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## Grand opening

### Hawks christen new arena with rout

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The packed student section behind the basket at the shiny new Multipurpose Activity Center on the campus of Monmouth University unleashed a lusty barrage of boos when Florida International coach Isiah Thomas walked onto the floor prior to Friday night's game.

After that the opening night crowd at the MAC watched Monmouth, bearing absolutely no resemblance to the offensive-challenged team of the last few years, christen its the new arena with a 99-70 annihilation of the Golden Panthers.

Thomas said the reception from Monmouth fans had a familiar ring from his days in the NBA and on back into college.

"I remember being with coach (Bob) Knight (at Indiana) when he walked into an arena and the things people were saying to him," Thomas said.

After the game Thomas said he was approached by a fan who security escorted away. "I thought security here was great and, with the person that took things to the extreme," Thomas said.

"A gentleman, and he wasn't a student, I don't think he goes to school here or is in college, he got out of line and security put him back in line.

"He didn't grab me. If he did that I would have had the right to go Charles Barkley on him."

"Obviously for Monmouth it's an exciting night," said coach Dave Calloway.

The 3,468 fans, the largest amount of rooters ever to see the Hawks play on campus, saw sophomore center Travis Taylor lead five Monmouth players in double figures with 18 points and five rebounds.

Monmouth had 31 assists, nine by point guard James Hett, on its 31 baskets.

"That's (31 assists) a lot of assists," Calloway said. "We're not a one-on-one go by you type offense.

"We're going to score as a group. Obviously one guy gets credit for the basket but the group gets credit for the win."

"We came into the game looking forward mostly to playing good defense," Taylor said. "We knew if we ran our offense sharply and effectively we were going to score. Everybody was seeing everybody on the court, open players. We just knocked down shots.

"Today I got into the rhythm defensively and the offense came."

It came from everywhere. Freshman Ed Waite scored 15 points in 18 minutes off the bench and Will Campell also came off the bench to drop in another 13.

Newcomer Justin Sofman scored 13 points in 14 minutes and Hett, not known for his offense, flipped in 12.

About the only trouble Monmouth faced was early in the second half. FIU (0-2) whittled what had been a 17-point Monmouth lead to six on two foul shots by Stephon Weaver.

On FIU's next possession Phil Gary missed from deep and Monmouth again caught fire.

Hett fed Campbell for a layup, Taylor hit a jump shot and Waite sank a layup starting an 18-1 run that spurred the crowd into a frenzy.

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