



Flying Cows Confront Heartbreak in 97-105 Defeat to Raleigh Firebirds

Friday June 6th, 2025
Frederick, MD

The Frederick Flying Cows dropped Game 1 of the TBL Conference Finals, falling 0-1 in the series after a disappointing showing on the defensive end. Final Score: Flying Cows 97, Firebirds 105.

In just their second season in The Basketball League, the Flying Cows have emerged as a rising power, earning 23 combined regular season and playoff victories. But memories of last year's early playoff exit still linger.

After a 20-win debut season, Frederick was swept in the opening round. This year, the team cleared that first hurdle, but Game 1 against Raleigh reignited old concerns.

Kyle Steward started off hot early, knocking down two three-pointers in the opening frame and finishing the game with 11 points after hitting 3 triples.

Despite the fast start, the game remained tight midway through, with the Firebirds holding a narrow 13-12 lead behind a strong showing from Shaq Dance, who poured in 9 first-quarter points.

The Flying Cows responded with defensive intensity, forcing five turnovers and building a 10-point cushion before Raleigh clawed back. At the end of the first, Frederick led 32-27.

The Flying Cows found momentum in transition to open the second quarter, with their up-tempo offense running through speedy guards Ed Dyson and Ronald Scott, who both scored 8 points in the half. Martavian Payne added a scoring bunch before heading to the locker room with 10 points at the half.

Dyson finished the game with 28 points, 5 rebounds, and 5 steals, while Scott added 12 points and 4 rebounds. Payne closed the night with 12 points and 7 rebounds.

Despite their fast pace offense, Frederick struggled to capitalize from the free-throw line, converting just 50% of their attempts, a stat that made reaching the bonus feel more like a liability than an advantage. Halftime Score: Flying Cows 56, Firebirds 53.

Out of the break the Firebirds turned up the intensity on the defensive end, chipping away at the Flying Cows' lead until trimming it down to just one. A momentum-shifting and-one finish by veteran forward Julian Gamble gave Raleigh its first lead of the second half midway through the period.

A 9-3 run helped the Firebirds build a narrow 62-60 advantage. But in the closing seconds, Frederick's captain, Tavares Sledge, drilled a clutch three-pointer to swing the momentum back. The Cows carried a 73-70 lead into the fourth quarter. Sledge quietly added 10 points and 10 rebounds, securing his ninth double-double of the season.

Ed Dyson began to impose his will in the paint, slicing through defenders and finishing tough looks at the rim to keep the Flying Cows within striking distance. However, Raleigh found their rhythm from beyond the arc, knocking down timely three-pointers to take a slight 86-84 lead. As the clock wound down, the game evolved into a battle at the free throw line, with both teams trading physical drives and late fouls.

With two minutes remaining, the Firebirds held a three-point edge, but the momentum quickly shifted. Star guard Shaq Dance buried back-to-back deep threes, extending Raleigh's lead to nine and sealing the game down the stretch.

The Raleigh Firebirds were led by Shaq Dance, who poured in 31 points to power the team to victory. After playing on a short week, the Firebirds will welcome a brief break before heading to Frederick for Game 2. With their dreams of returning to the TBL Eastern Regional Round gaining momentum, Raleigh's hot shooting from beyond the arc proved to be the difference in Game 1.

The Flying Cows' defense struggled late, surrendering 35 points in the fourth quarter alone in what proved to be an uncharacteristic collapse.

Now with their backs against the wall, the Flying Cows must win Game 2 to keep their season alive. The pivotal matchup tips off Sunday, June 8th at 5 p.m. at Woodsboro Bank Arena on the campus of Hood College, as Frederick returns home desperate to even the series and force a decisive Game 3.

If the Cows prevail on Sunday, they'll face the Firebirds once again for Game 3 on Monday, June 9th at 7 p.m., also at Woodsboro Bank Arena, with a trip to the TBL Regional Finals on the line. The winner of this series will go on to face either the Capital Seahawks or the Albany Patroons.

But fans attending Sunday's game will get more than just playoff basketball. A major in-game announcement is set to be revealed, adding even more excitement to an already electric atmosphere. The weekend theme is "Cow Out," and all fans are encouraged to wear black and white or cow print apparel. The first 250 attendees will receive an exclusive limited-edition cow print bandana.

Tickets available now at goflyingcows.com.

[See Flying Cows vs Firebirds Box Score Here.](#)