Michigan goes long range to beat SMU

NEW YORK (AP) – Derrick Walton Jr. didn't get to play in a blowout loss to SMU last season because of a sprained ankle. He was held scoreless in Michigan's opening-round win in the 2K Classic Benefiting Wounded Warrior Project because of foul trouble.

Boy, did he make up for those two games.

Walton hit seven 3-pointers and finished with 23 points and six assists to lead Michigan to a 76-54 victory over SMU on Friday night in the championship game at Madison Square Garden.

"Personally, I kind of felt I let my teammates down by picking up two cheap fouls," Walton said about Thursday's win over Marquette. "Thankfully they did a great job without me. It just shows how good we are as a unit and today I just wanted to be really aggressive and that was pretty much it."

He kept hitting from 3-point range to keep the Mustangs at bay. The closest they got in the second half was 13 points when they hit two 3s to open the second half.

"Coach has been giving me the green light to not worry about the missed shots," Walton said. "I miss a couple, I kind of shake it off. I feel like my guys had confidence in me as well, so that does wonders for my confidence as well."

Walton, who had seven 3s total in the first three games, was 4 of 6 from 3 in the first half as Michigan took control right away and went on to a 44-25 halftime lead.

Zak Irvin, the tournament MVP, added 16 points for the Wolverines (4-0), while Muhammad-Ali Abdur-Rahkman had 12.

"The last loss we had to them, we basically got punked throughout the whole game and we knew we weren't going to let that happen this game," Irvin said of the 24-point loss. "We came out with a chip on our shoulder. Derrick really started it off on the offensive end but also collectively on the defensive end. We held them to 37 percent from the field, that's huge for us."

Semi Ojeleye led the Mustangs (3-1), who beat Pittsburgh in the opening round, with 13 points and nine rebounds.

"Michigan played about as good a game as anybody has played against us in over four and change years," Mustangs coach Tim Jankovich said. "I think they were absolutely outstanding. I thought everything they tried to do, include hit a number of guarded shots, it was incredible. I thought they were terrific."

Michigan, which had only four turnovers, finished 13 of 31 from 3-point range, led by Walton's 7 of 12. SMU was 6 of 16 from beyond the arc.

BIG PICTURE:
Michigan: It was nothing new for Michigan to light it up from 3-point range. The Wolverines were ninth nationally last season making 342 from long range. ... Michigan is 9-2 in its last five trips to New York City. ... Michigan's average margin of victory in the tournament was 25 points.

SMU: The Mustangs were ineligible for the NCAA Tournament last season. ... This was the first loss to Michigan in three all-time meetings. ... The Mustangs had four players play at least 32 minutes.

STEADY MVP
Irvin couldn't have two games any closer statistically. Against Marquette he had 16 points, seven rebounds and five assists. In the championship game he had 16 points, six rebounds and five assists.

GOOD SHOOTING
Michigan shot 52.9 percent (27 of 51) from the field while the Mustangs hit 37.3 percent (22 of 59).

LOT OF REBOUNDS
SMU finished with a 41-24 rebound advantage over the Wolverines including 18-2 on the offensive end.

OLD COACH
Former SMU coach and Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Famer Larry Brown was sitting behind the Mustangs' bench for the second straight night. Brown brought Jankovich with him to SMU as an assistant.