

Villanova Wins 2018 AdvoCare Invitational Men's Basketball Tournament at Disney

Let's all stop worrying about the Villanova Wildcats. All it took was a trip to Walt Disney World Resort for head coach Jay Wright to get his team back on track after dropping back-to-back games last week and falling out of the AP Top 25 poll for the first time since 2013.

Villanova (5-2) won its sixth consecutive early-season tournament championship on Sunday, dispatching the previously unbeaten No. 14 Florida State Seminoles (5-1), 66-60, to claim the 13th annual AdvoCare Invitational at HP Field House at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Disney.

The Wildcats, winners of two of the past three NCAA men's national titles, don't have all aspects of their game figured out by any stretch, according to Wright. But Sunday's win against the very deep and talented Seminoles answers one question that was rattling around Wright's mind at the outset of the tournament.

"Winning here this weekend and against a very good Florida State team tells me that maybe we are not as inexperienced as I thought we were following the two losses against Michigan and Furman," Wright said.

"Against Michigan, we panicked. Against Furman, we were undisciplined. During the past three games and especially tonight against Florida State, we were patient, we didn't panic, and we were disciplined – especially when they made their run and keep coming at us. You can take wins like tonight and keep building your team, and that's what we plan to do."

The Wildcats shot a blistering 54 percent from the field and were led by point guard Collin Gillespie, who scored a game-high 17 points. Power forward Eric Paschall added 15 points, shooting guard Phil Booth chipped in 12, while Dhamir Cosby-Roundtree, the 2018 AdvoCare Invitational Most Valuable Player, finished with 11. During three games in the tournament, Cosby-Roundtree scored 35 points, grabbed 34 rebounds and dished out five assists.

Villanova, winners of three straight games, played suffocating defense down the stretch and limited FSU to a season-low 60 points.

"I thought Villanova did a much better job of playing to who they are than we did," said Seminoles head coach Leonard Hamilton. "We did a very poor job of containing them defensively when they started attacking us on the interior. On the offensive end, I think we made some errors in terms of ball movement and making the right decision. Give them credit. They did a much better job of playing to their strengths than we did."

The Seminoles turned the ball over 16 times, leading to 14 Villanova points and were out-rebounded on the defensive side of the glass, 18-15.

FSU led for just four minutes and 13 seconds against Villanova and was never able to kick start their high-octane offense into high gear against the Wildcats the way they did when scoring 81 points against Alabama-Birmingham in the opening round on Thanksgiving and 79 points against LSU in a semifinal thriller that went into overtime on Friday. The Seminoles, who shot 43 percent from the field, were led by guard Trent Forrest

and dominating forward Mfiondu Kabengele, who each finished with 11 points.

The Wildcats – if just for this weekend – took measures to quiet some of their loudest critics by taking the AdvoCare Invitational championship trophy back to suburban Philadelphia.

“We have a lot of aspects to our game that need a lot of improvement,” Wright said. “We got beat up pretty good on the offensive and defensive glass tonight and during certain stretches all weekend. They kept grinding and kept battling. So as a young team like the one we have, today is a great victory for us.”

NOTE: The eight-team field for the 2019 AdvoCare Invitational tournament has been released. The tournament – set for Thursday, Nov. 28 through Sunday, Dec. 1, 2019, at HP Field House at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort – will include Davidson, Fairfield, Harvard, Marquette, Maryland, Temple, Texas A&M and USC.

Six of the eight teams in the field made the post-season in 2017-2018. Texas A&M advanced to the NCAA Elite Eight, while Davidson reached the NCAA Tournament. Harvard, Marquette, Temple and USC all played in the National Invitational Tournament (NIT).