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## Bearcats Upset Bluejays in Thriller SEMO Conference Tournament Action

DECEMBER 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Sikeston, Missouri - With fans on their feet in the final seconds of the biggest upset in the SEMO Conference Tournament history, the #7 seeded Dexter Bearcats finally upset the #2 Charleston Bluejays in a thriller game. It was the first time since its inception in 2006 that the 'Cats have advanced to the semifinals. Final score 59-54!

It was also the Bearcats' first win over Charleston since 2004.

Dexter scored the game's first eight points and never trailed throughout. They were able to slow the game down and methodically take care of the ball and run their own offense.

"Tonight they received a well deserved win," said Coach Josh Dowdy of the Dexter Bearcats. "I thought we showed a lot of fight tonight. I will not forget the smiles in that locker room tonight! We understand it is just a first round win of a tournament but for our program it is a HUGE WIN!!!"

"We have practiced real well this year. The boys are trying to do what we ask of them each day," continued Dowdy. "In fact, there are times I feel like we are pushing them to their limit. They just keep coming back for more. We are just trying to convince them that whatever they put in is usually what they will get back."

Dexter senior Gabe Jackson scored a game-high 19 points. Jackson was instrumental inside and made the biggest impact setting the tone on just how the 'Cats wanted to

physically attack the Blue Jays man-to-man defense.

"Gabe was real good tonight. He has played fine this year, but tonight was a monster effort," stated Dowdy. "He grabbed rebounds, loose balls, and just played more physical tonight. Gabe will have to continue to give us those kind of minutes for us to compete with the best teams around here."

Seniors Ben Sindle and Clay Mullins each added 11 for the Bearcats.

"Clay Mullins continues to play real well. We are asking him to do so much for our team and he has been terrific," continued Dowdy. "He handles the ball and he stepped up and took a big charge that I felt was one of the highlights of the game. He is playing with more toughness this season!"

Sindle sank a trey just under 4 minutes left in the game to give Dexter their largest lead of the night 47-36. Nine of the next ten points came from the charity stripe where Dexter shot 8 for 10 and Charleston 4 for 6.

Back-to-back 3-pointers by Charleston brought them within 3 points and that were it got a little scary for the Dexter Bearcats. Many fans were on their feet holding their breath or just praying that they could hold on for the win. With just 20 seconds left in the game Charleston closed the gap to just 2 points, but the Bearcats would not give up and it was Sindle and Alan Pippins who finished the final 10 seconds perfect from the free throw line going four for four. Free throws definitely made a difference in the 4th quarter. Dexter shot 15 for 18 in the last period and was 17 for 22 in all.

"We really focused on stopping their transition game tonight," Dowdy said of Charleston's efforts. "In game one, they outscored us by 20 points in transition. Our defensive effort especially in the first three quarters was good tonight. We had a lot of help off the bench tonight due to foul trouble. Braxton was real good. He came up with some key loose balls and held his own guarding Clark. Our free throws down the stretch helped us to keep the lead and nail down a victory."

Dexter will play in the SEMO Conference Boys Basketball Tournament semifinal for the first time in the school's history. They will compete against the #6 seed Notre Dame who upset the #3 seeded Jackson Indians just prior to the Bearcats' performance on Monday evening. Game will be on Thursday, December 7, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

"Playing on a Thursday this week is new for us," commented Dowdy. "We will practice hard over the next two days and see if we can come over here and compete like we did tonight. I will be surprised if this group doesn't lay their heart on the line again."

Final Score Dexter 59, Charleston 54

Dexter 16 10 7 26 - 59

Charleston 6 15 8 25 - 54

Dexter (59) - Seth Rogers 7, Nate Gargas 2, Alan Pippins 2, Braxton Foster 2, Ben Sindle 11, Clay Mullins 11, Dawson Kasting 5, Gabe Jackson 19. FG 21, FT 17/22, F 22 (3-pointers: Seth Rogers 1, Ben Sindle 3. Fouled Out; Seth Rogers, Braxton Foster).

Charleston (54) Terridean Bogan 3, Samuel Bledsoe 5, Demarcus Sharp 14, Mardareyon Clark 17, Jeremy Tucker 11, Delontre Gillespie 2, Ke'Sean Griffin 2. FG 17, FT 1/24, F 21. (3-pointers: Terridean Bogan 1, Samuel Bledsoe 1, Demarcus Sharp 1, Jeremy Tucker 1. Fouled Out: Bogan, Porter).

Dexter will play Notre Dame at 7:30 p.m. at the Sikeston High School in the semifinals of the SEMO Conference boys basketball tournament on Thursday, December 7, 2017.

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