

WHEATON ACADEMY 83, WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY 82

Warriors win 83-82 in Triple Overtime

Game-saving shot after game-saving shot does the job

After a five and half hour van trip to St. Louis and another eighteen hours in a hotel, Wheaton Academy wanted to make their trip to St. Louis well worth their time. That's exactly what the Warriors (6-8) did by a triple overtime 83-82 win in dramatic fashion Saturday night. The Westminster Wildcats, a good-sized and skilled team were leading for most of the game, especially in the first half, before Wheaton Academy came back and tied it.

Wheaton Academy got off to a good defensive start by stopping the Wildcat big men in their high-low game, but left other shooters open who were hitting shots. John Tillery (22 points, 5 rebounds) hit his second three-pointer of the game in the second quarter to keep the Warriors in the game. Tillery would go on to hit four three's for the game. At the half, WA was trailing 31-23.

Pressure-filled full court press by Wheaton Academy led by Jason VanderVeen (5 points, 10 assists) in the third quarter forced Westminster turnovers and cut the lead to just 6 points, 36-30 with 4:30 left in the quarter. Jeremy Parker (24 points, 3 assists) heated up in the fourth quarter, nailing five of his season-high six three-pointers in the fourth quarter to lead the way for WA. The first of the game-saving shots was a Parker three to tie it up and send the game into overtime.

In the first overtime period, Axel Cerny (10 points, 3 assists) nailed a three and then got a steal on the other end with the clock ticking down. Wheaton Academy turned the ball over when the game was tied and allowed Westminster to make two free throws. After a timeout, down two points, Benjamin Euler (5 points) came off the bench to drop in a shot off the left baseline which tied the game and sent it into double overtime at the buzzer.

The Warriors were down 74-72 in this back-and-forth game that resembled the East Aurora double overtime loss with a minute to go in the second overtime. Jeremy Parker scored on a drive to the basket and then Westminster responded with a bucket with 30 seconds to go. At the 9-second mark, Wheaton Academy called a timeout. Jeremy Parker took a three-point shot at the top of the key with just seconds left, and it looked as if this was the end for WA as it bounced off the rim until Axel Cerny elevated and seemingly put time on hold to tip the ball in from five feet out and once again tie the game to send the game into a third overtime.

The third overtime was again evenly played for the most part until a costly Wheaton Academy turnover resulted in an open Westminster layup with a minute to play. Jeremy Parker made it 80-80 on a duck-under layup with 41 seconds left on the clock. The Wildcats again battled back against the Warriors, hitting a layup and drawing the foul with 27 seconds left. WA got the rebound and a quick timeout to set up a play to tie or win the game, with the score being 82-80. John Tillery drove and dished off to Benjamin Euler in the corner who connected on a three to put WA up 83-82. Seconds later the game had reached its conclusion as the Warrior bench exploded onto the court, with Westminster not able to get a good shot.

In perhaps the most exciting game of the season for Wheaton Academy, this triple overtime game tumulted into a 44-minute, almost NBA-length contest which went back and forth time and again. As the game continued, anticipation grew to the game's conclusion in the well-populated gymnasium. In a game destined for Warrior victory, three game saving shots kept the crowd on the edge of their seats. Wheaton Academy improves to 6-8 on the season and returns to practice next week. They will face West Chicago Tuesday night and Walther on Friday.