

# **Brunaugh Drops 26 As Jersey Wins Back-And-Forth Game Against CM**

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
January 13 2023 11:08 PM



BETHALTO – For the ninth straight time, the Jersey Panthers boys’ basketball team defeated Mississippi Valley Conference rivals Civic Memorial in what was a very physical, back-and-forth matchup.

The Panthers held out to earn a 55-53 win to improve to 12-7 on the season and 4-2 in the MVC. CM’s rollercoaster season continues as they slip to 8-11 this season and 2-4 in the MVC.

“Anytime we get together with CM it’s going to be physical and our kids we were just relentless again tonight and pulled another one out,” Jersey head coach Caleb Williams said postgame.

His shirt was a much darker color coming back out of the locker room after getting the water bucket dumped on him, but he didn’t mind a bit. The win keeps Jersey’s hopes alive of winning the regular-season MVC title.

The Panthers opened up the game on an eight-point run and finished the first quarter up 14-7. They’d keep their lead the entire first half, but the Eagles did begin to close the gap. Jersey still led 25-20 heading into the locker room.

The second half was when most of the action happened.

CM started the half with back-to-back buckets and then went on to take their first lead a couple of minutes into the third quarter at 28-27.

The teams exchanged the lead a few times before CM opened up to a 41-35 lead a minute into the fourth. It was at this point that the game really began to get physical.

That physicality hurt the Eagles who found themselves in deep foul trouble. Jersey had the double bonus for most of the fourth quarter and they took advantage of it.

“That second half we played pretty smart defense,” coach Williams said. “We moved our feet well and got some steals and some runouts. They got in foul trouble, and we hit our free throws tonight which saved the day for us.”

Through some clutch free-throw shooting and solid defense, Jersey tied the game back up at 45 with 3:38 remaining in the game after sophomore Jaxon Brunaugh put through both free throws.

This is when the teams started trading punches.

Sophomore Adam Ogden went the other way for CM and hit a corner three to regain the lead. Jersey’s senior Drake Goetten took it right back converting on a four-point play after being fouled during a three-point shot. He regained the lead for his team at 49-48.

Then, senior Sam Buckley pulled up for a three to make it 51-50 CM.

With time winding down, Jersey continued to go to work. They scored a quick basket and then another after stealing the ball during a CM inbound blunder to take a 54-53 lead. Jersey was up with 8.2 seconds on the clock.

CM tried the long ball to the basket, but it was out of the seven-footer Buckley's reach. With Jersey in possession, CM had no other option than to try and foul and Jersey held out for the win.

Williams mentioned that his side has won multiple games by just a single possession, this being their fifth this season.

"That's just kind of our style, we're comfortable with that," he said.

Brunaugh led the Panthers with 26 points, 10 of which came in the fourth quarter. Goetten added 13 and junior Francis Vogel had nine.

"The kid has an act for the spotlight I guess you could say," Williams said about Brunough. "When it comes to it, when it's gut check time he's ready to go, wants the ball in his hands and we're comfortable putting it there."

Brunaugh didn't say much about himself postgame, was just happy that his team pulled out the win and got the offense rolling again.

"We came out guns-a-blazing, had a big run. We've been struggling offensively lately and that was one of our best games in a while."

"It was a hard-fought game. Always fun to play against CM," he said.

For the Eagles, Buckley scored 17 while Ogden and senior Manny Silva each had 10.

"We had the right game plan. We just made some mistakes at some crucial times, had some turnovers, but you know you have to give credit to Jerseyville, they kept playing and they finished it off," CM head coach Lee Green said.

"We just have to keep grinding."

CM doesn't have any time to think about the loss as they'll immediately be back in action at the Litchfield Tournament. They open against Ramsey at 5:30 p.m. this evening (Jan. 14).

Jersey now has back-to-back wins and will try to keep things going when they host Granite City on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in their next game.