

County Tournament 2012

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Mules Upset Hornets In Varsity Semifinal Action

JANUARY 27TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

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The No. 3 Bernie Mules and No. 2 Advance Hornets met in first Varsity semifinal contest of the day; Advance had a single-digit victory over Bernie earlier in the season, but the Mules were able to pull off the only Varsity bracket upset of the tournament with a 62-54 victory over the Hornets.

"I'm really proud of our guys for their outstanding effort tonight. Other than shooting free throws, we played pretty well," Bernie head coach Brad Botsch said after the game. "I thought we really battled a very good Advance team. They have a lot of weapons with so many guys that can score."

Lane Below and Ethan Barr were the only Hornets to find the basket in the first quarter; Barr's ten point effort, coupled with solid defense on Matt Eaves, was enough to get Advance a 17-15 lead after the first.

Both squads traded buckets early in the second quarter, but a three from Below gave the Hornets a one point lead. David Baker exploded for 10 points in the frame, including an offensive board and putback to give the Mules a 29-28 lead heading into halftime.

Trey Wallace buried a three for the Hornets in the opening minute of the second half to help Advance surge to a 38-35 lead. A jumper from Sam Turner tied the game at 38 with just over a minute left, but Below came up with a steal and layup to give the Hornets a two point lead. Bernie rattled off four unanswered to take a 42-40 advantage into the fourth quarter.

Neither team could put together a solid run in the fourth; they exchanged four-to-five point runs until the last minute of the contest, when Tyler Middleton dropped in a bucket to bring the Hornets within four points. The Mules maintained their composure, and a key pair of free throws from Baker sealed the 62-54 victory.

"We did a much better job this time around against them offensively. We had so much more movement and executed better than we have been," Botsch said. "It was a good fundamental defensive effort as well. Even with us missing so many free throws (the Mules were just 14-28 in the game), our guys still found a way to scratch out a win and advance to the championship game and we're proud of them for that."

Below led Advance with 23 points; Barr was the only other Hornet in double figures, with 14 points and eight boards.

Baker and Eaves led the Mules with 22 and 16 respective points.

Bernie advances to the Varsity Championship with the win; the game is set to tip at 8:30 p.m. on Friday. Advance will compete for third place at 5:30 p.m.

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