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Double Thriller

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By DOUG FEINBERG, AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jim Jabir took a deep breath as he sat in the news conference. His young Dayton Flyers had just pulled off one of the biggest wins in school history.

It's been a season of thrills for the veteran coach.

"I'm going to enjoy this win," Jabir said. "I'll be savoring this for a long time. It's one of the most complete games I've been a part of. It was a complete game, total team effort."

Andrea Hoover scored a career-high 24 points and seventh-seeded Dayton outlasted No. 10 St. John's 96-90 in a double overtime thriller Sunday in the opening round of the NCAA women's tournament. Freshman Kelley Austria had a career-high in points too with 21.

It was the first double overtime game in the NCAA tournament since 2000 when Vanderbilt outlasted Kansas in the opening round.

"This whole season has been improbable," Jabir said. "A bunch of freshmen running around out there against St. John's on their home court. We've done it all year. I'm proud of the way they handled the whole season. The presence and maturity of these guys."

The win was the second for the Flyers in their brief NCAA tournament history. The team first made the NCAAs in 2010 and pulled off a win over TCU. They had lost the past two years in their opening games. Brittany Wilson, who hit the game-winning shot in UD's 18-point come-from-behind victory over TCU, also scored a trey in the second overtime that gave Dayton the lead for good.

"This means a lot for our program," said senior Olivia Applewhite, who had 13 points and a game- and season-high 16 rebounds for Dayton.

"Our freshman year we were happy to be here. We won the first-round game on a game-winner. Now we're no longer that type of team. We expect to get here. We're not happy to be here and lose the first game like we did the last two seasons."

It has been an exceptional season for Dayton. The Flyers won their first Atlantic 10 regular-season title before falling to Saint Joseph's in the conference tournament semifinals. The team has already surpassed the school record for wins and is in its fourth straight NCAA tournament.

Not bad for a squad that lost a lot to graduation last year and has the sixth youngest roster in the country. The Flyers used a balanced offense that features four players averaging in double figures. Eight different players have led the Flyers in scoring at some point this season.

"It takes a lot of heart to pull out that game," Hoover said.

The Flyers (28-2) will face Kentucky in the second round Tuesday night.

"I'm a senior and bottom line is I didn't want to go home," Applewhite said. "My shots weren't falling so I crashed the boards really hard."

Brittany Wilson hit a 3-pointer and Kelley Austria had a three-point play to make it 90-86 with 2:11 left in the second extra period. After St. John's failed to score, Applewhite added a basket with 47 seconds left to seal it.

The Red Storm (18-13) trailed by 13 with 5:30 left in regulation before rallying. Nadirah McKenith, who led her team with 22 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds before fouling out, hit a layup with one-tenth of a second left in regulation to force OT.

Dayton's Amber Deane tied it with 15 seconds left in OT to force a second one. Aliyyah Handford had one final chance for the win in overtime, but her floater in the lane fell harmlessly off the rim.

"We left everything we had on the floor," St. John's coach Joe Tartamella said. "We don't play a lot of players and we started the game slowly and dug ourselves a hole. It was a special play by Nadirah at end of the game to force overtime. I can't say enough about these players."

St. John's was hosting an NCAA tournament for the first time in school history.

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