

## Tulsa Outduels Rhode Island 77-71 in Back-and-Forth Matchup

**DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.** — The University of Tulsa men's basketball team topped the Rhode Island Rams 77-71 on Saturday evening and will advance to the championship of the Sunshine Slam to face the University of Utah.

Tulsa moved to 3-1 on the season while handing Rhode Island (3-1) its first loss. Sam Griffin and Jeriah Horne led the Hurricane in scoring with 21 and 17 points respectively. Tim Dalger had his first double-digit scoring night as a Hurricane, scoring 12 and adding eight rebounds.

The Hurricane came out firing to start the game. Griffin scored 14 of Tulsa's first 18 points to give them a 18-9 advantage with just over 10:00 remaining in the first half. Tulsa would gain its largest lead of the game at 25-13 after a Keyshawn Embery-Simpson three-pointer with 8:14 to play in the opening half. A quick 9-0 run brought the Rams within one at 25-24, and Rhode Island would eventually take its first lead with an and-one free throw from Ishmael El-Amin to make it 29-28 with 4:58 left.

The teams would trade leads, but Rhode Island would go into the break with a 36-35 advantage after hitting a pair of free throws with just seconds remaining on the clock.

Griffin led all scorers with 16 at the half, while the Hurricane shot 15-33 (45.4 percent) from the field in the opening half. Rhode Island also had a good shooting half, hitting 52.0 percent of their shots, going 13-25 from the floor.

Rhode Island earned its largest lead of the evening midway through the second half, leading the Hurricane 57-50 with 12:27 to play, but four points apiece from Dalger and Anthony Pritchard helped bring Tulsa within one, 59-58, with 9:19 remaining.

Tulsa would take the lead for good when Pritchard knocked down a pair of free throws to give Tulsa a 64-62 advantage. A timely seven points from Darien Jackson, including a clutch three-pointer with 3:46 on the clock brought about the final media timeout with Tulsa holding onto a 73-65 lead. Two difficult shots from Horne in ensuing possessions gave Tulsa enough cushion to hold off any comeback attempt.

In all, there were 10 ties and nine lead changes in the game. Tulsa led for 23:09 of the 40 minutes. The Hurricane shot 29-59 from the floor (49.0 percent), while Rhode Island knocked down 52.0 percent of its shots (24-46). Free throws were important to Tulsa's win as the Hurricane only had one attempt in the first half but went 11-12 (91.7 percent) in the second 20 minutes.