



BADGERS FALL IN STATE SEMIFINALS 70-64

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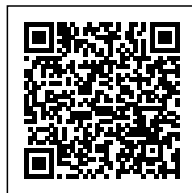


Photo: Josiah Peoples slam dunks the ball to tie the score at 34

It was a great run while it lasted, but for so many it came to an end much too soon.

The Prescott Badgers battled extremely hard against a bigger St. Mary's Knights team and when the clock ran out, so did the Badgers season.

A 70-64 setback is not the way this gifted team wanted to close out their season, but an appreciative crowd showed their support to the very end and those remained after applauded the team as they came back out from the locker room. St. Mary's will now play Deer Valley in the championship game on Thursday.

Photo: Uriah Tenette splits the defense on his way for a bucket. The senior closed out his career with 2752 points, good enough for seventh in Arizona high school scoring history

The very start was fitting for the Badger faithful, as a loud packed Badger Dome saw Uriah Tenette take the opening tip and lay down a slam dunk for a quick 2-0 lead. Then lead again 4-2, but St. Mary's turned that moment into a 9-1 run to build an 11-5 lead over Prescott midway through the opening quarter.

Photo: Zane Gaul goes to the basket between six-foot eleven Cam Williams and six-six Arteus Jefferson

The Badgers pulled within two on another dunk by Tenette and it was 11-9. The Knights went up 16-10 on a three pointer by Brody Postorino, but Prescott came back as Tenette hit all six free throw attempts to get within 18-16. The Knights Cam Williams knocked down a pair of baskets to give St. Mary's a 22-16 after one quarter.

Photo: Josiah Peoples launches a three point shot

Josiah Peoples made a great move on the baseline to pull within 29-24, and had an opportunity for two more points, but was fouled hard on a breakaway going down on his back to the floor. Peoples would get up but still reeling from the contact was unable to convert the free throws.

The quarter saw the Badgers continue to trail by as many as eight points three different times, but when Peoples slammed one down at the two minute mark, the crowd erupted as the game was now tied at 34.

Photo: Uriah Tenette gets a hand to the face as he drives to the basket. It was one of many no calls in the second half after the senior made all eight of his free throws in the first half.

St. Mary's countered with a bucket a minute later to regain the lead at 36-34. Tenette drove to the basket and was unable to get the ball to drop as a defenders hand went across his face, but with no call by the officials, the half ended with the Badgers down by a deuce.

Prescott came out and tied the game at 36 on a drive to the basket by Gaul, but then Knights began to score while the Badgers went dry from the field.

A three and half minute drought allowed St. Mary's to go ahead 43-36 with 5:36 left in the third quarter.

The Badgers trimmed the deficit to 45-41 ninety seconds later on buckets by Gaul and Tenette.

Once again the Knights responded to boost their lead to 52-42 with a minute left in the third. This time though St. Mary's benefitted on a pair of very bad calls. First, Tenette went up to cleanly block an inside shot but the official standing all the way by the St. Mary's bench called goal tending. Then a ball clearly touched by a Knight on an inside pass went out of bounds, but the official awarded the ball back to St. Mary's. A three point basket resulted costing the Badgers five points on the two plays. Still down by ten points, Cooper Magnett sank a crucial three point shot to end the third quarter, but Prescott trailed 54-47 with one quarter left.

Tenette drilled a three pointer for his 29th point of the game to pull within 54-50 with seven minutes remaining. St. Mary's would switch defenders on Uriah, often double and triple teaming him in allowing him only one more bucket as he finished the game with 31 points. The same total as he scored against the Knights in the season opener.

Prescott scored again to get within 54-52. The Knights crashed the boards hard and were able to score on a couple of weak side misses that they converted into buckets growing their lead to 60-52. Tense moments would ensue down the stretch.

The momentum switch began when Peoples drained a three, and it was 60-55 with 5:16 left. Then Peoples knocked down a second three, the deficit was down to 62-59 with 3:26 remaining.

Photo: No foul was called late in the game when Cooper Magnett got hacked by AJ Muandumba

In keeping with the physicality of the game, Magnett was hammered as he drove along the baseline, but no call was made. Then Tenette scored what would be his final basket as a Badger on a mid range baseline jumper in front of the Prescott bench to pull the Badgers within one at 62-61 with 2:42 left.

St. Mary's called time out and it paid off as they came back to score five in a row to go up 67-61 with 1:15 remaining. The Knights smothering defense closed things out to win by six, 70-64, ending the careers of Cooper Magnett, Josiah Peoples, Zane Gaul, and two time state scoring champion Uriah Tenette.

After a team meeting in the locker room coach Travis Stedman said, "We knew this was going to be a battle. They had all their players and that made them a better team than they were when we beat them in the season opener. We played very hard and needed some breaks to go our way, which they didn't." In regards to his final time addressing this team, Stedman said, "There is not much to say right now after a loss like this. So I told them I loved them."

Uriah Tenette's 31 points equaled his season opener total against the Knights. Tenette shot all his free throws in the first half, draining all eight from the line, but despite being fouled during some drives to the basket in the second half, the officials failed to blow the whistle.

Tenette said, "It was a physical game. Just could not get it done tonight. We worked so hard and this is not how we wanted it to end. I have been playing with Zane all four years and our goal was to win a championship. Sadly that is not going to happen. It has been great playing here. It is just tough right now, There is a lot of emotion that we are going to need to work through but in the end I have been so blessed to play here. Thanks to my coaches, my team mates, the school, the fans. Everyone has been great. Just not how we wanted it to

end.”



Zane Gaul said, “It was a really tough battle out there. It was a back and forth game with momentum swings. It could have gone either way. We had our chances, tied it a couple times but could not get the lead on those guys. We had a good season and I don’t think we can look at our season by just this game. It’s just crazy that it is all over after all the work we put in during the season.”

Josiah Peoples said, “Hard fought game by both teams. I think they got some calls, but we got some too. Shout out to Cam Williams and St. Mary’s for playing a great game.” About the physicality of the game, Peoples said, “I know I got smacked around and Uriah did too. They wanted revenge on us and what can you say, shout out to them.”

Cooper Magnett said, “St. Mary’s came to play. They had some guys this time they did not have before and that helped them. They play at a high level and exploited some of our mistakes, but I still think we played pretty good and did not beat ourselves. It is nothing to hang our heads about.” About the atmosphere in the Badger Dome, “It was amazing the best I have ever seen it. It just makes the game ten times more fun and we fed off the crowd.” Thoughts about this season and his basketball career at Prescott High School, Magnett added, “It’s been an amazing ride. I have been so lucky to have played with some amazing players. Playing for coach Stedman and our other coaches I could not have drawn it up any better.”

The Badgers end the season at (22-7). This was the third straight season Prescott has won over twenty games.

#3 ST. MARY’S KNIGHTS 70, #2 PRESCOTT BADGERS 64

ST MARY’S (70)-Williams 10 5-7 25, Jefferson 2 0-0 4, Postorino 2 2-2 7, Jones 9 4-7 22, Bagley 4 0-0 10, Muandumba 2 0-0 4, Hatsakarzian 0 0-0 0. 29 11-16 70.

PRESCOTT (64)-Magnett 3 1-2 9, Tenette 10 8-8 31, Vanderploeg 0 0-0 0, Gaul 4 4-7 12, Peoples 4 0-2 10, Richardson 0 0-0 0, Fundalewicz 1 0-0 2. 22 13-19 64.

Score by Quarters- 1 2 3 4 - T

St. Mary’s 22 14 18 16 - 70

Prescott 16 18 13 17 - 64

Total Fouls- SM 18, P 14

Fouled out-None

Three Pointers-SM (3)-Bagley 2, Postorino 1. P (7)-Tenette 3,

Magnett 2, Peoples 2.