

# Explorers “Run Out Of Time” - Drop Home Opener After Exciting Overtime Finish With Highland

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ALTON – The Marquette Catholic High School boy’s basketball team took on the Highland Bulldogs in their home opener in front of a packed house Tuesday night. They put on a show that led to overtime and eventually resulted in a 56-52 setback.

The Explorers fall to 3-2 on the season while Highland goes to 4-1.

This was a game that the Explorers never led and one that was very physical from the start.

Both teams got off to a bit of a slow start with the Bulldogs up 12-8 after the first quarter and 22-14 at the half.

The second half was when both teams exploded offensively.

Marquette edged closer and closer gaining some momentum in the third quarter but all that was slightly washed away after a buzzer-beater three-pointer from Highland that gave them a 36-32 lead after three quarters.

The Explorers were determined and never gave up, tying the game up at 39-39 with 4:38 to play. The game would eventually be tied at 41-41 before Highland went on a four-point run to lead 45-41 with 1:35 left in the game.

On the Explorers' next possession, junior guard Braden Kline, who was relatively quiet until this point, hit a huge three to make it 45-44. The Bulldogs went down the other way and scored a basket leading by three once again.

It forced Marquette's head coach Cody Best to call a timeout with 18 seconds left down 47-44. Whatever the play was that he drew up worked.

The ball eventually came to senior guard Parker Macias who drained a three-pointer to tie the game up with seconds left. Highland had a decent shot off the inbound but missed. The game was headed to OT tied at 47.

Marquette outscored Highland 33-25 in the second half to erase the eight-point halftime deficit and force overtime. Unfortunately, the comeback would fall short.

The Bulldogs got off to a good start in the short four-minute extra period and jumped to a 52-48 lead.

Marquette had a great opportunity to tie the game at 53-53 but just got a little unlucky. Macias got the ball and put up a three that did go in, but coach Best called a timeout right before the shot was released therefore it did not count.

The Bulldogs held off Marquette and prevailed after OT with a score of 56-52.

Highland was led by junior Jake Ottensmeier with 17 points, Brenden Gelly with 16, and Joe Jansen with 11.

Macias led the Explorers with 17 points and was followed closely by Lavender with 15.

“They definitely stepped up. It’s something we’re going to count on all year, their leadership,” coach Best said regarding those two players.

Senior forward Jack Spain had eight, Kline had six while junior guard Sean Williams, junior forward Jayden Rochester, and junior guard Jaylen Cawthorn each scored two.

Marquette went 13-15 from the free-throw line.

It’s worth mentioning that before coach Best came on to take over the boy’s team at Marquette, he spent the last two years coaching Highland. Best had his home opener, played his former school, and went to overtime all in the same game.

“It was definitely fun,” he said.

After the game, he could be seen embracing his former players in the handshake line.

As for his team’s performance, he was generally pleased.

“We battled. We started out sort of slow, they killed us on the boards. We were playing from behind the whole game but you know what we never quit. We changed some things at the half, guarded better, rebounded better, and shot it better.”

Best mentioned a relatively tough start to the season having to face teams like Centralia, Freeburg, Highland, and Mater Dei all in a row.

“We’re going through a rough stretch with all these powerhouses, but it’s making us better for a long season, but I wish we would have had that one.”

“They’re a good team,” Best said about Highland.

“I don’t think we lost; we just ran out of time.”

