

Knights Come Away With 40-37 Overtime Win Over Explorers In Gateway Metro Opener

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - Metro-East Lutheran's boys' basketball team captured a hard-fought 40-37 win over Marquette Catholic in the first-ever game between the two teams in their first-ever Gateway Metro Conference game Tuesday night at Hooks Gym.

The Explorers had a chance to win in regulation, but a turnover gave the ball to the Knights with 28 seconds to go, but couldn't connect as the game went into overtime tied 32-32. Jeremiah Neal scored the first basket of extra time to give Metro-East the lead, and a pair of free throws after a technical foul was called on the Marquette bench extended the lead to 36-32. It became 38-32 later on, then Marquette was able to come to within 38-37. A pair of late free throws made it 40-37 and the Explorers missed a game-tying three at the buzzer to give Metro-East the win.

Marquette Catholic head coach Steve Medford and MELHS head coach Anthony Smith were both busy all night directing their boys in such a close early conference encounter.

Medford said the Knights are a "great team" and he thought his boys battled through the game with them.

"Metro East Lutheran is a very talented team," he said. "They have some nice players. We competed with them the entire game."

Coach Medford said his club has a tough schedule to start after the MELHS game, with Breese Central at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11, at Breese Central, Carrollton at home at 7:30 on Thursday, Dec. 16, and Christ Out Rock Lutheran on the road at 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 18.

He said he believes his team will win several games and he still has hopes of a 20-win overall season even with the difficult schedule.

MELHS travels to Gibault on Friday, Dec. 10, and to Southwestern on Tuesday, Dec. 14 and meets Maryville Christian at home on Friday, Dec. 17, then travels to Collinsville for a contest on Saturday, Dec. 18.

T.J. Harris and Bennett Briles led the Knights with nine points each, while Jeremiah Neal added seven. Owen Williams led the Explorers with 19 points, while Braden Kline had seven points and Parker Macias added six.

The Knights are now 5-3, while the Explorers go to 3-4.



