

## Yellow Jackets trying to make habits from win

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By [Ken Sugiura](#) - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

With a little more than seven minutes to play Wednesday night, there was a familiar wobbling. Georgia Tech had led No. 23 Miami by as many as 14 points in both halves, but now the upset bid was losing steam.

Between an errant Yellow Jackets hook shot and a needless turnover, Hurricanes guard Manu Lecomte had stuck a 3-pointer to close the lead to 51-43 in Tech's favor. And now, Miami trapped guard Travis Jorgenson along the sideline near halfcourt. Tech had botched moments like these in the course of losing seven games in a row to start ACC play, five of them by painfully narrow margins.



But Jorgenson pivoted to the sideline and found guard Chris Bolden, who in one motion redirected the ball to the paint to center Demarco Cox, who laid the ball in to restore the lead to 10. After a defensive stop, forward Marcus Georges-Hunt worked a screen-and-roll with Cox, giving the center space for a dunk and a 12-point lead with 5:51 left. Tech had regained control. Crisis averted,

losing streak over. The 70-50 win at Miami's BankUnited Center tied for the largest margin of victory in an ACC game in coach Brian Gregory's tenure.

"It's the same system and the same players," Gregory said. "You have to make some plays. That was a play. That's an offensive play."

Against the Hurricanes, the Jackets finally demonstrated the timely playmaking and game-long focus that had eluded them and led to the 0-7 start despite the scoring margin being three points or fewer in five of the games.

"The thing we did better was contain the lead and keep the lead up and keep fighting," said Georges-Hunt, who hung 24 points on Miami on 10-for-12 shooting, much of it on drives to the basket.

It was an especially sweet night for Georges-Hunt, who grew up about five minutes from Miami's campus and had about 20 family members in attendance. Georges-Hunt was the star of Tech's win over then-No. 6 Miami in March 2013, his freshman season, with a buzzer-beating tip-in. The junior has also carried the load for the Jackets with varying degrees of success. Gregory said that sometimes, it has appeared that "the weight of the world is on his shoulders."

Said Gregory, "Nobody deserves it more than him."

With the win in the bag, the Jackets have proved they can close out a likely NCAA tournament team on its home court, albeit one prone to inconsistency. The next step is meeting the standard again. Beating Miami is impressive, but if the Jackets can't make playing consistently smart and efficient a habit, they already know their fate.

Against Miami, they pushed the pace when the opportunities availed, patiently fed the ball into Cox and didn't wilt when the Hurricanes closed in. If they can summon it often, the team's ceiling will rise considerably.

Gregory was particularly proud that his team followed a strong first half of defense (when Miami shot 33.3 percent from the field) with a worthy second half (36 percent). In the first seven ACC games, Tech allowed its opponent to shoot a better percentage from the field in the second half six times. Miami did it as well, although Wednesday's instance pales in comparison with the Boston College loss Sunday. The Eagles shot 35.7 in the first half and then 59.1 percent in the second.

"Our guys took it to heart," Gregory said. "That was much more indicative of how we want to play all the time."