

## Bobcats slide past Buffalo and on to the area tournament

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By JASON EPP

Leader & Times

SHATTUCK, Okla.—The Tyrone Bobcats earned a trip to the Area Tournament this week in Woodward with a 48-44 win over the Buffalo Bison.

With the game tied at 44, Tyrone's Ethan Reese was fouled and went to the line with 13.3 seconds left and sank both. Buffalo, who had hit seven threes in the game still had a chance to win or tie the game, but Reese came up big again with a steal with 3 seconds left in the game. Reese was fouled, went to the line again and put the game away by sinking both free throws again.

Buffalo hit their third trey of the game with just over a minute left in the first quarter to go up 13-10. Tyrone had stayed close by getting shots in the paint. The Bobcats continued to go inside, scoring their first 20 points of the game in the paint.

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“They are a tough team,” Bobcats coach Clay Witt said. “They have a lot of good post play. Our game plan to go inside and put pressure on their big guys, and we were able to get one of them in foul trouble.”

Nerlin Rivera hit the Bobcats first shot outside of the paint when he drained a three with 2:38 left in the second quarter to cap a 13-3 run by the Bobcats that put them up 23-16.

Tyrone still led by seven at half, 26-19.

Tyrone went on an 8-2 run midway through the third quarter to go up 34-26, but a 7-0 run by Buffalo capped by a three at the third quarter buzzer cut Tyrone's lead to just one point, 34-33.

Buffalo retook the lead (36-34) for the first time since the first few seconds of the second quarter with a three-point play less than a minute into the fourth quarter.

“We got away from feeding the post and when we do we struggle because we're not that great of a jump shot team,” Witt said.

Tyrone answered with eight straight points and led 42-36 with less than two minutes left.

Buffalo hit two threes and had a chance to take the lead with 18.9 seconds left, but missed an 'and one' free throw.

“When he got the 'and one' I thought we were in trouble,” Witt said. “But we were able to hit free throws down the stretch. You can tell our seniors don't want this to end. Ethan has really carried us throughout the playoffs, and Nerlin has played well too.”

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Nerlin Rivera and Willie Slater each finished with 13 points for the Bobcats; Ethan Reese added 11, and Ty Harvey 8.

Tyrone will take on Dover in the first round of the area tournament, Thursday at 3 p.m. in Woodward.