



The good news, Cleveland State fans, is that Charlie Lee returned on Saturday after missing three games with a knee injury.

The bad news, though, is that CSU had one of their worst performances of the season in a 73-61 setback against Akron at the Wolstein Center.

"We didn't play well at all," said Vikings head coach Gary Waters. "We missed 10 layups and 10 free throws. This is college basketball. They should be able to make layups."

Waters did not think that they were still fatigued from playing in Wednesday's heartbreaking triple overtime loss at Drexel.

"{The issue is} not the triple overtime game, it's losing a triple overtime game. That's where the problems come because it's in your mind and in your head," said Waters. "I'm a believer that everytime you lose a game it takes a little bit something from you, and you got to get it back. Did we get it back? I'll take responsibility for that. We didn't get it back."

Lee was one of the few bright spots for the Vikings. He had a team-high 14 points off the bench. Jon Harris added 12 points for the Vikings who dropped to 4-5.

Nick Harney, a Benedictine product, led Akron with 15 points. Nyles Evans and Reggie McAdams, who went a combined 7-of-10 from three-point range, each added 12 for the Zips who improved to 2-2.

The Vikings struggled on both ends of the floor.

CSU's top two scorers Bryn Forbes (19.8 points) and Trey Lewis (14.5) went a combined 5-of-15 shooting from the floor for 15 points.

Give some credit to Akron's defense which held Forbes to only seven shot attempts and a season-low nine points.

"They did a good job on Bryn," said Waters. "They worked hard to stay with Bryn."

Forbes also struggled at the free throw line. Forbes, who has been almost a sure thing from the charity stripe this season, making 43 of 45 (.956), went 2-of-6 against Akron.

The Vikings also had no answers for Akron's hot-shooting from beyond the three-point line.

The Zips came into the game shooting just 26.7 percent from beyond the three-point line, but connected on 11-of-22 from downtown against a Vikings squad that leads the Horizon League in defending the three (.301).

"Eight of them were breakdowns," said Waters.

Even Evans, who had not made a three-pointer all season (0-of-10), went 3-of-5 from downtown. His last three-pointer, just before the half, gave the Zips a 32-23 lead at the intermission.

The Zips started the second half with back-to-back three-pointers from Deji Ibitayo and McAdams to extend it to 38-23.

"That hurt us," said Waters.

After a timeout, CSU responded with a 6-0 run to close to within nine (38-29), but a three-pointer from Jake Kretzer started a 17-7 run over the next six minutes that saw Akron extend the lead to 19 (55-36).

"We were down 10 or 11 points and turned the ball over three straight times," said Waters. "It's like we didn't want it."

A three-pointer from Forbes cut the lead down to 69-61, with 22 seconds left, but it was too little, too late for the Vikings.

Akron closed out the game with a layup from Harney and a dunk from Ibitayo for the final score.

The Zips shot 48 percent from the field and made five more field goals than the Vikings. They held a huge 43-26 advantage in bench points.

The Vikings shot 43.8 percent from the floor, and were 4-of-13 from downtown.

"They will learn from this," said Waters. "I feel for them because they are hurting. They know they are a pretty good team, but didn't play well today."

CSU is off next week for final exams and return to action on Dec. 16 with a home game against

Western Carolina.