

Air Force Crowned Sunshine Slam Champions With Win Over Bethune-Cookman

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. - Air Force men's basketball was crowned Sunshine Slam Bracket I Champions with their 73-65 win over Bethune-Cookman (1-4) Sunday afternoon at the Ocean Center. Senior guard AJ Walker earned Tournament MVP honors with a game-high 22 points and sophomore guard Joseph Octave made the all-tournament team with 14 points.

Air Force swept the weekend competition with yesterday's win over Holy Cross and went 3-0 overall in the Sunshine Slam games (road win at Tulsa). The Falcons have won four in a row and improve to 4-1.

The Falcons rallied back from a blistering start by Bethune-Cookman. After a three by freshman Jake Heidbreder for the first points of the game, the Wildcats ripped off a 12-0 run to jump ahead 12-3. The Falcons steadily chipped away at the lead and cut it to two at the half at 41-39.

Air Force took over in the second half, out-scoring Bethune-Cookman 34-24. The Falcons at one point, held the Wildcats without a basket for over seven minutes.

Air Force shot 49 percent from the field and out-rebounded Bethune-Cookman 29-20. The Falcons got to the free throw line 24 times, making 20 shots, good for an 83 percent performance from the line.

In addition to his 22 points, Walker had six points, four assists and two steals. Octave added six rebounds to his 14 point performance. Freshmen Jake Heidbreder and Ethan Taylor both scored 13 points each. Taylor added four assists and four steals. Heidbreder had three rebounds and a pair of threes.

Bethune-Cookman was led by Dylan Robertson and Mikey West, who both scored 13 points.

The tournament win by the Falcons was their first since winning the All-Military Classic in 2012.