

Regional match-up with Generals of Clarksville results in 49-45 loss for Eagles

Written by George Browning
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After a nice local send-off, the Southwestern Sectional champions, the Austin Eagles, traveled to Memorial Gymnasium in Huntington on Friday afternoon, March 14, to prepare for their boys' 2A Regional match-up against the Clarksville Generals on Saturday, March 15.

The Eagles held this ranked team to one point in the last quarter of the teams' regular season game, and the tournament game was decided by just 4 points in overtime.

Before the Eagles took to the court for the 1 p.m. game, the Linton-Stockton Miners claimed a victory over the Perry Central Commodores by a score of 75-65.

Dakota Stashke tipped the ball toward his team, but the General interfered and claimed the first possession. They fell short in their first scoring attempt. Austin drew the rebound but fumbled on the other end, resulting in a timeout by Clarksville. The Generals' second long shot also failed, and the round went to Hunter Spencer. A double dribble was called against Devin Richey, which gave the ball back to Clarksville. The Generals finally made their first successful shot of the game at 5:33.

Two travels were called against Chris Mayfield, allowing the Generals to take the next 2 shots. Mayfield redeemed himself with a three-pointer to put the Eagles at 6-3. Richey scored the next Eagle points, but a weak lane defense let the Generals score more easy points. Richey swished in a long trey 10 seconds before the buzzer sounded, leaving the Eagles trailing 16-10.

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Clarksville made a successful three-pointer 35 seconds into the second quarter. After the Generals suffered 2 fouls, Josh Vires brought the difference to only 4 points with a shot behind the arc to which Clarksville responded with a trey. Richey earned 2 more points for the Eagles after a basket interference was called against Clarksville. The goal tending let Mayfield score behind the arc to make the score a more interesting 22-20. The Generals weren't done: they made 3 fast three-pointers to quickly leave the Eagles behind again. The first half ended 31-22 after Spencer contributed another field goal for the Eagles.

The Eagles put together a short 5-2 run at the start of the second half. Although Duncan Wooten and Spencer made a few nice drives under the basket, the General made every three they threw and left the Eagles behind 39-31.

Wooten made another shot inside before Clarksville called a time-out early in the final period. The turning point for the Eagles came when Wooten stole the ball to give Richey an easy, fast break. The exact same play occurred over the next two possessions, and Richey's rapid 6 points set the score at a 39-all tie.

Wooten matched the Generals' next 2 points, and Eagle fans went wild when Spencer gave Austin its first lead of the game at 43-41 with under three minutes to play.

A foul by Mayfield let the Generals tie the score again at the free throw line. With a minute left to play, both teams fought for final points. Richey could not claim them as he was sent to the line with 16 seconds left. He missed the first shot of a single bonus.

Mayfield walked off the court for the last time in his high school career with 5 fouls at just 2 seconds to play. The score remained unchanged, and a 43-43 tie sent the Eagles and Generals into overtime.

The Generals caught the second tip and were successful once again behind the arc. Spencer added an inside shot, cutting the margin to a single point. Clarksville players held the ball and let 1:30 pass in the next possession, which ended after an out-of-bounds pass was called.

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Mayfield's strong defense was missed in these extra four minutes, the Eagles letting the Generals add to their lead at the charity stripe. Richey missed another bonus opportunity, which left the Eagles behind by just 2 points. A game-winning shot tried by Spencer fell just short with three seconds to go, and the Generals secured the victory with 2 more shots from the free throw line in the game's final moments. The final score was 49-45.

Fifteen of the Eagles' 45 points came from Devin Richey. Duncan Wooten and Hunter Spencer each added 8 points. Chris Mayfield had 6 points, with Markus Fleenor and Josh Vires both adding a three-pointer. Dakota Stashke had 2.

The Generals were led by senior Calvin McEwen who had 17 points.

The Clarksville team went on to earn the Regional crown over the Miners in yet another overtime that evening.