



They say good things come to those who wait.

Cleveland State's Devon Long had to wait patiently for three years before he finally got an opportunity to play this season.

On Tuesday night, the Highland Park, Mich. native might of had his breakout performance in CSU's 66-60 victory over Youngstown State at the Wolstein Center. Long, who came into the game averaging 5.5 points per game, scored a career-high 23 points and added five rebounds against the Penguins.

"I knew my game was always there," said Long, who went 9-of-11 from the field and 5-of-6 from the line. "I had to rebuild my confidence."

CSU head coach Gary Waters said the game plan was to go right after YSU's shot-blocking forward Damian Eargle, who came into the game leading the Horizon League in blocked shots at 3.5 per game.

"I put on the board in the locker room that we had to attack the basket," said Waters.

That's just what CSU did.

The Vikings (12-12, 4-6 Horizon League) went down low early and often to Long.

The 6'7", 215-pound Eargle had no answers on how to slow down the 6'7", 260-pound Long.

"I told Charlie [Lee] as soon as you see me, throw it in there," said Long. "I was extra vocal [today]."

By halftime, Long had already eclipsed his previous career-high of 13 (vs. Urbana, Nov. 15, 2010), as he had 14 points in the opening half to help CSU take a 30-23 lead at the intermission.

Unfortunately, CSU couldn't maintain the lead.

YSU (13-10, 5-5 HL) opened the second half on a 13-5 run to take a 36-35 lead on freshman Bobby Hain's lay-up.

With 6:10 left and YSU leading 48-47, CSU would start to take control of the game.

The Vikings would get back-to-back three-pointers from Lee and Bryn Forbes, then a three-point play from Marlin Mason to take a 56-48 lead with 3:38 left.

"I told them the last four minutes, it's our time to take control of the game," said Waters.

Still, YSU had some fight left and cut it to a one possession game on Hain's jumper that made it to 58-55.

Then, on CSU's next possession, sophomore guard Sebastian Douglas grabbed a loose ball under the basket with the shot clock running down and put it in to give the Vikings some breathing room.

The Vikings would close out the game, making their free throws down the stretch.

Give some credit to CSU's defense which held YSU's high-powered offense to 11 points under their scoring average of 71.7.

"Our goal was to hold them to the 50s and low 60s," said Waters.

Waters said CSU's defensive game plan was to try to take away Kamren Belin and Blake Allen.

Belin, who scored a career-high 24 points in YSU's 73-59 victory over CSU two weeks ago, was limited to 11 points on 3-of-10 shooting from the field. Allen finished with 14 points.

One thing Waters never expected was that YSU's leading scorer Kendrick Perry (16.5 ppg, 3rd in HL) would be held to only five points.

Give some credit to Douglas, who hounded Perry all night and limited him to 2-of-7 shooting from the field.

"We knew if we shut Perry down we had a better chance to win," said Douglas, who finished

with 10 points.

Lee and freshman Junior Lomomba each contributed 10 points for the Vikings.

Hain came off the bench to lead YSU with 15.

CSU hosts Horizon leader Valparaiso on Saturday.

*Photo courtesy of Cleveland State athletics*