

Miracle on the Court

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Article by Michael Horgan

Miracles can and do still happen. Want evidence? In Saturday's Junior Boys District Basketball Final in Marshall the hand of something or someone with a keen sense of the implausible stirred the pot for the tiny Glaslyn School Jets. Imagine a team with only five, that's right, five players going up against a team with a full bench, the Pinehouse Lakers, who happen to be the defending champions, too. Predictable outcome? Not even close.

As the undermanned Jets managed to play with the fleet Lakers, references to the great basketball film *Hoosiers* were already circulating among the observers. At one point Glaslyn even held a 10-point lead. Then, it seemed the roof of the gym was about to fall in on them. As the Lakers came at them in waves in the final quarter, the Jets looked to be victim of the inevitable fatigue.

Pinehouse's rally gave them a two point lead. Just as important, Glaslyn's center, high-scorer, and a force on defense all day, Dylan Locke, fouled out. When play resumed Glaslyn Coach Brian Goota had, for the first time in the tournament, company on the bench. The four Jets who remained on the floor were down two points and their big man. Somehow, perhaps just to prolong the pain, Glaslyn found a way to tie it. Overtime, here we come.

In the overtime, after an exchange of baskets the exhausted Jets were dealt what should have been the final blow: another player, Bayley Kryzanowski, picked up his fifth and final personal foul leaving only Bayley's brother Dylan, Joel Pylypow and Kody Rose standing between Pinehouse and a long, quiet ride home.

Soon the Lakers held both a two-point and a two-man advantage with only a minute and change remaining. But they had trouble inbounding the ball. Glaslyn stole it and scored to tie the game. Then, and who knows what the odds in Vegas might be against it, in almost identical fashion it happened again. Dylan Kryzanowski stole a pass and laid it in with his brother, in a full-throated scream, cheering him on from the bench.

Glaslyn's three remaining warriors found themselves with a two-point lead and 1.2 seconds on the clock. The Jets, however, could not get the ball in bounds, and the Lakers had the ball in the perfect spot, inbounding under Glaslyn's basket. This time the Lakers got the ball into the hands of their best player, but his shot to send the game into a second OT fell harmlessly as the horn sounded. The Jets, per their namesake, were flying, loud and high.

In *Hoosiers*, Gene Hackman's character, coach Norman Dale delivers this short speech to his undersized, undermanned, and disrespected team as they prepare for their championship game. 'Five players on the floor functioning as one single unit: team, team, team - no one more important than the other.' Coach Goota and his Jets might change the 'five players' to, well, three.

Congratulations to both teams. You treated all those present to not only the best junior basketball game any of us could remember, but also a perfect and memorable example of why we play and why we watch these games.

In the Bronze Medal game, Maidstone defeated Marshall.



Back row left to right are Bayley Kryzanowski, Dylan Locke and Coach Brian Goota
Front Row, left to right are Dylan Kryzanowski, Joel Pylpov and Logan Washbrook
Photo by Michael Horgan

