



# **Cox scores 18, Hemann 10 as Explorers advance to final over Odin 57-26**

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November 24 2018 7:11 AM





EDWARDSVILLE – Spencer Cox had 18 points, including four threes, and Nick Hemann added 10 as Marquette Catholic advanced to the final of the 38th Metro-East Lutheran Turkey Tip-Off Classic with a 57-28 win over Odin Friday evening at Thomas Hooks Gymnasium.

The Explorers jumped out to a 30-8 halftime lead over the Eagles and never looked back in advancing to the Saturday night's final, where they'll play the host Knights, a 67-49 winner over Litchfield in the other semifinal.

"The effort and intensity was a lot better tonight," said Marquette coach Steve Medford, "and, you know, we had a really good walkthrough today, and the kids played well. I thought we played hard; we know that it's going to get harder and harder for us once we start playing some of the 3A and 4A schools down the road here, so we're just going to try to get better. This is a team that's young and doesn't have a lot of experience, so if we can just continue to get better as a group and kind of mold each other a little bit and figure out who can play, I think we're going to be alright."

Medford felt Cox was one of many of his players who played well on the night.

"I thought Spencer Cox had a really good game tonight," Medford said. "Spencer had a really good game, and played a ton of minutes for us, I know he's a kid who's capable

of playing, and he really shined tonight. He hit four threes, was really aggressive defensively, and he's a guy we think can really help us. So hopefully, he continues to get better, and we're going to figure out who's going to play and who's not."

The most important thing is that everyone who played contributed to the win.

"We do (have) a lot of depth this year," Medford said, "probably more than I've ever had. We've got a lot of kids that can play, a lot of kids that can fill different roles. We can go big, we can go small, we can go quick, we can get after you a little bit. Again, it's just really about us, figuring out who we are, and trying to find an identity before the season really get going here, before too long. So hopefully, we can find a good identity about us, and we'll figure it out."

The Explorers scored the game's first eight points with baskets from Brett Terry, Hemann, Jack Rice, and Iggy McGee. After allowing an Eagle basket, Hemann made a nice spin move to score, and Nate Hall stole the ball and scored to make it 12-2 after one quarter. In the second, Marquette again scored the first eight points, all scored by Cox on a pair of threes and a breakaway layup after a steal to make it 20-2 before Dylan Friend scored the Eagles' second basket. The two teams traded baskets before the Explorers ended the quarter with a 6-2 run behind Hall and Hemann to take a 30-8 lead at halftime.

Odin scored the first five points of the second half, a three from Gage Roberts and a driving lay-in by Friend to make it 30-13. Marquette called timeout and then outscored the Eagles 17-2 the rest of the period. Cox led the way with 12 in the quarter, including two threes, while Chris Hartrich hit a three, and both Hemann and Rice each scored to make it 47-15 at three-quarter time, forcing a running clock in the final period. In the fourth, Hartrich and Rice each hit threes while Will Dixon and Cortez Harris also scored as Marquette outscored Odin 10-9 to take the 57-26 final.

Friend was the only Eagle player in double figures, with 11 points. Both Hall and Rice also contributed eight points each for the Explorers.

Medford thought either the Purple Panthers and Knights would give his team a very good test, no matter who would go through to the final.

"Yeah, it'll be a good game for us," Medford said. "Litchfield's strong and physical, which could pose some problems for us, because we're not very physical. Metro's got some really good athletes, and they have some length to them. It ought to be a good test for us either way."





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)