


By Phil Sandoval

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BALKO, OKLA. — Coaches, at times, have to do some out-of-the-box things to inspire their team.

Tyrone girls skipper Tisha Loomis put herself in that position at a critical point of Thursday's Class B, District 2 Tournament game with Hardesty. 

Down 24-16 late in the third quarter Loomis was given a technical foul for arguing a call against the Bobcats too loudly.

A tired-looking Tyrone club to then awakened. The by-product of the call translated to a stunning 35-34 win that puts the Bobcats in tonight's District championship game with Balko.

"I told the girls I haven't got a T all year. Now, I want you to come out and play hard," Loomis told the Bobcats in the huddle after the violation. "I guess they did."

Tyrone guessed right. No matter what happens tonight, the Bobcats are playing in next week's Regionals.

Thanks to Katy Lotspeich.

After the technical foul, the freshman sank the final bucket of the period to reduce Hardesty's lead to six points.

In the fourth quarter, Lotspeich, who had a game-high 17 points, hit another deuce as part of a 11-2 run for a 27-all tie with 3 minutes, 4 seconds left to play.

The two field goals she hit in that stretch was just the opening act.

.With 1:22 remaining, she drained in a 3-pointer to move Tyrone within a point of the ?Bison. That basket came after Hardesty had regained the lead on baskets from Melina Rivera and Felicia Jacques.

That score was Act Two for Lotspeich.

Hardestly set up the stage for a couple more dramatic scenes by Lotspeich in the game's waning seconds when Jacques cross-court pass intended for Caitlyn Gilbert in the offensive end was too high to reach.

The turnover led to Lotspich's second, 3-pointer of the quarter. The field goal gave Tyrone their first lead of the night.

With 46 seconds remaining, it appeared the basket would stand up.

Nope.

Jacques retaliated with a 3-pointer to give the advantage back to Hardesty - a club who prides itself on defense.

Not this time.

With seven seconds left, Lotspeich got the ball.

Inside of firing deep, she found a hole on the right side of the lane and rushed by a couple of late-moving Hardesty defenders for the game-winner.

"I don't know if (Hardesty) took Katy lightly," Loomis said. "But, Katy's good at dribbling and making things happen for us. That's what she did at the end."

Lotspeich scored 10 of Tyrone's team-best 17 points in the fourth. Up to then, the best they posted on Hardesty's defense was 8.

Those came in the third quarter after concluding the first half with a meager 10 points combined. Hardesty wasn't much better on the offense end. But, the Bison did manage to take a four point lead into the locker room with them at intermission.

"I was very proud of their defense in the first half, but we just couldn't get our offense going," Loomis said. "They had 10 fouls to our two fouls. That told me right there that we weren't attacking enough to get those fouls."

Tyrone kept Hardesty's down by keeping Rivera in check. The Bison senior was held to 6 points in the first half.

"Our main concern was Rivera," said Loomis. "Our goal was to keep her under 12 points." The Bison senior finished with 13. Loomis' response to Rivera's final point total: "That's OK. I'll let that slide."

FANTASTIC FINISH! Tyrone Lady Bobcats advance

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