

Bohannon hits 44, but Lions fall in OT

Written by Jim Ecker

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Jordan Bohannon pulled his Linn-Mar jersey over his head and covered his eyes to hide the agony and tears Tuesday night as he left the court at the U.S. Cellular Center.

He played the most spectacular game of his brilliant prep basketball career with a career-best 44 points and seven 3-pointers, but it was not enough to save the Lions in the Class 4A substate finals.

Cedar Falls sophomore A.J. Green, who could succeed Bohannon as the next big star in the Mississippi Valley Conference, hit a cold-blooded jumper in the final second of overtime to give the seventh-ranked Tigers a 76-74 victory over the 10th-ranked Lions in a classic battle in downtown Cedar Rapids.

Linn-Mar rallied from a 13-point deficit in the second half with Bohannon popping in 25-footers from all over the place, but Cedar Falls had the final possession in overtime and Green delivered the knockout punch with the last of his 31 points.

"That game could have gone two or three overtimes and it still might have been a one-possession game," said Linn-Mar coach Chris Robertson.

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Bohannon, an all-star guard who will play for the Iowa Hawkeyes next season, scored 16 of Linn-Mar's 17 points in the fourth quarter and added another nine markers in overtime, but he was still a little red-eyed when he emerged from the locker room after the game.

"It's just hard that it has to end like this," he said softly, searching for the right words to describe his emotions. "Just the fact I won't be able to put on a Linn-Mar jersey again. That's what really gets to me.

"I won't be able to be with these great coaches and this great community. It's all come to an end. And that's what really got to me. I won't be able to lace the sneakers back up."

Bohannon broke many of the records set by his three older brothers at Linn-Mar, but all three of them -- Jason, Zach and Matt -- got to play on state championship teams with the Lions. More than anything else -- more than all the points and all the records -- the youngest Bohannon wanted to join his brothers on the pantheon of champions.

As it turned out, he never even got a chance to play in the state tournament during his four-year career.

"He really hurts right now," Robertson said, "but once he gets a chance to reflect on the season, he's going to be really proud of what he accomplished. He was big tonight.

"Unfortunately, one of the best Metro careers came to an end tonight. And that's tough."

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Linn-Mar trailed 29-20 after a sluggish first half and fell further behind at 42-29 midway through the third quarter. It didn't look good for the Lions at that point, but Bohannon took matters into his own hands and put on a show for the sizable crowd at the U.S Cellular Center.

If the Lions were going to lose, Bohannon was determined to go down fighting to the end.

"Coach Robertson, he's always believe in me," Bohannon said. "That's what he said at the start of the second half: 'I always believe in you and keep playing your game.' I think that's what really got to me the second half."

Bohannon spent a lot of energy guarding Green, but that changed shortly after Bohannon picked up his second and third fouls within 32 seconds in the third quarter, first when he bumped Green and then when he was called for charging.



Riley Murphy was given the assignment of trying to stop Green, and that seemed to let Bohannon catch his breath on defense and start firing away on offense. He nailed two 3-pointers and a layup after the defensive switch to help pull the Lions within 49-43 entering the final stanza.

As it turned out, he was just getting warmed up.

Bohannon tossed in a 25-footer, hit a fallback jumper and hit another triple to lift the Lions into a 53-53 tie at the mid-point of the fourth quarter and the slugfest was on.

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He dropped another 25-footer to give Linn-Mar a 56-55 lead with 2:26 left, but Cedar Falls responded and carried a 60-56 advantage into the final minute.

Enter Bohannon again, this time on hard drives to the basket.

He got fouled, hit both free throws and made it 60-58 with 56 seconds left. Cedar Falls missed the front of a one-and-one and Bohannon took off for the basket again, got slammed and hit two more foul shots to make it 60-60 with 39 seconds to go.

Cedar Falls tried to hold the ball for the final shot, but Murphy deflected the ball away from Green and the Lions managed to get a jump ball with 1.3 seconds left on the clock by diving on the loose ball. "That was a huge defensive stop by Murphy," said Bohannon.

The arrow pointed in Linn-Mar's possession, but Murphy's long heave at the buzzer banged off the backboard.

Bohannon gave the Lions a 70-68 lead with another long triple with 1:38 left in the extra session and he made it 72-68 with 1:11 left with a pair of free throws, and suddenly it looked like the Lions might pull it out and make the state tournament.

Cedar Falls had other ideas.

Murphy had to leave the game with a severe cramp in his right calf and Reese Phillips, given the assignment of guarding Green, was called for a

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foul on a 3-point shot by the Cedar Falls 10th grader. Green hit all three free throws with 61 seconds left to pull the Tigers within 72-71.

Murphy came back in the game a few seconds later, but Bohannon was double-teamed in the backcourt and called for traveling with 51.3 seconds remaining.

Green stuck a jumper over Murphy to give Cedar Falls a 73-72 edge with 43 seconds to go. Bohannon missed a long 3-pointer and the Lions fouled Tra'Von Fagan with 31 seconds left.

Fagan went 1-for-2 at the foul line, giving Cedar Falls a 74-72 lead, but Linn-Mar senior Beau Klostermann got fouled and made both shots to knot the game at 74-74 with 22.2 seconds remaining.

Cedar Falls held for the last shot again and this time it worked. Green rose for a medium-range shot over Murphy as Bohannon came over to help, but Green hit nothing but net with a second remaining for the victory.

"Right when it left my hand it felt pretty good and then it just happened to go down," Green said. "It's a great feeling to give us a win."

Bohannon saluted Green for a job well done.

"He's a heck of a player. He's going to have a huge career," Bohannon said. "The fact he's able to hit those big-time shots, that's going to pave the way for the rest of his career."

Bohannon finished his career as the third-leading scorer in Metro history with 1,591 points and the top 3-point shooter in Metro history with 261,

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but he'd trade a bunch of those numbers for a trip to the state tournament and a chance to win a title.

"As an individual career, it's as good as any," Robertson said. "It's up there with his brother Jason and Marcus (Paige).

"He's grown into an unbelievable all-around player. It's unfortunate that he never got to play in the state tournament, but those aren't things he can control."

Bohannon scored 44, but the rest of his teammates combined for only 30 points in a sub-par night for most of them. The 44 points matched the 11th-best output in Metro history and gave him three games this season at 40 or more.

Cedar Falls Coach Ryan Schultz said Bohannon played a fantastic game.

"And I thought we defended him well," Schultz said. "That's the crazy thing. That shows you how good of a player he is. Bohannon has a special career ahead of him. There's no doubt about it."

Klostermann was the only other player in double figures for Linn-Mar with 12 points.

Fagan finished with 21 points for Cedar Falls and TreyShawn LaBeaux had 19.

Cedar Falls (19-4) will face Council Bluffs Lincoln (22-1) in the first round of the state tournament next Wednesday. The other first-round games are Pleasant Valley (22-1) against Dubuque Senior (14-10), Dowling Catholic (20-3) against West Des Moines Valley (20-3), and Des Moines Hoover against Iowa City West (19-4).

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CEDAR FALLS (76): Fagan 10 1-5 21, Harrington 0 0-0 0, Green 10 7-7 31, LaBeaux 8 2-4 19, Alexander 0 1-2 1, Johnson 2 0-0 4, Gerdes 0 0-0 0, Leisinger 0 0-0 0. Totals 30 11-18 76.

LINN-MAR (74): Printy 1 2-5 5, Murphy 1 0-0 2, Phillips 1 0-0 2, Bohannon 14 9-11 44, Klostermann 4 3-4 12, Brandt 3 2-3 9, Voves 0 0-0 0. Totals 24 16-23 74.

Halftime - Cedar Falls 29, Linn-Mar 20. Regulation - Linn-Mar 60, Cedar Falls 60. 3-point goals - Cedar Falls 5 (Green 4, LaBeaux 1), Linn-Mar 10 (Bohannon 7, Printy 1, Klostermann 1, Brandt 1).