

NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Gonzaga rallies to reach Sweet 16

BY TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Drew Timme gathered his Gonzaga teammates at midcourt, pointed at the scoreboard showing a 10-point halftime deficit for the top overall seed and expressed a few choice words.

Timme's goal was to spark his teammates with words. He did it with his play on the court, too.

Or as Memphis coach Penny Hardaway said, "the Drew Timme effect came into play."

Timme scored 21 of his 25 points in the second half, and Gonzaga rallied from a 10-point halftime deficit to beat No. 9 seed Memphis 82-78 on Saturday night, March 19, in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Trailing at the half for only the fourth time this season, Gonzaga leaned on its star junior to reach its seventh straight Sweet 16. The Bulldogs (28-3) will face No. 4 seed Arkansas in the West Region semifinals on Thursday, March 24, in San Francisco.

"What I said was, no matter what happens, no matter what the score is, win or lose, this could very well be the last 20 minutes of basketball you ever play, and go out with no regrets," Timme recalled.

That was the G-rated version. But his point was made and the Bulldogs responded.

Andrew Nembhard added 23 points, Rasir Bolton scored 17 and Gonzaga never trailed after a basket from Timme and Bolton's 3-pointer with 10 minutes remaining that made it 61-57.

Timme made 10 of 16 shots and grabbed 14 rebounds.

"The way we came out fighting in the second half I thought it was more who we are," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said. "And then we just did a great job down the stretch executing all our late game stuff."

Memphis (22-11) didn't go away despite Gonzaga's surge. The Tigers pulled even at 66 on DeAndre Williams' basket. After Nembhard's 3 put the Bulldogs up 76-69, the Tigers still made it a one-possession game



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian-TNS

Memphis center Jalen Duren (No. 2) fights for a rebound against Gonzaga forward Drew Timme as the Tigers and Bulldogs meet in the second round of the men's NCAA Tournament at Moda Center in Portland, Oregon, on Saturday, March 19, 2022.

with 32 seconds left on Lester Quinones' 3-pointer.

Nembhard, the only consistent free-throw shooter for Gonzaga on the night, made four at the foul line in the final 25 seconds.

"We hung in there long enough. But we couldn't get the shots, we couldn't get the stops, and they did," Hardaway said.

Williams scored 14 points for Memphis but sat a big chunk of the second half with foul trouble. Tyler Harris had 11 of his 13 points in the first half and Quinones finished with 10.

The matchup between future NBA lottery picks Chet Holmgren of Gonzaga and Jalen Duren of Memphis never fully materialized because of foul trouble. Duren finished with seven points and seven re-

bounds but played just 19 minutes and sat for more than 10 minutes of the second half after picking up his fourth foul.

Holmgren had nine points, nine rebounds and four blocks before fouling out in the final seconds.

For a while, Memphis looked willing and able to spoil what was essentially a Gonzaga home game a 6-hour drive from its campus. Memphis dominated the latter stages of the first half and built a 41-31 lead at the break as nervous energy filled Moda Center.

"We knew we could go out there and play with those guys," Williams said. "The crowd got into it, they were very resilient. They played together. They were poised. And like coach said, they showed us the bar."

Timme erupted to start the second half, scoring the first 11 points for the Bulldogs and in the process helping land Duren and Williams in foul trouble. Timme knocked down a 3-pointer, hit a pair of tough jumpers and scored on a slick baseline reverse to erase a big chunk of Memphis' half-time lead.

From there, he got help from Bolton and Nembhard. The trio combined for 42 of Gonzaga's 51 points in the second half.

"I just want to step up for my team in those types of moments," Nembhard said. "I know they have ultimate confidence in me, so coaching staff has ultimate confidence in me so I just want to step up and make those kinds of plays for us."

NCAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Ducks fall to Belmont in 2 OT

BY TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — The Belmont Bruins made history a year ago with the program's first women's NCAA Tournament win.

They found a way to top that.

Destinee Wells knocked down a pair of free throws with 1:02 left in double overtime, and Belmont knocked off No. 5 seed Oregon 73-70 Saturday, March 19, for the Bruins' second straight win as a 12 seed to open an NCAA Tournament.

Belmont (23-7) upset 14th-ranked Gonzaga in the sterile Texas bubble with no fans on hand last year in the NCAA Tournament. This time, the Bruins won their 13th straight and 19th in 21 games with a victory made all the more precious by being able to celebrate immediately in the arena with family, friends and fans.

"It's so hard to rank them because last year we made history," Belmont senior forward Conley Chinn said. "It was the first time it had been done in our program. But I mean, just today, you kind of can't get it better than that. That was pretty sweet."

They will play fourth-seeded Tennessee, an 80-67 winner over Buffalo, on Monday in the second round.

This was the first double-overtime game in the NCAA Tournament since Dayton and St John's in the first round in 2013.

This was a thriller from start to finish with 10 ties and Wells' go-ahead free throws was the seventh lead change and the only time Belmont led in the second overtime.

Belmont coach Bart Brooks loved how his Bruins never quit.

"They had every opportunity to fold, and when it got really hot, a lot, and they just always had an answer," Brooks said. "They always fought. They found a way. They made a play. That's our team. That's what we've been. That's who we are. It was really cool to be in that atmosphere. Great performance."

After Wells split two free throws with 4.5 seconds left, Oregon had a final chance. But Sedona Prince's long 3 bounced off the rim as the Bruins rushed the court to hug each other and Prince hung her head in dejection.

Oregon had the ball for much of the final minute in the second overtime and couldn't get a shot to fall.

The Ducks won a jump ball situation with 29.8 seconds remaining. They kicked the ball out to Endiya Rogers whose 3 hit off the far rim, and Madison Bartley got the rebound with 6.5 seconds left to start the Belmont celebration.

Oregon coach Kelly Graves said his Ducks had plenty of chances and credited Belmont.

"It just seemed like we did not make that right play other than the shot at the end of regulation when we needed to," Graves said.

The Bruins led 50-44 with 5:02 left in the fourth before Oregon rallied with a 9-3 run capped by TeHina Paopao's 3 from the left corner with 7.9 seconds left tied it at 53. All Pac-12 forward Nyara Sabally blocked Nikki Baird's 3-point attempt at the buzzer to force overtime.

Both teams had a chance to win at the end of the first overtime tied at 64. Sabally missed a layup in the final seconds before she blocked a couple inside chances by Bartley before the buzzer.

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