

St. Bonaventure is like home to Tyndale



By VINNY PEZZIMENTI For the Daily News

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OLEAN, N.Y. — If you ask most Atlantic 10 players and coaches, they would probably rather skip the trip to St. Bonaventure's Reilly Center.

The location is remote. The fans are vocal. And even the lowly Bonnies can steal a win on their home court.

Temple's Mark Tyndale fits into the minority. He can't get enough of it.

And who can argue with him?

The senior guard scored 22 points and just missed a triple-double in keying the Owls to a 96-82 victory last night over last-place St. Bonaventure.

"I love this gym," said Tyndale, who had nine assists and eight rebounds. "I always play well here. It's something special about this gym."

Tyndale had a then-career-high 26 points on 10-for-15 shooting in a game here 2 years ago. This time was just as productive, and his teammates might have new fondness for the Reilly Center, too.

Led by Tyndale, three Owls scored at least 20 points and two others also reached double figures as Temple enjoyed its most efficient offensive game of the season. Its 24 assists, 35 field goals, and 96 points all were season highs.

The Owls shot 58.3 percent from the floor, 41.7 percent on three-pointers and sank 16 of 17 free throws. They are 64-for-69 from the line in the last four games.

"I think any coach would be envious of that kind of performance by his team," Fran Dunphy said.

The win boosted the Owls (14-11, 7-4) into a second-place tie in the conference with Saint Joseph's and Richmond, though the Hawks and Spiders have already beaten Temple. The Owls have won three of four and five of their last seven games.

The most impressive aspect of the latest victory was the balance, especially for a team that relies so heavily on Tyndale and fellow guard Dionte Christmas to score points.

Christmas, who is tied for the A-10 lead in scoring, and point guard Chris Clark each poured in 20 points. Ryan Brooks had 15 and freshman Lavoy Allen 14.

Tyndale and Christmas were willing to help their teammates get into the scoring act. Tyndale's nine assists were a career high; Christmas had seven assists and eight boards.

"I think that says a lot about them trying to give it up," Dunphy said. "They understand that they're obviously scorers and they're going to get their points. But they also want to win and they want to distribute the basketball to their teammates."

Temple led by as many as 19 points and took the lead for good in the first half via a 24-5 run. Although the Bonnies cut the deficit to seven points by halftime (45-38) and to four early in the second half, the Owls took command again by hitting 18 of 29 field goals over the final 20 minutes.

Tyndale and Christmas, the only Owls who average double figures in scoring, each shot 7-for-13 from the field. Allen and Brooks each went 7-for-10.

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"We just had fun out there tonight," Tyndale said. "This is probably the most fun I've had playing college basketball."

Forward Michael Lee had 23 points and guard Tyler Relph chipped in 19 points and seven rebounds for the Bonnies (7-18, 1-10), who have won just twice in their last 15 games. *

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