



UTEP Wins WestStar Bank Don Haskins Sun Bowl Invitational

Tim Floyd and his UTEP Miners reclaimed the title to the nation's oldest collegiate holiday tournament with a 68-52 win over Nebraska. EL PASO, Texas (AP) — Konner Tucker and Jacques Streeter had 17 points apiece to help UTEP defeat Nebraska 68-52 in the championship game of the Don Haskins Sun Bowl Invitational on Sunday night.

“I feel like we played really well defensively and offensively early. We were rebounding hard, getting push outs. We were getting good looks and it was fun playing like that,” Tucker said. Tucker was named the invitational most valuable player but gave credit to his teammates and coaches for. “It felt good but it wouldn’t have happened without the help of my teammates or coaches,” Tucker said. “I was just lucky to be able to knock the shots down and coach (Tim Floyd) has good plays that we run and we execute them. The award is good but I’m more worried about winning (games). “

Nebraska (8-4) did not score until 13:31 into the first half. The Huskers then began to chip away at the lead when UTEP went cold for a 4-minute stretch but closed out the half going on a 16-5 run.

“It started with our defense so coach got on me, told me it starts with me on top, so he wanted me to get into the little guys and my teammates got into their guys and it made it easier,” Streeter said.

The second half was much of the same as UTEP (6-5) controlled the pace. Nebraska cut the lead to as little as eight with a 13-4 run late, but UTEP stayed ahead.

UTEP head coach Tim Floyd joined the Miners on the bench Sunday night after missing Saturday’s game against Arkansas Pine-Bluff. It was evident his presence made a difference in the Miner’s play.

“You have to credit UTEP,” Nebraska head coach Tim Miles said. “They were energized and their leader and you could see Coach Floyd, nothing personal, looked awful and you have to credit him for being there for his team. I think their energy level was really good.”

Nebraska shot 37.3 percent from the field for the game, while UTEP shot 47 percent and led by as many as 22 points.

Ray Gallegos led Nebraska with 22 points. Brandon Ubel had 11 points. Dylan Talley, who had averaged 15 points per game, was held to four points.

The loss by Nebraska was the third in five games.

“UTEP by design will try and eliminate two of your best scorers and so they are going to deny (Ray Gallegos) catches and limit his opportunities,” Miles said. “It takes a really special player to work your way out of that. It takes a while to adjust to that and I thought Ray did a good job after the first half.”

John Bohannon, who was awarded the Don Haskins Award, had seven points and had 11 rebounds. The Miners out-rebounded the Huskers 36-32 and it was significant for UTEP.

“We won the rebounding game, which has been an Achilles’ heel for us this year,” UTEP

assistant coach Greg Foster said. "It just makes it a lot more fun when we're able to rebound the ball, get out on transition."