-2 run. It started the second half just as strong, going up 45-28. Syracuse never got closer than 12 the rest of the way.