With 15 seconds left in the game, the Cleveland State men's basketball team received a standing ovation from the 4,711 fans at the Wolstein Center who cheered CSU's hard-fought, 69-62, victory over the South Florida Bulls of the Big East Conference.

The Vikes (13-1) won the game despite being out-rebounded by 23. Despite Norris Cole sitting most of the first half on the bench in foul trouble. And, despite allowing the Bulls to shoot a season-high 48 percent from the field, including 58.3 percent in the second half.

"When you look at these statistics you would say we would probably lose this game," said CSU men's basketball coach Gary Waters. "I thought we fought (hard), then got loose balls, then got steals and those type of things made up for all these other deficiencies."

What caused CSU to stay in the game was USF's inability to handle CSU's full court pressure defense. The Bulls turned the ball over 24 times, which led to a 22-2 advantage in points off turnovers for CSU.

"The turnover differential was huge," said USF head coach Stan Heath. "I've never seen a differential that big in my life. They were a big part of it, but we were probably a bigger part of it. They just wouldn't let us get it across (mid-court)."

The Bulls (6-7) led by as much as seven in the first half.

With Cole sitting on the bench for most of the first half with two fouls, it was junior guard Jeremy Montgomery who gave the Vikes a lift, scoring all nine of his first half points in the final seven minutes.

Montgomery's effort helped cut the lead down to 26-24 at half-time.

"I thought (that group) did a fabulous job of maintaining the score (in the first half)," said Waters. "(South Florida) could have went up big in the first half, but I thought they fought hard enough to get back in it."

In the second half, it was the Cole and Montgomery show for CSU. Cole scored 25 of his game-high 27 points in the second half and Montgomery hit several big three-pointers down the stretch. The Bulls had no answer for Cole's driving ability as he kept attacking the paint and had several easy lay-ups and dunks.

"That kid (Norris Cole) could play at any level," said Heath. "If he wants to play in the Big East, I'd love to have him. He's a big time player."

CSU took the lead for good on Montgomery's lay-up with 11:37 left in the game that gave the Vikes a 46-44 lead.

Montgomery finished with 21 points. Freshmen forward Luda Ndaye also had a strong performance for CSU contributing seven points and seven rebounds in a season-high 19 minutes.

"Playing a Big East opponent, we got a chance to show (our doubters that) we can play at any level," said Cole.

USF had strong performances from Jarrid Famous (22 points, 11 rebounds), Augustus Gilchrist (12 points) and Hugh Robertson (11). Ron Anderson Jr., the son of former Cleveland Cavalier, Ron Anderson Sr., contributed seven points and 13 rebounds for the Bulls.