

Maroons Hit Three Straight Buzzer Beaters - Belleville West Stuns Collinsville in Double OT Regional Final Thriller

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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GRANITE CITY - Jamorie Wysinger led Collinsville with 15 points, but it was Belleville West hitting three consecutive buzzer-beating shots, including the final one from Daylen Byrd, that allowed the Maroons to stun the Kahoks with a 58-56 double overtime win in the final of the IHSA Class 4A boys basketball regional final Friday night at Granite Memorial Gym.

Byrd's game-winner was the climax of a game that had almost everything - clutch shooting, great defense, even a scoreboard malfunction near the end of regulation. In the end, it was Byrd who sank a three to put the game into overtime, then won it at the end of the second overtime. Put together with how West defeated Belleville East in Wednesday's second semifinal 49-48, and it makes it an astonishing four straight buzzer beaters to stay alive in this year's playoffs.

Maroons coach Alex Schobert, needless to say, was ecstatic about the win, and gave his team full credit for coming through the way they did.

"I said this after the Belleville East game; we were down 18 points in the third quarter to Belleville East," Schobert said, "but I said this after the East game. I'll take my guys against anybody right now, with the toughness they're playing with, the unselfishness

they're playing with. And we just stepped up, and we made huge plays. Daylen Byrd and Jordan Lacey made huge plays to keep the game alive, and we're still fighting because of it."





The Maroons prepared for the final shot for whatever defense the Kahoks were in, and it worked out exceptionally well for West.

"The final shot, we didn't know what defense they were going to be in," Schobert said, "so we had something ready for a man, or a zone. They went to a zone, we actually messed it up. We tried to get a guy flashing into the middle, a couple of guys collided, Daylen found an open space, stepped up, knocked down the shot, because he's a great player, he clutch, and I knew he would."

It wasn't the way the Kahoks wanted to end the season, but with a final record of 28-5, there's still plenty to be proud of with how the Kahoks played this season overall.

"Well, if you look at the big picture, it was a really great season," said Collinsville assistant coach Mark Jiles, who spoke in place for head coach Darin Lee. "And just one little bad game, that's one little bad hump. But let's look at the great season we had overall, because a lot of teams didn't do the things we did during the season. We had some great leadership, great seniors, and they played hard, won the (Southwestern) conference championship, won our own championship (the Prairie Farms Collinsville Holiday Classic) in our own gym. So hen you look at those things, this season was a pretty good season, instead of looking at one day, one moment in time."

As far as his feelings on the final shot that won the game for West, Jiles used a Las Vegas-style approach to explaining his feelings.

"Well, my thoughts are this: In Vegas, would you have bet they'd make three buzzer beaters in a row?," Jiles said. "So, I said even though it looked like a good, clean shot, there's no way it's going to go in. And it hit the bottom of the net, anyhow. So if I had made the bet, I lost," he said with a smile and laugh.

The Maroons were down 15-3 after the first quarter and two minutes into the second, then went on an 8-0 run to cut the lead to 15-11, and the run changed the momentum and complexion of the game.

"Yeah, and I think that second quarter was critical," Schobert said. "I've got to shout out one guy, De'rhaje Cross. He doesn't get in the box score a whole lot, but he comes in off the bench, and brings energy, and brings defensive tenacity. We had some guys step in and play defense, and really turned the tide of that game in the second quarter. And we're still not playing without that."

The Maroons will play Quincy, who defeated O'Fallon in the Edwardsville regional final 49-42, in the sectional semifinal on Tuesday night, and although West knows it'll be another tough game, they'll be ready to go.

"Yeah, it's going to be a tall task," Schobert said. "But I told these guys the way we're playing right now, with the toughness we're playing with, I think we can go out there and beat anybody. Obviously, we took down the one seed tonight, we're going to have the two seed on Tuesday. I know they're a really good team they're well-coached, but we'll be prepared."

The Kahoks did come out well and went off to a 15-3 lead after the first quarter, and two minutes into the second quarter, but the Maroons went on the 8-0 run to cut the lead to 15-11, forcing a Collinsville time out. The run became 12-0, with Lacey and Myles Liddell scoring to tie the game at 15-15, with an exchange of baskets bringing the score to 21-21, before Wysinger scored before the halftime buzzer to give the Kahoks a 23-21 lead at halftime.

Chase Reynolds scored on a driving shot at the start of the second half to up the lead to 25-21, and from there, back-to-back threes from Horras and Reynolds, plus baskets by Horras and Chambers gave Collinsville a 35-25 lead. West fought back on baskets from Nicholas Hankins, Jr., Liddell, and Byrd to cut the lead to 39-34 after the third quarter, setting the stage for an exciting fourth quarter.

And exciting it indeed was, as the Maroons came to within 38-37 to get the quarter started, with Wysinger hitting a three to give the Kahoks a 42-38 lead. Liddell scored to cut the lead to 42-40, and after an exchange of baskets, a Stanley Carnahan free throw upped the Collinsville lead to 45-42. A basket by Lacey and a free throw by Hankins tied the game at 45-45, with a Tyree Brister steal and score putting Collinsville up 48-47. The Maroons called time out with 48.0 seconds left, and as play resumed, everything went into chaos.

The scoreboard malfunctioned as the ball was being brought back into play, and play went on for a few seconds while Granite City supervisors tried to tell the officials what had happened. The scoreboard and clock were fixed right away, and officials decided to reset the clock to 44 seconds, and since the Kahoks got the ball after a rebound of a missed shot, Collinsville kept possession.

Afterwards. Chambers hit a pair of free throws to make it 50-47 with 20.6 seconds left, and after a Maroon time out, Byrd hit a three with 1.3 seconds left to tie the game 50-50, sending it into overtime.

In the first overtime, Chambers hit inside to give Collinsville the lead back at 52-50, but free throws from Byrd and Brandon Scott retied the game at 52-52. A Tyree Brister steal and score gave Collinsville a 54-52 lead late, but Lacey hit a baseline jumper as time expired to tie the game again 54-54 and force a second overtime.

Byrd scored in the lane as the second overtime started to give West a 56-54 lead, with a pair of Wysinger free throws tying the game again at 56-56. The Maroons held the ball for the final seconds, calling time out with 8.5 seconds left to set up a play. Byrd got the ball, dribbled over to a spot at the foul line, and scored as the buzzer went to give the Maroons their dramatic 58-56 win to advance to the sectional.

Liddell led West with 18 points, while both Lacey and Hankins had eight points each, Scott and Byrd had six points apiece, and David Marshall, Jr. had a single point. Wysinger led the Kahoks with 15 points, while Chambers scored 11 points, Horras added 10 points, Brister scored eight points, Reynolds hit for seven points, and Carnahan had five points.

The Kahoks end their season 28-5, while the Maroons improve to 19-13, and will face Quincy, who won the Edwardsville regional 49-42 over O'Fallon, in the semifinals of the Pekin sectional Tuesday night at the OTHS Panther Dome in O'Fallon, the game tipping off at 7 p.m.

The winner plays the winner of the other semifinal between Normal Community, who won their own regional over Rock Island 62-46, and Moline, who won the East Moline United regional over Bradley Bourbonnais 52-51, next Friday at Pekin's Dawdy Hawkins Gym at 7 p.m.



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