

Coaches, Players, and fans would all describe the rivalry Eastern/Salem game as the game of the year. Saturday night's rivalry game included two technicals, charges, multiple lead changes and plenty of attitude. In the end though, it was the Lions who got the better of it 61-57. Salem Head Coach Hank Weedin said it was a typical Salem/Eastern game.

"I told the team before the game that there would be multiple lead changes, things that wouldn't go our way and things that would, and big runs," he said. "I knew it was going to be an exciting game and atmosphere."

Eastern got the tip and scored in transition but Salem answered with a basket of their own. With both teams scoring consecutively, the atmosphere of the gym was intense. Eastern's Tevin Wolf took a charge which gave Eastern the momentum to take the lead. Salem's Ian Bowling was given a technical for slamming the ball and Eastern's, Curtis Howard, hit two threes to extend the lead to 20-14 at the end of the first.

Salem's, Andy Nice, gave his team momentum as he scored a rare four point play. Howard hit another three. The Lion's, Taylor Banks was fouled while shooting and was given two free throws along with two more free throws from a technical given to Eastern's, Austin Brown. Banks made all free throws with 4.5 seconds left in the half. Eastern managed to keep the lead at 34-40 at the end of the half.

Salem took the lead in the third quarter. Eastern became flustered and forced some turnovers which lead to transition points for the Lions. Eastern's, RJ Jackson, hit a buzzer- beater 3 to take the lead back at the end of the third.

The Lions tied the game with a three from Andy Nice and Banks stole the ball in pressure and was fouled. Banks hit both free throws giving the Lions the lead. Salem took the lead back with 3:45 remaining and didn't look back. With 1:53 remaining, Salem was leading 57-53. Eastern gave effort but couldn't seem to get the lead back. Salem won the game 61-57.

Coach Weedin was excited to end the game with a win. "The guys played with a sense of urgency at the end of the game and played well."

Andy Nice and Zach Bowling were the leading scorers for Salem with 17 points each. Eastern was lead by RJ Jackson and Curtis Howard with 14 points each.

"Andy Nice had his season high game tonight," Weedin said. "He shot the ball well and played with confidence."

The loss drops Eastern's record to 4-10 with two home games scheduled this week.

They will host Corydon Central Friday and Christian Academy on Saturday.

Salem improved to 10-4 and is also preparing for a stretch of home games. They will host Silver Creek Friday and Seymour Saturday.

The Lions are in the thick of things in the Mid Southern Conference. They are currently in fourth place, one game behind the Dragons and Brownstown Central and two games behind MSC leading Clarksville.

A win Friday would keep them in the hunt.

