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Turnovers, Free Throws Doom Bearcats

DECEMBER 29TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Turnovers, Free Throws Doom Bearcats

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

BLOOMFIELD - Sophomore Cody Neldon drove the lane and attempted a layup with under 10 seconds left on the clock and the 'Cats down by one; Adam Grantham bear-hugged the Dexter guard under the basket, and Neldon's shot missed the backboard completely and fell to the ground.

There was no whistle, no signal from the baseline referee.

"[The baseline official] had a better angle than I did; it definitely looked like one to me," DHS head coach Rob Nichols said of the no-call. "They didn't call it, so I guess it wasn't a foul."

Regardless of any controversy surrounding the finale of the contest, for the second time in nine days, the Dexter Bearcats lost a game that could have easily been won if they were able to simply make a free throw.

In the first semifinal contest of Wednesday night, the 'Cats shot an abysmal 37% from the charity stripe in a 49-48 loss to the top-seeded Kennett Indians.

Despite the 'doom and gloom' surrounding the controversial finale of the would-be upset, the 'Cats actually performed well in the contest. Nichols noted that his team performed

well in his key areas of concern, but silly mistakes early the second half, coupled with pathetic free throw shooting, would eventually be the Bearcats' folly.

"I thought we did everything we had to do to win. We knew if we could guard them and not turn the basketball over then they would have trouble scoring," Nichols said. "We knew [we had to] rebound it well, and they did."

The 'Cats were able to open a 6-2 lead early in the first quarter thanks to a blocked shot and three pointer from Tyler Miller; Brad Potts picked up a steal and several key boards in the opening frame, and Neldon completed a three point play to keep the 'Cats tied with the Tribe at 14 after the first quarter.

Divante Taylor dropped in a layup to push the Indians ahead by six at the 6:30 mark. Miller came up with a steal and layup to cut Kennett's lead to two at 5:40, and Jordan Fitts picked off the ensuing inbounds pass before dishing the ball to Neldon for a quick two to tie the game at 20. Threes from Miller and D.J. Dowdy late in the second were enough to propel Dexter to a 29-22 lead at halftime.

The Indians quickly took control of the game early in the third quarter and tied the contest at 29 at the 6:30 mark. The Bearcats went on a quick 7-0 run to bring the score to 37-30 before Kevante Mitchell picked up loose balls on two consecutive possessions and tied the game at 37 at the end of the third.

Jake Lee, who was 3-10 in the contest, connected on a free throw to pull the 'Cats within one at the 5:00 mark of the fourth quarter; the senior post came up with a steal a minute later and handed the ball off to Miller for another three to take a 45-43 lead. Kennett quickly responded and got up 47-46 at the 1:45 mark, but Lee had an offensive board and putback on the next trip down the floor to turn the score back in the Bearcats' favor.

The Indians dropped in a quick bucket, but Neldon connected on one of two free throws with 50 seconds left in the contest to put the 'Cats down by one. Potts snagged a crucial defensive board and dumped the ball to Neldon before the controversial no-call under the basket; the 'Cats were forced to quickly foul and give the Tribe a bonus chance from the charity stripe. Miller got the rebound on the second free throw and chunked the ball from half court as the buzzer sounded, but his shot bounced around in the framework of the goal as the buzzer sounded.

"We had a seven point lead in the third quarter, then three straight turnovers at half court that were basically unforced and led to layups for them, and that ate up our lead," Nichols

continued. “Turnovers are what got us. I thought the kids played great defense, and we executed every step we called out of a timeout. Everything we talked about during timeouts, they went out and executed.”

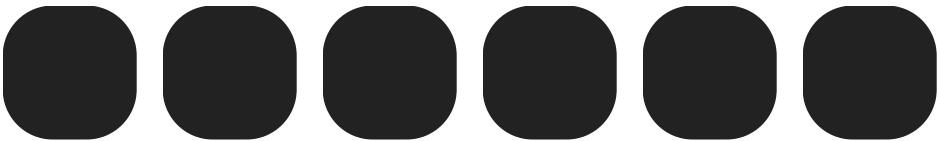
“We were up one when we turned it over, there were about 18 seconds left. We were midcourt, getting into our delay game,” Nichols said when asked why he didn’t call a timeout to set up a play late in the game. “The way Kennett was scrambling and running two guys across the court, I thought it would be better to not call a timeout because we might have gotten a layup and that would keep it from being a free-throw shooting contest - at that point we were seven for 19 from the line, and I’d rather get a layup than try to shoot free throws.” Miller led the ‘Cats with 17 points; Mitchell paced the Indians with 20.

The Indians will advance to the Championship Bracket Finals, where they will attempt to claim their third-straight tournament title. If successful, the Tribe will be the first team to win three straight BCT Titles since Paul Hale and Eric Sitze led the Bearcats to seven straight titles in 1998-2004.

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'Cats Slow Down Massey, Pick Up 61-56 Win

DECEMBER 28TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

'Cats Slow Down Massey, Pick Up 61-56 Win

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

BLOOMFIELD - The Dexter Bearcats set out with a goal during their contest against Holcomb: hold Jamie Massey to half of his 32 point total from the night before. With a solid defensive performance in the paint from Jake Lee and Tyler Miller, the 'Cats did just that in a 61-56 victory.

"We tried to front him and back him all night," DHS head coach Rob Nichols said after the game. "We knew he had that big 32 point game last night, and we wanted to try to cut that in half tonight. He's a good player, and for the most part I thought Jake Lee did a good job of not giving him position down low."

The 'Cats maintained a lead throughout the first quarter, but the Hornets were able to pull within one midway through the frame. A steal from Chase Young led to a quick bucket for Jordan Fitts to push the Bearcats to a 13-10 advantage after the first.

Brad Potts dropped in a 12-footer to open the second quarter, but it didn't stop the Hornets from pulling within one again late in the second. A three point play from D.J. Dowdy and a deep three from Cody Neldon put the 'Cats on top by five, 28-23, heading into halftime.

Patrick Skelton scored Holcomb's first four points of the third quarter, but the 'Cats were able to exploit the Hornets' 1-3-1 zone for a three pointer from Miller to get a 35-30 lead. Neldon made a freak-show assist to Potts - the sophomore drove the lane and was tripped up; during the fall, he blindly passed the ball over his right shoulder to Potts, who was directly behind him - to put the 'Cats on top 39-31 at the end of the third.

The Hornets fought back during the fourth quarter and scored a game-high 25 points, but a three from Young and two more from Miller were enough to seal the 61-56 victory for

DHS.

Poor free-throw shooting continues to plague the 'Cats in their third-straight contest at 50% or less, and Nichols noted it as an area of concern moving forward.

“We made some big shots against that 1-3-1, especially with Tyler Miller down in the corner. At the same time, we need to make a few more free throws down the stretch,” he said. “They’re a very good team. They’re going to beat a lot of people, and they have a good chance to go pretty far in Class 3.”

“I think we played better than we played the last two or three games,” Nichols continued. “We gave up a few too many offensive rebounds, but we were focusing so much on Massey that a few times we didn’t have anyone there to block out on the weak side. You take him away, you give something up.” Miller led Dexter with 16 points; Lee and Fitts were the only other Bearcats in double-figures with 11 points apiece.

The Hornets were paced by Skelton with 20; Ryan Reeves added 15, while Massey was held to just 13 points.

The Hornets will move on to face Hayti in the fifth-place bracket at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday. The Bearcats advance to the Championship Bracket semifinals, where they will face the top-seeded Kennett Indians.

“It’ll be a different team than what we played tonight,” Nichols said. “They’re a little more fast-paced and guard oriented. It’ll definitely be a big challenge for us, but it’s one that I hope we’re ready for.”

Tipoff is set for 6:00 p.m.

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Owls Fall To Western Illinois In Exhibition

DECEMBER 27TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Owls Fall To Western Illinois In Exhibition

MACOMB, Ill. -- Megan Aubuchon (Old Monroe, Mo.) tallied a 12-point outing to lead the Owls offense on Tuesday night, but it wouldn't be enough as the William Woods University women's basketball team fell to NCAA Division I Western Illinois by a 73-52 margin. WWU managed to outrebound the Leathernecks, but could only muster a 11 percent shooting pace from 3-pt range in the game.

Neither team was able to find the range early, as it took nearly two minutes for either team to score. Aubuchon put in a jumper with 18:15 on the clock to put the Owls up 2-0, but the lead would be short-lived.

WIU answered with a bucket on its next possession, and used a series of small spurts to build a 39-25 halftime lead. Coming out of the locker room, however, the Leathernecks posted an 11-2 run and didn't look back.

The Leathernecks stretched out to a 66-32 lead with 8:50 to go, but the Owls were able to claw back into the game with a 15-2 run, closing the gap to 49-68 with 1:13 to go. Destani Stensrud (Exeter, Mo.) capped off the run with seven consecutive points, including a three-pointer with 1:26 on the clock.

Dexter, Mo., native Ashlee Taylor contributed six rebounds, four points, and a steal in her 20 minutes of playing time.

William Woods finished the game with a .358 shooting percentage from the field, and hit at a .650 pace from the free throw line. Western Illinois finished with a .425 pace from the floor and a .321 rate from 3-pt range. The Owls held the rebounding edge on the evening, 43-38, and will return to regular season action on Friday.

WWU is set to take on Campbellsville University in the Cougars vs. Cancer Classic on Dec. 30, with tipoff slated at 2 p.m.

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Bearcats Muzzle Bulldogs In Christmas Tourney

DECEMBER 26TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Bearcats Muzzle Bulldogs In Christmas Tourney

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

BLOOMFIELD - The Dexter Bearcats took the floor against the South Pemiscot Bulldogs in their first contest since a close loss against the Scott City Rams. The Bearcats' struggles from the free-throw line continued, but the 'Cats were still able to come up with a 56-38 victory in the opening round of the 55th Annual Bloomfield Christmas Tournament.

The 'Cats opened up a quick 8-2 lead, aided by a three from Tyler Miller, but the Bulldogs fought back within four points late in the frame. The Bulldogs dominated the boards throughout the first half, and were aided by terrible inside shooting by the Bearcats. The 'Cats were able to hang on to a two point, 12-10 lead after the opening quarter of play.

Miller, Jordan Fitts, and Brad Potts all recorded steals in the second quarter to help spark a 7-0 run. A three from South Pem's Jacob Trammel helped get the Bulldogs within six at the 4:00 mark. The Bulldogs would take a brief 21-20 lead at the 2:00 mark on a Collin Gilmore layup, but Jake Lee quickly tied the game when he hit one of two from the charity stripe. Fitts picked up another steal and quick bucket on the ensuing inbounds pass to give the Bearcats a 23-21 lead at the half.

South Pemiscot went on a 4-0 run to open the second half before a Miller 15-footer tied the contest at 25. The Bulldogs took a 27-25 lead at the 5:00 mark; Fitts gave the 'Cats a one point lead with a deep trey, but Contrell Johnson quickly answered with a three of his own. Miller completed a three-point play to put the 'Cats back out in front. Dexter held a 36-30 lead at the end of the third.

Cody Neldon picked off the opening inbounds pass of the fourth quarter and turned it into a quick basket for the Bearcats. After a technical foul was called on Lee early in the fourth, the Bulldogs were able to convert one of the two free throws and Trammel added a three on the ensuing possession to cut Dexter's lead to 40-34 at the 6:40 mark. Miller picked up the Bearcat 'D' late in the fourth, and recorded two blocks and a steal, as well as two three pointers, to help push the 'Cats to a 56-38 victory.

DHS Head Coach Rob Nichols was unavailable for comments after the contest.

Miller led the Bearcats with 18 points in the contest, while Fitts had 13. The 'Cats continue to struggle from the charity stripe, and only made 12 of 25 free throws.

Gilmore paced the Bulldogs with 10 points; Seth Harris added 7.

The Bearcats will move on to face the No. 4 Holcomb Hornets at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday in the Championship Bracket.

The Bulldogs will move on to face No. 13 Malden in the Consolation Bracket; tip is set for 9:00 a.m.

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Bloomfield Christmas Tourney Begins Monday

DECEMBER 24TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Bloomfield Christmas Tourney Begins Monday

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

With Christmas upon us, the minds of players and coaches from area high schools all shift

to the 55th Annual Bloomfield Christmas Tournament.

Stoddard County will be well-represented in the tournament, with the Richland Rebels, Bloomfield Wildcats, Bernie Mules, Puxico Indians, and Dexter Bearcats all competing in the four-day basketball extravaganza.

The Bearcats were given the No. 5 seed in the tournament. The 'Cats are currently 1-5, after opening the season with a *Murderer's Row* of a schedule. The 'Cats have dropped two games to the defending Class 4 State Champion Sikeston Bulldogs, as well as two two games against Jackson and one against Charleston. The Bearcats' most recent 65-62 loss against the Scott City Rams could have just as easily been a win for the team.

The 'Cats open the tournament against No. 12 South Pemiscot on Dec. 26 at 2:30 p.m.

The Bernie Mules, fresh off their second-straight Show-Me Showdown Final Four appearance, were given the No. 6 seed and sport a 6-1 record. The Mules' lone loss of the 2011-2012 season came against Holcomb in the semifinals of the Bernie Invitational Tournament.

The Mules will open against No. 11 Van Buren at 4:00 p.m. on Monday.

The Bloomfield Wildcats earned the No. 7 seed with a 3-2 record. The host Wildcats two losses came against Holcomb and the Bernie Mules, and they open the tournament against No. 10 Saxony Lutheran at 5:00 p.m. Monday.

The Puxico Indians were given the No. 9 seed with a 3-2 record and will open the tournament against the No. 8 Hayti Indians on Monday at 7:00 p.m. in the final contest of the opening day.

The Richland Rebels, with a 1-5 record thus far in the 2011-2012 campaign, was given the No. 16 seed.

The Rebels will open the tournament on Dec. 26 at 9:00 a.m. when they face off against the No. 1 Kennett Indians, who look to three-peat after knocking off the Bearcats in last year's title game.

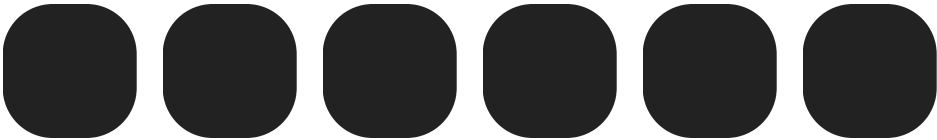
ShowMe Times sports editor Andrew Cato will be at all 26 games, and you can follow live score updates via our **Facebook** or **Twitter** pages. There will also be a new menu area, under the *Sports* tab, where you can find recaps of all 26 games.

For your convenience, Tournament Brackets can be downloaded and printed out here.

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