Cambridge – East Anglia [UEA] (45-28)

20 November 2019

Cup Game

Location: Cambridge

CUWBbC Blues not only remain undefeated in their current season (4-0 and going strong!) but their latest victory means that they will be progressing onto the next match for the Cup Tournament. The Cup, which is separate from the regular BUCS league matches, consists of several do-or-die matches where teams must win their game in order to advance to the next round. Cambridge managed to pass through Round 1 without a match, which put them up against UEA in Round 2. Next up for the Cup Match (February 2020), Cambridge will play against Nottingham Trent in the quarter final, where they will have to come out with a win in order to advance to the semis.

The Cambridge-UEA match started with both teams experiencing some difficulties on offense. Cambridge finally broke through after Duran-Camacho stole the ball and proceeded to fast break down the court for an easy lay-up. The Blues continued to add points to the scoreboard as the team engineered their offensive set-up to bring the posts to the high-elbow, and then fed Duran-Camacho the ball for a jump shot. The Blues consistently shut down UEA on defense and used their confidence on offense to move the ball around before getting it to their high posts. As UEA began to double-up on defense in the high-post to prevent any more shots or drives, Florez seized the opportunity and cut into the lane, catching a quick assist and scoring from the block. Just one minute later, yet another steal on defense allowed the Blues to run their offense again; they took their time to read UEA’s defensive strategy and spotted Illingworth ready and waiting: a pass, a shot, and bucket—bringing the score up to 10-0 for the Blues. UEA’s Sztepanov broke the Blues’ winning streak by hitting two baskets of her own—one of which was a bank shot just inches short of being a 3-pointer—but these were quickly countered by a bona fide 3pt shot by Bass and a free throw each by Duran-Camacho and Pohran. The first quarter finished at 17-4.

As the game moved on, UEA set to work on defense in order to stop the Blues from scoring—or to at least slow them down! In return, the Blues had to adjust their own strategy. Sometimes, this meant playing even more aggressive defense—and converting a steal into an easy lay up, like Monti did—but, at other times, the Blues went rogue. On the offensive court, they broke away from their play-book with moves that hadn’t necessarily been vetted, and in the midst of this they caught even their own players by surprise (ahem—you know who you are). Thankfully, UEA’s defensive players were even more surprised by Cambridge’s new attack strategy, and their defense couldn’t adjust to the Blues’ quick passes, cuts, ball screens, and dribble-hand offs—all of which allowed the Blues to keeping bringing up the score. But UEA wanted this victory just as much as Cambridge did, and they were not willing to give it away easily. UEA’s Ilinas put down five consecutive baskets for her team, and, following that, the Blues entered a 3-minute window where, with or without plays, they were unable to score. The half wrapped up at 28-18.

Despite pep-talks by both Captain Monti and Coach Wright, the Blues truly struggled to find their rhythm in the third quarter. Even with several hard-fought box outs by Pohran, Dawson, and Widjaja, UEA outscored Cambridge in those ten minutes: UEA gained 14 points while the Blues only added 11. Cambridge kept sending UEA to the line and, in return, UEA consistently converted those fouls into points at the free-throw line. Meanwhile, Cambridge was struggling to make-well on their own foul shots, and despite going to the line frequently, a free throw rarely meant another point for the Blues.

The Blues finished their game strong, but it was clear from the score that both teams were tired. Thankfully, Dawson worked hard under the basket and got a number of offensive rebounds, allowing her some easy opportunities to add to Cambridge’s scoreboard. The Blues scored 8 points while UEA scored only 2, finishing the game at 45-28.

Next week, the Blues will travel to UEA where the teams will play each other again—this time as a BUCS league match rather than as a Cup game. But UEA will have home court advantage and will, no doubt, be thirsty for a win. Cambridge will need some long-distance cheers in order to keep up their winning-streak!