

Cougars take over in OT, beat Cedar Falls

Written by Jim Sullivan, Waterloo Courier

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CEDAR FALLS - Cedar Falls kept giving itself chances.

At the end, the Tigers couldn't make the chances last.

Rally after rally carried C.F. into overtime Thursday night, but the eighth-ranked Tigers fell to No. 7 Cedar Rapids Kennedy, 63-57, in the regular season finale for both teams.

"We had our chances," said Tiger Coach Tom Bardal. "It just seemed like every deflection didnt go to us. We had our opportunities in overtime."

The records and the rankings hinted that this Mississippi Valley Conference matchup would be tight. It was. Neither Cedar Falls (15-5, 13-3) nor Kennedy (17-4, 12-4) enjoyed a double-digit lead. In the fourth quarter alone, the edge changed hands six times.

Yet the Tigers spent much of the night coming back. They went scoreless for the opening 5 minutes and 24 seconds of the second quarter. They trailed by eight late in the third period. And, after letting a five-point fourth quarter lead get away, Cedar Falls forced OT on two Tony Johnson free throws with three seconds left in regulation.

But that's where the magic stopped. Kennedy took the lead for good when Kyle Lamaak (22 points) snatched a tipped pass and scored at the 2:50 mark in overtime. Cedar Falls turned the ball over, then Christian French hit two free throws, banking in the front end of the one-and-one.

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The Tigers couldn't recover.

"We just could never get the lead once (Kennedy) tied it," said Bardal. "We had the lead for a while in the fourth quarter, but once they got it back we could never get that key stop and key basket."

Said Kennedy Coach Bob Fontana, "I thought our kids showed a lot of grit and moxie. We just toughed it out. We executed on offense and we got some big stops on defense. Then we hit some big free throws late."

Kennedy's multitude of zone defenses and its size advantage inside bothered Cedar Falls for much of the night. So did an ankle injury suffered by James Harrington in the first quarter.

Harrington still finished with 13 points, nine coming in the fourth quarter and overtime. Caleb Konieczny topped the Tigers with 18, including 13 markers in the final half.

Now, the Tigers and Cougars go in different directions for substate play.

"We set our goals to start the season," said Bardal. "The first one was to win the conference. We've done that. The next goal is to win substate. We're in position to do that as the No. 1 seed."

Fontana figures a rough schedule that included road games against Cedar Falls plus Iowa City West, Linn-Mar and Dubuque Wahlert has prepared his Cougars for postseason play.

"You hope that makes you tournament tough," he said.

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KENNEDY (63): Jacob Manning 3-8 3-4 9, Jacob Misener 0-4 0-0 0, Kyle Lamaak 9-12 2-6 22, Josiah Coleman 3-10 3-4 10, Darius Fuller 0-1 6-8 8, Herschel Dixon 2-3 0-0 4, Elliott Christians 0-0 0-0 0, Trevor Heitland 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 22-48 16-24 63.

CEDAR FALLS (57): James Harrington 4-13 5-7 13, Caleb Konieczny 6-10 2-3 18, Bobby Brummel 0-2 0-2 0, Matt Klinehart 3-7 0-0 7, Tony Johnson 1-5 2-2 5, Isaac Boettger 3-6 0-0 6, Matt Allender 0-0 0-0 0, Bryce Wolf 3-3 0-0 6, Nicholas Clark 0-0 0-0 0, Kalehl Brown 0-1 0-0 0, Kalund Brown 1-3 0-0 2. Totals 21-50 9-14 57.

Halftime -- Kennedy 27, Cedar Falls 22. End of regulation -- Kennedy 50, Cedar Falls 50. 3-point goals -- Cedar Falls 6 (Konieczny 4, Klinehart, Johnson), Kennedy 3 (Lamaak 2, Coleman). Total fouls -- Cedar Falls 19, Kennedy 16. Fouled out -- Misener, Konieczny, Boettger. Technical foul - Cedar Falls bench.