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Lee's Double-Double Leads Cats To Title Game

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

. The Dexter Bearcats put their No. 1 seed and undefeated SCAA record on the line Thursday night against the No. 4 Bloomfield Wildcats. Dexter utilized excellent perimeter shooting and a much-improved effort from the charity stripe to get a 71-59 victory and the right to defend their SCAA Title.

"We played pretty good offensively; we didn't have a lot of turnovers, and we shot the ball pretty well," head coach Rob Nichols said after the game. "We need to play better defensively. I didn't think we played really well defensively tonight, and that's been something we've done the last few games. We just haven't guarded well lately."

After a 4-0 Bloomfield run to start the game, Chase Young hit a three to wake up the Bearcat offense, and DHS took a 15-12 advantage into the second quarter.

Tyler Miller and Young combined for five threes in the second quarter, coupled with a seven point effort from Jake Lee, to extend their lead to 10 at halftime.

"[Bloomfield] went to that zone on us, and we've played well against the zone this year," Nichols said. "Every time we've seen it, we've shot the ball well. Tyler hit three big threes in the second quarter, and that really got us some momentum heading into the second half."

Both teams played better defense in the third quarter, but struggled offensively. Neither Dexter or Bloomfield could really put together any consistent offense, but the Bearcats were able to keep their lead intact. DHS led 50-39 heading into the fourth.

The Wildcats put on a three point parade of their own in the fourth, with Caleb Baker hitting one and Logan Cowart knocking down two. Young hit his fourth three of the night for the Bearcats, and great free throw shooting from none other than Lee (7-9 in the fourth) sealed the Bearcat victory.

Adam Vandiver led the Wildcats with 16 points; Brett Ruch, Zach Pounds, and Cowart had 13, 12, and 11 respective points.

The Bearcats were paced by Lee, who had 23 points and 13 rebounds. Young and Miller added 17 and 15 points.

"Jake just plays hard," Nichols said of the senior's second double-double in the tournament. "He gets everything out of his body he can get, I've been real proud of him this year."

Lee had struggled from the charity strip so far this season, but has shown great improvement as of late.

"He can make free throws," Nichols added he shot well last year, and he's getting better this year. I think collectively we've been better as a team lately."

The Wildcats will face Advance in the third place matchup; tipoff is set for 5:30 p.m. on Friday. The Bearcats will return to the Championship Game, where they look to defend their SCAA Title against the Bernie Mules.

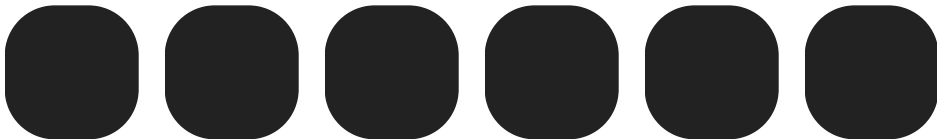
"We expect a tough, hard-fought game; you always have to play well to beat those guys," Nichols said. "Botsch always has a great game plan. We'll have to play well. It's probably the game that most people wanted to see."

The Mules and Bearcats met exactly 14 days ago at the Bearcat Event Center on Dexter's homecoming; the 'Cats emerged with a 68-61 win.

Tipoff is set for 8:30 p.m.

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