

Nevada captures CBI Championship

RENO, Nev. – In what may go down as the most exciting and intense CBI Championship Series ever, Nevada took Game 3 of the Championship Series with an 85-82 overtime win over Morehead State.

From the opening tip of Monday's Game 1 to the Xavier Moon's half court heave that hit the rim as time expired in overtime in Game 3, the level of excitement and intensity was unparalleled.

After tying the Championship Series at one game apiece on Wednesday, Nevada looked to close out the series with another home win, this time in front of 9,043 at the Lawlor Events Center. The Wolf Pack jumped out early and managed to lead by as many as 14 points, 26-12, with 9:27 to play in the first half.

However, if the first two games of this series proved anything, it was that neither team would lay down. And Morehead State didn't.

Trailing 41-34 at the half, Morehead fought back, eventually taking a 64-63 lead on a Malik Maitland three-pointer with 6:51 to play in regulation. As the game remained close, Tyron Criswell hit a free throw with 15 seconds to go to give Nevada a 75-73 margin. However, DeJuan Marrero was fouled with five seconds to play in regulation and went to the line having made just 3-of-8 free throws on the night. After banking in the first, he was perfect on the second to send the game into overtime.

In the extra session, D.J. Fenner opened the scoring with a layup to put Nevada up 77-75. Brent Arrington tied it at 80 with his own layup with 2:34 to go before Lyonell Gaines gave the Eagles an 82-80 lead with 1:55 left.

Criswell hit a free throw to cut the lead to one with 1:05 to go and then his layup with 13 seconds left put the Wolf Pack up, 83-82. Two Fenner foul shots with two seconds to play gave Nevada an 85-82 lead and the win.

Criswell led Nevada (24-14) with 21 points and 11 rebounds en route to being named the CBI MVP. He averaged 19.2 ppg for the tournament. Cameron Oliver posted 20 points and 10 rebounds, Fenner closed the game with 17 points, and Marqueze Coleman added 11 points.

Foul shooting was a huge difference in the game as Nevada used its size to its advantage. The Wolf Pack went 39-45 at the line while the Eagles were 6-13.

Gaines led Morehead State (23-14) with 17 points. Lamontay Harris had 15 points and nine rebounds, Maitland, who played just one minute in the Championship Series prior to Game 3, had 12 points and nine assists, Marrero ended with 11 points and six rebounds, and Arrington had 11 points.

The win marks the first-ever men's basketball postseason championship for a team from the Mountain West Conference.