

Piedmont International dominates Trinity in second half

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

The Piedmont International University (PIU) Bruins picked up their first win of 2019 with a 79-53 victory over Trinity Baptist College. This win brings the Bruins' record to 6-10 on the year.

Trinity jumped out to an early six-point lead in the first half at 17-11. That prompted Bruin head coach Josh Howard to call a timeout and settle his team down, because they were playing a bit frenetic.

With both teams struggling on the offensive end, the Bruins locked in on the defensive end to take their first lead of the game with just under five minutes left in the first half at 24-22. PIU kept the pedal to the metal and never looked back after taking the lead. By halftime, the Bruins led 36-28.

"I told them to start focusing on their mental game and not playing to the level of competition," said Howard about what he told his team during that early timeout. "Trinity Baptist is a good team, but I think I prepared my guys well enough to let them know that we should dominate that game and go out there and not play around."

"I think my guys responded well to that, definitely my bench guys who got more minutes than usual. They came out ready to contribute and try to learn from that experience, because I am going to need those guys as we get ready for conference play."

Piedmont continued their onslaught as the second half began. Before the Eagles could blink, the lead had ballooned to 20. Defensive pressure and the ability to limit Trinity to one shot were the key factors in building the sizable lead for PIU.

"The plan coming out of the half was to let Trinity Baptist know that we were not going to let up," said Howard. "Even with Tamir (Glenn) not having a typical good game, other guys were able to step up and learn from that experience and know that they can't rely on Tamir 24/7."

Howard says his defensive philosophy is for his team to stay home on their defensive assignments and have everyone "crash the boards." He says since they are not a big team, his guards must get in the mix to help rebound the ball as well.

That philosophy worked to perfection for the Bruins

Ramsey

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recruiting five years in a row. 2011 is really when the Clemson program began taking the ACC (Atlantic Coast Conference) by storm. From that point on, there was no looking back for Swinney, as the Tigers started to become a national power, slowly but surely.

With players such as Tahj Boyd, Deshaun Watson, Sammy Watkins, DeAndre Hopkins, Vic Beasley, Shaq Lawson and Mike Williams, all being high draft picks in the past few years, Swinney has turned Clemson into the place to be. His laid-back persona is a stark contrast to what Saban shows at Alabama. From the outside looking in, it seems Alabama is more of a business atmosphere, while at Clemson the players seem to be having the time of their lives. That type of attitude really resonates with an

18-year-old kid. The Tigers will continue to bring in the top tier talent, as long as Swinney is at the helm.

I am not claiming that Alabama is taking a backseat to Clemson; I'm simply saying that they are now on an even playing field. So, when Swinney walks into a kid's living room, he carries the same amount of clout as Saban right now. We have been waiting to see what team would step up and be a consistent challenger to Alabama and Clemson has accepted the challenge.

It wouldn't be a stretch to see Clemson and Alabama match up in the College Football Playoff next year. I know some people may be getting tired of seeing these two teams play, but until another team figures out a way to crack the mountain top, we are left with this. I love to root for the underdog, so hopefully a team can make it interesting heading into next year's playoff.



Photo by Timothy Ramsey

Piedmont heads into conference play with some momentum after their 79-53 victory over Trinity Baptist College.

down the stretch. The Eagles did not give up as they attempted to make a run, but were halted by big shots down the stretch by PIU. The Bruins put an exclamation point on the game with an emphatic dunk on a fast break that sealed the deal.

"We knew it was going to be a hard-fought game, we just had to stick to our principles especially on the defensive end by holding Trinity to one shot, because they are definitely a good offensive rebounding team," Howard

continued. "I think our guys responded well and did a great job of sharing the ball and rebounding."

Heading into conference play, Howard feels the tough, non-conference schedule he put his team in will pay dividends when they enter conference play. "We just have to be mentally ready to play night in and night out and knowing we have a chip on our shoulders will take us a long way."

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