No. 22 Texas Beats Cal In 2K Empire Classic Consolation

NEW YORK (AP) -- Coach Shaka Smart wanted to see No. 22 Texas rebound after giving up a season-high 82 points in a loss to Georgetown the night before. The Longhorns responded, holding California to a season low.

Matt Coleman III scored 14 points, Jericho Sims had 12 points and nine rebounds and Texas beat California 62-45 on Friday night in the 2K Empire Classic benefiting Wounded Warrior Project consolation game.

"Today we responded from that loss last night," Jerricho Sims said. "Thankfully, we got to play in less than 24 hours. I learned that we're a gritty team and we just got to keep the strong identity."

They played in front of a sparse crowd, with Madison Square Garden only beginning to fill up late for the championship game between No. 1 Duke and Georgetown.

Texas (5-1) never trailed, with Cal (4-2) tying it just once at 21 on Matt Bradley's free throws.

The Longhorns led 25-21 at the half and took a 13-point advantage on Kai Jones' put-back dunk with 12:35 left. A put-back dunk by Jericho Sims to made it 51-38 with 5:48 left.

"It was huge," Smart said about Sims' play. "I just thought his aggressiveness was at a high level and he played within himself he finished really, really well. Even took the ball from people a couple times and I thought he was really solid on the defensive end."

Jase Febres added 12 points for Texas.

Bradley led Cal with 22 points.

"I would say that to play two nationally ranked teams this early in a season where we're rebuilding is probably an earlier test than maybe would be ideal," first-year Cal coach Mark Fox said. "But we'll use it hopefully as a great lesson in how we have to grow and change and improve. If we use it the right way, this weekend can be very productive for us."