

BASKETBALL

Thunder struck by Pulamoos in heartbreaking final

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The Miramichi Valley Pulamoo overcame a 17-point deficit late in the third quarter to overcome the Woodstock Thunder 81-79 in double overtime a Classic varsity girls banner. The team is coached by Matthew Swezey and Chris Ingram, and it includes Jillian Harris, Erinn Chambers, Jayme Bell Hayley Somers, Kassidy Hamilton, Drew Blackmore, Rachel Barry, Bailey Black, Dakota Donovan and Kaylee Russell.

Photo: NATHAN DELONG/BUGLE-OBSERVER

The Woodstock Thunder varsity girls' basketball team was reminded the hard way in Monday's Thunder Valley Classic, as they fell two points short of a third consecutive girls' banner.

The Thunder led 24-16 at halftime and 36-28 early in the fourth quarter, but the Miramichi Valley Pulamoo overcame in the third to tie the game at 65 to force overtime. Miramichi finally grabbed the banner with a 81-79 win in double overtime.

Players of the game were Lindsey Gallant for Miramichi Valley and Claire Dunlop for Woodstock. The Pulamoo's Bai was named tournament MVP after scoring 25 points in the championship game, the second most for Miramichi Valley on the occasion.

Jillian Harris led the Pulamoo's offense with 30 points, while Lindsey Gallant added 17.

Kyla Carr netted 29 points for the Thunder, while Sandy Saunders chipped in 15 and Mallory Thomas recorded 11 points.

The championship was a close one from the get-go, with Miramichi Valley keeping Woodstock within two points for most of the first quarter. A burst of offense late in the first put the Thunder up 17-11 after 10 minutes.

Despite the close score early in the game, the Pulamoo started to slow. But they proved they were in the game all afternoon with a free throw success and a handful of three-point shots in the second half.

The score stayed within 10 points throughout the second quarter as well, and another offensive spark for the Thunder came in the third as they looked to clinch their third consecutive Thunder Valley Classic banner and their fifth in seven years.

But Miramichi Valley had other plans, as they began the comeback late in the fourth quarter of the back-and-forth contest, cutting the deficit to 10 points in the last few minutes of the third.

The banner was in the Pulamoo's sights in the last five minutes of regulation, as they trailed by just five points. They managed to take the lead with three minutes to go and tied the contest with a minute and a half left on the clock before regaining the lead with 1:22 to play.

Woodstock would regain their cushion in the final minute of regulation, but Miramichi Valley tied the game and would eventually lead in the dying seconds before a Thunder buzzer beater knotted the score at 55.

Neither team gained a significant edge in overtime, but the Pulamoo finally prevailed.

The Thunder girls advanced to the final with an 85-57 victory over the John Caldwell Knights from Grand Falls in the quarterfinals. Miramichi Valley edged the Fundy Mariners 59-58 in another nail-biter in Sunday's crossovers.

The Carleton North Stars downed the James M. Hill Tommies 55-49 in Sunday's fifth place game.

In the girls' round robin, the Thunder downed the Mariners 99-46 and the Stars fell 66-45 to the Knights before dropping to Miramichi Valley.

The Thunder defeated the Tommies 64-48, the Mariners tripped the Tommies 83-74 and the Knights upset Miramichi Valley 71-64.

The 2014 tournament featured six varsity girls' teams from around the province. Games were played at the Woodstc and the large gymnasium at Hartland Community School.

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