

Terps: First place in ACC temporarily wrested from Deacs

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put from the Deacons' head man: "When we don't rebound, we don't have much of a chance."

It was then that the Deacons came out in the second half hoping to erase their deficit. After

the Terrapins quickly came out and stretched their lead to 17, the Deacons were able to chip away to within six at 63-57 with just over 10 minutes remaining.

But that was as close as it would get. The Deacons were unable to rebound any better than they had in the first half and therefore, as

Prosser put it, had very little chance of coming back. The Terps quickly responded to the Deacons' uprising, outscoring the Deacs 27-10 over the final 10 minutes to provide the final 23 point margin.

The Deacons were led by Howard's 20 points, followed by 11 and

10 respectively from sophomores Jamaal Levy and Vytas Danelius. Levy led the team in rebounding with six.

Prosser also commented that the snow did not do anything to influence the game's outcome.

"Nothing, absolutely nothing," he said when asked what

the weather's effect was. "They had the same - well, it was a little bit different because they were at home, but ... as far as the rebounding total, I didn't see any snow on the court."

The Deacons now head to Atlanta to tangle with the Ramblin Wreck of Georgia Tech Feb. 20.

With Duke and Maryland, traditionally the conference's two toughest teams, behind them for the regular season, the Demon Deacons control their own destiny, as they are guaranteed at least a share of first place if they are able to win their last six regular season games.

Duke: Deacs win in 2 OTs

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free throws.

Duke's Dahntay Jones gave the Devils the lead at 67-66 on two free throws after sophomore Taron Downey had committed his fourth foul with 4:30 remaining. Williams scored inside and then hit a free throw to put the Deacs back up 69-67 with 1:22 to go. After a timeout, the Devils quickly tied it on a drive by Daniel Ewing.

Each team had at least one chance to end the game there, but no one could convert, despite numerous chances, sending the game into overtime with the score knotted at 69.

The first overtime was as offensively dreary as the end of regulation, as the teams combined for only 10 points. Gray and Williams and Duke's Ewing and Shavlik Randolph all earned their fifth foul during the period. Danelius' two free throws following Randolph's fifth foul pulled the contest even at 74.

After forcing a shot clock violation by Duke, the Deacons had a chance to end the marathon. Freshman Trent Strickland drove the lane and missed from close range, then corralled the offensive rebound, had it knocked away, regained it and missed again, only to have sophomore Jamaal Levy barely miss a follow attempt at the buzzer, leaving the score at 74-74 entering a second overtime.

It was in this overtime that some offense was finally found, as the Deacons outscored the Blue Devils 20-5 in the period to tear away the win 94-80. Strickland provided a much needed set of fresh legs, scoring 10 in the five minute period, including a spectacular, if somewhat shaky, 360-degree dunk that provided the final points of the game.

Innumerable Deacons stepped up with superlative performances in the game. There was Strickland's late explosion and Gray's 18 points in his first game in over a month. There was Danelius and Levy both logging 45 minutes, coming up with 20 points and 14 rebounds and 15 points and 13 rebounds respectively. And there was sophomore Taron Downey putting in 42 minutes of work while scoring 10 and handing out five assists.

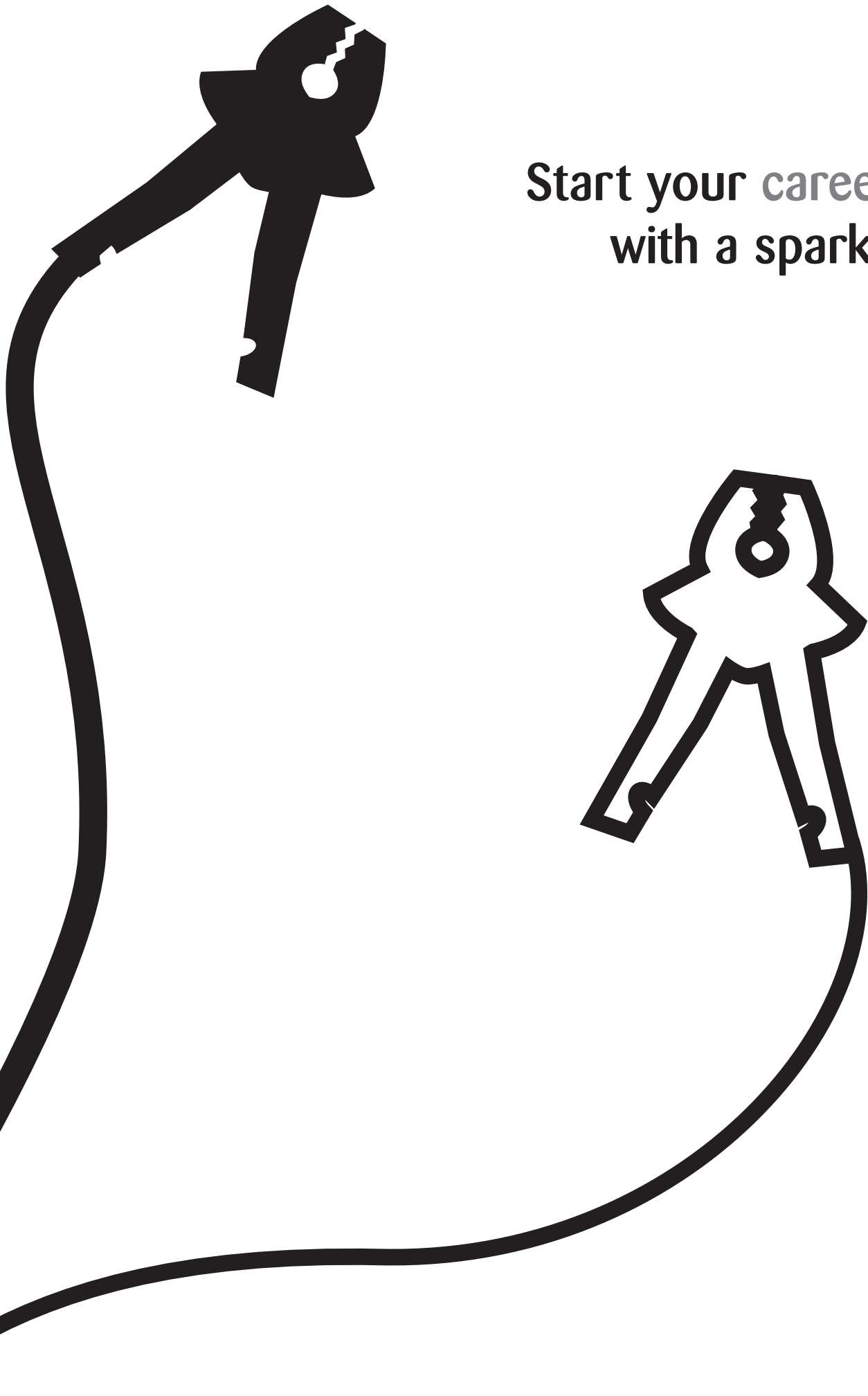
The talk for most of the season had been about how much Howard provided for this team, and how much the team's success was dependent on him. It was a large statement then that the team was able to notch such a big win with him out of the game with five minutes remaining in regulation, signaling something of a coming of age for the young Demon Deacons.

"(I feel like) an old man, like my son just graduated," Howard said of watching his teammates come through. "I'm just happy, it was a big win for us. Everyone stepped up."

Prosser said, "I've been doing this for 30 years. And this is as good as any game I have been part of. It was a battle. That's just the way it is in the ACC. Duke and our guys fought well and we feel fortunate to walk out with a win after a hard played game."

Prosser summed the entire night up for the Deacons and their fans. With the other students pouring onto the court to join the players in celebration, Prosser grabbed the public-address microphone. His message was very simple and applied as much to the players as to the students he was addressing.

"Hey! Great job!" he said.



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