

Siena Knocks Off Penn State in Final Seconds

ALBANY, N.Y. - Evan Hymes raced the length of the floor and scored high off glass with 3.2 seconds left to lift Siena over Penn State 54-52 in front of an energized crowd in the CBI Quarterfinals Monday night in Albany. The Saints will play in the Final Four of the CBI Wednesday night, with the site and opponent to-be-determined late Wednesday night.

"We owe it to all the teams in the MAAC to play hard, because they taught us to play hard." Siena coach Jimmy Patsos said. "I thought today we did a lot of little things that were kind of grinding, and that's just the way the MAAC is."

Hymes coast-to-coast score came after Brandon Taylor grabbed a rebound and finished for Penn State (16-18) to tie the game with 9.3 seconds left. Hymes, who may not have even been in the game if starting point guard Marquis Wright wasn't injured earlier in the half, raced into the front court, faked a handoff to Rob Poole and cut hard right, drawing contact as he scored the game-winner. He missed the ensuing free throw, but D.J. Newbill stepped out of bounds near midcourt, and after Ryan Oliver missed two free throws, the Nittany Lions desperation three-quarter court heave to win the game was well off the mark.

Penn State led 46-45 after a three-pointer by Brandon Taylor with 4:16 to play, but Lavon Long scored off glass on Siena's (17-17) next trip with 3:41 to play and the Saints never trailed again.

Long was the difference in the second half, scoring 13 of his 17 points on aggressive drives.

"That's why we recruited Lavon, because he's a funny matchup," Patsos said. "He's a Big Ten guy. His mother played in the Big Ten (at Iowa)."

Siena has now improved its win total by nine games from last season. The Saints improved to 15-11 in national postseason Tournament play and are 5-1 against BCS schools at Times Union Center the last 10 years.

The Saints out-rebounded a Penn State team (40-36) that out-rebounded Hampton by 24 in its First Round win last Wednesday and had a positive rebounding margin in the imposing Big Ten.

D.J. Newbill matched Long's 17 points to lead all scorers for Penn State.

Steady sophomore Brett Bisping had a double-double with 12 points and 12 rebounds and Rob Poole had 11 points, eight rebounds and two steals for the Saints.

Siena won despite turning the ball over 16 times and making just seven free throws. Penn State struggled at the line, converting just 12-22 opportunities.

The Saints entered Monday night's matchup as one of just 44 Division I teams left playing, a remarkable accomplishment for a team picked 10th in the 11-team MAAC in the Preseason Coaches' Poll.

