



TOP

'Cats Win Double-OT Thriller Against NMCC

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

There are eight seconds left in double overtime; the 'Cats trail by two points. Tyler Miller comes around a screen from Jake Lee, gets a pass from Chase Young, and launches a prayer.


The senior struggled from the perimeter throughout the second half and first overtime period, but Miller's clutch three as time expired gave the Bearcats a 61-58 win over the New Madrid County Central Eagles.

"That play wasn't designed, it just developed out of our motion set," Dexter head coach Rob Nichols said. "We were out of timeouts, and had exhausted just about every set we had throughout the game. The guys created that themselves."

"The shots Tyler hit at the end, you just have to pat him on the back for those," Nichols continued. "He missed two [threes] there in the fourth quarter, one of them was almost an air ball, and he stepped up. That's what a senior does when he's a good player and knows it: he stepped up and hit that big shot there at the end."

Miller wasn't the only Bearcat to have an exemplary performance in the contest, despite being the hero of the day with his game-winning three. Lee scored 21 points in the game, as well as pulling in 12 rebounds. Young and Cody Neldon - who missed Tuesday night's

contest at Puxico - both played through illness in the contest and had solid defensive performances for the Bearcats.

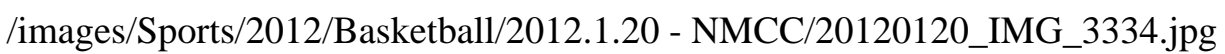
“That  was a complete team win. Everybody played their role; we had some kids that played sick, but played well,” Nichols commented. “Chase [Young] and Cody [Neldon] have both been sick this week.”

After an early technical foul on the NMCC bench, the ‘Cats jumped out to a 7-0 lead midway through the first quarter. The Eagles battled back within one before a three from Miller gave the ‘Cats a 14-12 lead after the opening frame.

Brad Potts hit a trey early in the second to spark another 7-0 run for the ‘Cats. Jordan Fitts came up with a pair of steals in the quarter, and turned one of them into an easy layup. The Eagles had their worst scoring effort during the second quarter, and trailed 28-20 at halftime.

The ‘Cats rattled off four quick points to open the second half, but New Madrid pulled within five at the 4:30 mark and transitioned into a three-quarter press. The Eagles forced the Bearcats into a turnover-induced slump, and a pair of free throws from Armondo Thatcher tied the game at 38 with just under a minute left. Miller hit another three to put the ‘Cats up 41-38 at the end of the third.

Both teams exchanged quick scoring spurts early in the fourth quarter; the ‘Cats rattled off five unanswered before a three-point play from Thatcher and a three from Lomonta Nelson tied the game at 48 with 3:00 on the clock.

 The game was tied at 50 with :15 seconds left when Nelson had a clear path to the basket; he drove into the lane, but was called for a travel to give the ‘Cats a shot at the win with :11 on the clock. Neldon’s 15-footer bounced off the backboard, but Fitts was there with a tip-in basket at the buzzer that was waved off by the officials for overtime.

Neldon fouled out early in the first overtime period, and a pair of free throws from Lee tied the game at 52. The Eagles got into their delay game at the 1:00 mark and maneuvered for a final shot, but threw the ball away at the :16 mark. Miller came up short on a three attempt for the win on the next possession, got his own rebound, and missed

another shot to send the game to double overtime.

The Eagles took their first lead of the game on a Nelson jumper, but the ‘Cats battled until the final play, when Miller finally hit paydirt from downtown to seal the win.

Nichols noted some of the Bearcats’ mental mistakes early in the second half, but was proud of his team’s ‘never say die’ attitude in the second half and overtime periods.

“We had a few turnovers, a few miscues, that gave them easy baskets there in the third quarter, and if we cut down on those there probably wouldn’t have been any overtime tonight,” Nichols said. “There’s been times this season that miscues like that, we would have dropped our heads and might have lost the game, but the kids fought through it, and we picked up a win against a quality team.”

The Bearcats will be back in action on Monday, when they open the SCAA Tournament. The ‘Cats drew the No. 1 seed, and will face the No. 8 Bell City Cubs at 7:30 p.m.

/images/Sports/2012/Basketball/2012.1.20 - NMCC/20120120_BB_NMCC_Stats.jpg

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