The Cleveland State men's basketball team held serve at home this weekend, winning three games in three days to capture the 2010 World Vision Classic championship.

CSU (3-0) defeated Bryant on Friday, Iona on Saturday, and rallied from a 16-point deficit in the second half to defeat Kent State, 69-66, on Sunday.

It's the first time since the 2004-05 season that CSU has started off 3-0.

"That was a heck of a game from both sides of the floor," said CSU head coach Gary Waters. "But, I have to give my kids credit they fought back and they never quit."

KSU (2-1) led 45-29 with 15:51 left in the second half. That's when CSU switched to a 2-3 zone. The Vikings would outscore them 40-21 the rest of the game.

"The zone changed the whole complexity of the game," Waters said. "When we went to that zone it stymied them."

CSU's zone gave the Golden Flashes all kinds of problems as they committed 12 of their 16 turnovers in the second half, which CSU turned into 17 points.

"We lost our poise," said KSU's Justin Greene. "We didn't play Kent State basketball in the last 10 minutes of the game."

With the score tied at 61-61, Norris Cole's lay-up put the Vikings up for good with 50 seconds left. He would go 6-of-6 from the line in the final 27 seconds to extend it to, 69-64.

"Every team goes on a run. We understand that," said Cole. "It's about who goes on the second run, and this time we got on a run. They gave the first blow to us and we took it and then we threw one back and they couldn't overcome it."

Still, the Golden Flashes had one last run in them. A lay-up by Greene cut it to, 69-66, with 18 seconds left.

Junior guard Trevon Harmon had a chance to ice the game for CSU, but he missed both free throws, giving KSU one last chance to tie the game.

Greene had a good look for the game-tying 3-point attempt in the final seconds, but it fell short at the buzzer.

On the final possession, KSU head coach Geno Ford said they were looking to set-up a 3-point attempt for Carlton Guyton or Randal Holt, but a defensive blunder left Greene wide open.

"What we told Justin Greene is don't go to the rim cut towards the rim and then spin out to the weak side and they lost him," said Ford. "That shot didn't deserve to go in. We didn't play the right way (to win) in the second half."

Cole led the Vikings with 21 points. It was his third straight 20-point effort. He went 11-of-13 from the line.

The Vikings also had strong contributions from Jeremy Montgomery, who scored all of his 14 points in the second half, Tim Kamczyc (13 points) and a near double-double from Aaron Pogue (nine points and nine rebounds).

The Golden Flashes were led by Greene with 17 points. Guyton, Justin Manns, and Michael Porrini, each contributed 10 points for KSU.

CSU is back in action on Monday hosting Division II Urbana at 7 p.m. at the Wolstein Center.

All-Tournament team: CSU was well represented on the World Vision Classic all-tournament team with Cole (Most Valuable Player), Harmon and Pogue representing the Vikings. Rounding out the all-tournament team were KSU's Greene and Guyton, and Bryant's
Frankie Dobbs
, a product of St. Edward High School.

Jeremy Montgomery photo courtesy of Cleveland State athletics