

Pepperdine Advances to CBI Championship

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. – Pepperdine overcame an 11-point second-half deficit to defeat Bellarmine, 82-71, in Tuesday night's College Basketball Invitational semifinal.

The Waves (14-12) outscored the Knights (14-8) 41-21 in the second half and will play Coastal Carolina on Wednesday for the title. Bellarmine led 58-47 with less than 15 minutes to play but Pepperdine went on a 28-2 run over the next eight minutes.

BIG WAVES

- Junior forward Kessler Edwards scored a game-high 28 points. He also had seven rebounds, five blocked shots, three steals and two assists. He's averaging 25.0 points per game at the CBI and this was his 10th 20-point game of the season.
- Senior guard Colbey Ross wasn't far from a triple-double, as he finished with eight points, a season-high nine rebounds and eight assists.
- Freshman forward Kendall Munson hit double-figures for the second time in his career, as he scored 13 points on 6-for-8 shooting to go with six rebounds and two steals.
- Junior guard Jade' Smith had 11 points and three assists.

KEY STATS

- The Waves shot 56.1% for the field, their best showing this season against a Division I team.
- The Knights went 20-for-31 (64.5%) in the first half but just 6-for-31 (19.4%) in the second, for 41.9% overall.
- Bench points favored the Waves 31-13.
- The Waves outrebounded the Knights 38-25.
- Bellarmine had four players score in double-figures, led by Ethan Claycomb's 16 points.

PLAY BY PLAY

The Waves led briefly at the start of the contest, but wouldn't again until the second half. Tied at 18, Bellarmine hit a couple of threes and went on a 10-2 run to go ahead 28-20. The Knights went ahead by double-figures at 41-31 with 3 1/2 minutes left in the half. The teams traded baskets the rest of the way and Bellarmine led 50-41 at the break. Both teams shot better than 60% from the field in the first half.

Five straight Bellarmine points early in the second half gave the Knights their largest lead of the game at 58-47 with 14:49 to play. But Pepperdine turned things around completely at that point. Grad transfer forward Kene Chukwuka hit two three-pointers in a 12-0 run that gave Pepperdine the lead at 59-58. Two Bellarmine free throws ended the run and gave the Knights back the lead at 60-59 with 10 1/2 minutes left. But the Waves then scored the next 16 points, with four apiece by Edwards and Munson, as Pepperdine went from 11 down to up 15 at 75-60 with 6 1/2 minutes left. Pepperdine kept the lead in double-digits for the remainder of the contest.

NOTABLES

- Pepperdine is going for its first postseason trophy since the 1994 West Coast Conference Tournament.
- The Waves have evened their all-time record at the CBI to 2-2 (they lost in the first round in 2015 and 2016).
- This was the first-ever meeting between Pepperdine and Bellarmine.