



By Eric Olson

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(AP) Doug McDermott saved his best game for his last one at Omaha's CenturyLink Center. McDermott scored a career-high 45 points and became the eighth player in Division I history to go over 3,000 for a career, helping No. 14 Creighton roll to an 88-73 Senior Night victory over Providence on Saturday.

In the process, he also passed Oscar Robertson and Hersey Hawkins and moved into seventh on the NCAA's all-time scoring list with 3,011 career points.

"I never in my wildest dreams thought I'd reach 3,000," McDermott said.

"To do it in this building is special because of the way the fans have always been."

McDermott passed the milestone with a 3-pointer midway through the second half. After the ball went in, the crowd roared and he ran backward with his right hand in the air, three fingers raised.

At the next timeout Doug and his coach-father, Greg McDermott, shared a long embrace on the court as the team huddled at the bench.

"It's a moment in time I'll never forget," Greg McDermott said.

McDermott scored 22 points in the first half as the Bluejays (24-6, 14-4 Big East) put away the Friars (20-11, 10-8) quickly.

Bryce Cotton, the Big East's second-leading scorer, had all of his 23 points in the second half for Providence.

The Bluejays, who avenged an 81-68 loss at Providence in January, finished behind Villanova in their first season in the Big East. They're the No. 2 seed in the conference tournament in New York and will play Georgetown or DePaul today (Thursday).

The Bluejays made fast work of the Friars after the sellout crowd of 18,868, the largest in the arena's 11-year history, roared during pregame introductions for McDermott and fellow seniors Ethan Wragge, Grant Gibbs and Jahenns Manigat.

The class helped lead Creighton to 104 wins, the most over a four-year span for the school.

"We've played in hostile environments, and it was a special night for them," Providence coach Ed Cooley said.

"Doug is one of the more electrifying players in college basketball, arguably the best player in college basketball. You're going to have days where a player is going to have a night like that. He had his on Senior Night. Congratulations to him," Cooley said.

McDermott, who has scored 25 points or more in nine of the last 10 games, looked determined from the start to reach the 3,000-point milestone in front of the home fans. The two-time first-team All-American made two 3-pointers while scoring 10 straight points at the start of a 24-5 run that put Creighton up 32-12 in the middle of the first half.

Creighton led 45-22 at half and never let the Friars get closer than 14 points the rest of the way.

McDermott, who has scored 40 or more points four times in his career, started the night eight points behind Oscar Robertson for eighth place on the NCAA scoring list and 34 points away from 3,000.

McDermott dunked in transition off Devin Brooks' long pass, bringing the fans to their feet. They were standing again a few minutes later when he took the ball well behind the top of the key and swished the 3-pointer, putting him over the top for a 68-45 lead.

"He missed a couple layups, easy ones, early," Gibbs said. "I couldn't foresee a night like that. It was typical Doug fashion. I had no idea he was close to 45 until he hit that 3 and the crowd erupted. Another special night. Probably his best one," his teammate said.

Before Saturday's game, McDermott rubbed elbows with billionaire Warren Buffett, who was on hand as a guest of Creighton President Timothy Lannon.



Accolades start

This is a big week in college basketball for awards, and they've already started for McDermott. Announced Tuesday, McDermott has collected National Player of the Year honors from NBC Sports which also named him its BIG EAST Player of the Year and a member of its All-BIG EAST squad.

The recognition comes one day after Sporting News named McDermott a First Team All-American, and also one day after BleacherReport.com named McDermott its National Player of the Year. Earlier on Tuesday McDermott was named National Player of the Year by Sporting News.

McDermott leads the nation in scoring (26.5 ppg.), ranks second in field goals and third in points scored.