

 **No. 9 Duke 87 Virginia 65** 



AP photo

Virginia's Sean Singletary (left) and Duke's Greg Paulus battle for a loose ball in a game controlled by Duke from the start.

Way out of reach

Duke jumps out early in ACC opener for both teams

By Andy Bitter
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DURHAM, N.C. — The last time Virginia got blown out on the road, it had its locker room privileges revoked upon arriving back home to the John Paul Jones Arena.

After an 87-65 thumping at the hands of No. 9 Duke in its ACC season opener on Sunday night, there's no telling if another ban

is in the works.

It was the Blue Devils' 12th straight win against Virginia (10-3, 0-1 ACC) at Cameron Indoor Stadium, a streak dating back to 1995. Each of those wins has been by double digits.

"We lost to a very good team," UVA coach Dave Leitao said. "And usually is the case, especially in this league and especially on the road, when you allow a good team to play to their strengths and you don't match it with the strengths you may have, then the out-

come is quite obvious."

Entering the game, Virginia and Duke (13-1, 1-0 ACC) ranked 1 and 2 in the ACC at 3-point shooting. Only one team looked the part Sunday.

Like Xavier, which sank 16 3-pointers in a 38-point rout of UVA on Jan. 3, Duke fired at will from long range, making 11. DeMarcus Nelson, who led all scorers with 20 points, and Greg Paulus (9 points) made with three apiece.

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Bridgewater 85
Lynchburg College 82

Inspired Hornets fall late

Injured teammate in plane crash returns to campus

By Chris Humphreys
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The Lynchburg College men's basketball team welcomed Sean Sutherland, one of two Hornets players injured in a plane crash just after Thanksgiving, back to campus with a spirited effort that saw LC come up just short against Bridgewater College in 85-82 loss in an Old Dominion Athletic Conference game on Sunday.

"We played our hearts out," Hornets coach John Swickrath said. "Sean came back to school today and goes to class tomorrow, so things are back to normal. It's great to have him around and have him with us."

With BC leading 81-79, the Eagles' Dominic Trawick picked up LC's Kwame Safo at the top of the arc. Safo tried to drive around Trawick but Trawick stayed in front of Safo and when the 5-foot-10 Safo rose for the jumper just inside the foul line, 6-foot-3 Trawick blocked the shot and came down with ball.

Trawick all but sealed Bridgewater's victory with a pair free throws after a Safo foul, giving the Eagles an 83-79 lead with eight seconds left.

The Hornets' Evan Fancourt made a 3-pointer that cut the lead to 83-82 with 1.3 seconds left but Josh Fox put sank two free throws for the Eagles with .2 seconds and Trawick intercepted the Lynchburg's Hail-Mary pass to end the game.

"We are putting ourselves in the position to win ball games but now we have to get over that hump," Swickrath said. "We are a young team. We start two seniors and the rest are freshmen and sophomores."

"We have found a way to win games this year," Bridgewater coach Bill Leatherman said. "We've won our last four games and all them went down to the last play. We were 10-17 last year with all underclassmen. We are finding a way to win now."

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Road warriors prevail as underdogs in playoff hunt

Charger reserves play big roles

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — After handing New England a huge gift, the San Diego Chargers believe it's time to give the unbeaten Patriots something else: a challenge.

And, oh yeah, a loss.

By stunning Peyton Manning and the defending champion Colts 28-24 on Sunday, undermanned San Diego removed New England's biggest road block to the Super Bowl. Not that the Chargers are intimidated by facing the 17-0 Patriots in the AFC title game next weekend.

Despite having LaDainian Tomlinson and Philip Rivers on the sideline, the Chargers won their eighth straight game. Of course, that's not even half of what New England has achieved.

"Seventeen have tried and it hasn't happened," quarterback Philip Rivers said of New England's perfect record. "We think it can happen."

But San Diego must avoid a repeat of its last performance at New England, when it was routed 38-14 in Week 2.

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AP photo

New York Giants wide receiver Amani Toomer (center) celebrates an early touchdown with his teammates.

Giants hang on despite Cowboys' opportunities

The Associated Press

IRVING, Texas — Tony Romo can go wherever he wants with Jessica Simpson now. Eli Manning and the New York Giants knocked him and the Dallas Cowboys into the offseason Sunday.

Having to wait out long, slow drives by Dallas, Manning made his few chances count, throwing two touchdown passes to Amani Toomer and getting a 1-yard touchdown run from Brandon Jacobs for a 21-17 victory that put New York into the NFC championship game for the first time since the 2000 season.

"I won't get tired of hearing that this week," Manning said. "No one's given us much credit and probably still won't. But that's OK. We like it that way."

Manning is heading to his first NFC

championship game, at Green Bay next Sunday. Manning had a much better day than his brother, Peyton, whose Indianapolis Colts were stunned by the San Diego Chargers.

"I know he was watching and rooting for me," said Eli, who was 12-of-18 for 163 yards.

Cornerback R.W. McQuarters intercepted a pass into the end zone with 9 seconds left, turning away a last-ditch drive by Romo. It marked his second straight disappointing finish to a playoff game, following his flubbed hold of a short field goal in Seattle last January.

"It hurts," said Romo, who was 18-of-36 for 201 yards with a touchdown. "It's tough right now."

Terrell Owens came to his quarterback's defense, even crying behind dark sunglasses with a quivering bottom lip while declaring, "You can point the finger at him, you can talk about the vacation (with Simpson), and if you do that, it's Simpson

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