



PURCHASE COLLEGE – SUNY MEN'S BASKETBALL NEWS

Journal News Captures Experience at Madison Square Garden

New York, NY (Dec. 20, 2010) – **Justin Walters** darted into the lane in the opening minutes, swiped an inbounds pass and went behind the back to set up **Marvin Billups** for a highlight dunk that drew an enthusiastic response from the Madison Square Garden crowd.

And then he pinched himself.

Some of the other details will get fuzzy over time, but the Purchase College senior left the World's Most Famous Arena with at least one lasting memory. Walters had plenty of company. There was plenty of storytelling on the benches Sunday long before the final buzzer.

By the way, Manhattanville (8-1) won the game 66-54.

"It was probably the most memorable moment for me on the court ever," said the former Stepinac standout. "Everybody really came alive there. I'm definitely going to be telling my grandkids about it one day. I coulda swore all 19,000 people stood up, even though we only had about 1,500 fans here."

Both teams were intent on soaking up the atmosphere.

"No human being could walk in here and say it's just another game," said Valiants freshman Jack Bramswig, who starred at Pleasantville and heard all 150 members of his entourage. "I could hear them chanting my name. That was surreal. Going onto that floor and having family and friends support you like that, I'll probably never experience anything like this again in my life."

There was clearly a surge of adrenaline in the opening minutes as both teams played too loose and fast. It was sloppy until everybody slowed up to catch a breath at halftime. "I think it took us an entire half to settle down," Manhattanville coach Pat Scanlon said. "We just stuck with it. We started getting a little negative at the end of the half, and I told them we needed to stay positive. It was too good an opportunity to do that."

Getting any kind of separation was a chore. Despite shooting 9 for 32 from the field and committing a dozen turnovers in the first half, the Panthers went into the locker room with a 27-23 lead.

The Valiants lost the handle 17 times. "It was just nerve-wracking being out there," said Manhattanville guard Trevoy Pointer, who led all scorers with 21 points. "How can you not think about being at the Garden? I still can't believe where I am. I was just watching Miami play the Knicks here on television. I mean, LeBron James was here just a couple of hours ago."

There was lots of back and forth in the second half between the neighboring schools which had not played since 2003. Words and forearms were exchanged.

It got a little bumpy for a while. Valiants reserve forward Ivan Jovicic broke a 46-46 tie with 7:25 to play when he connected from behind the 3-point arc. He scored 11 points down the stretch. Purchase was able to stick close for a time until the missed shots began to pile up.

"He's done that for us the last few games," Scanlon said. "He hadn't played a lot of minutes, but he's made some big shots."

Purchase (7-1) only managed one field goal in the last 6:27, a 20-footer by Walters. "It was the poor shooting that did us in," said **head coach Jeff Charney**, whose team went 18 for 62 from the floor. "We usually shoot over 50 percent. It could have been playing here, the aura of Madison Square Garden because Manhattanville threw a couple of shots over the basket, too. It was crazy. We didn't make anything there at the end, but it was fun."

-Mike Dougherty

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