# Southwestern Outlasts North Mac In 104th Macoupin County Championship – Win Tournament In Back-To-Back Years In OT

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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BUNKER HILL – For the second year running, the Southwestern High School boy's basketball team is Macoupin County Tournament Champions. In the 104$^{th}$ rendition of the tournament, the Piasa Birds narrowly beat the Virden North Mac Panthers by a score of 38-36.

It took a dramatic overtime period to decide a winner Friday night in the raucous James Hlafka Hall inside Bunker Hill High School.

"I guarantee one thing, the people who paid money to get in here got their money's worth," Southwestern head coach Jason Darr said with a smile after winning the tournament in back-to-back years.

The score was tight throughout the entirety of the game. It was tied up at 10 after the first quarter.

North Mac led 19-17 at the half. The Birds took over and led 28-27 after three.

With 10 seconds left in the game, Piasa trailed by two points. Sophomore Ryan Lowis was up to the free-throw line shooting one-and-one. He made both to tie the game up at 33.

North Mac still had plenty of time to get a potential game-winner off but neither one of their chances fell. The game went to OT tied at 33.

The Panthers won the OT tip-off but immediately turned the ball over. Lowis was fouled on a three-point shot but went 1-3 from the line. His team led though by a point.

On the Birds' next possession, junior Rocky Darr made a pull-up jumper to extend the lead to 36-33. After a 1-1 trip to the line and a basket, North Mac tied the game back up at 36.

After that basket, a foul was called with 0.8 seconds left on the clock. It was Southwestern's senior Hank Bouillon to the line with a chance to ice the game. He made both and his team went up 38-36.

But somehow there was still a little more drama. North Mac inbounded the ball and got a long three-pointer to go in, but it was waived off by the officials as the shot did not get off in time.

It left the gym's packed stands stunned, but it was the Piassa Birds who went on to win the tournament in back-to-back seasons.

Lowis ended the game with 13 points while Bouillon had 12. Cole Robinson had seven, Lane Gage had three, Darr had two and Ian Brantley had one.

Coach Darr had nothing but good things to say about Bouillon and the team after the game.

"That's what he's all about. He's a hometown kid. He's Southwestern through and through. He's a true Piasa Bird," coach Darr said of Bouillon. "We got 125 percent out of Hank Bouillion and a lot of other guys in this game."

"We're not the biggest, we're not the most athletic, we don't shoot the best, but I know we play the hardest," he added.

The win makes it four in a row for the Piasa Birds who are now 11-10 on the season and are getting ready to have a three-game home stand beginning Wednesday.

These teams met in last season's championship game which also had to be decided in OT. The Piasa Birds won 40-37.

"They work hard and they're getting paid back," Darr said. "These kids will remember this forever."