

McComb “Cheats” Miller City out of Controversial Win

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“I have never seen anything like this in my life,” a distraught Kevin McGlaughlin stated after Miller City’s controversial 58-57 loss to McComb last Friday night. “It was a pathetic display of partiality ... absolute cheating is what it was ... shameful ... downright shameful.”

Most high school basketball games last 32 minutes – eight for each of the four quarters. Overtime games last a little longer but even though there was no overtime Friday, the winner of the Miller City-McComb game wasn’t determined until well after the final buzzer.

Al Siefker fired in a jumper from deep in the corner to give Miller City a 57-56 lead just four seconds left in the game to seemingly grant the Wildcats their 12th win of the season. McComb’s Dave Moore then took the inbounds pass with three seconds on the clock, dribbled a few times, and let fly with a desperation 25-foot shot that split the hoop.

No signal went up from the officials, however, as the noise of the partisan McComb fans drowned out the final buzzer. Neither official could determine if the shot counted or not so the scorekeeper was consulted. The scorekeeper likewise didn’t know if time had run out before the shot or not so a second timekeeper was brought into the picture. “No”, the second timekeeper said, “the shot came after the buzzer.”

That should have settled the issue, but the fireworks were just beginning.

“Most of the players were already in the dressing room and I was just going off the court,” McGlaughlin picks up the tale, “when I heard this big argument over at the scorer’s bench. Their coach was screaming that the basket counted and pretty soon they were asking for a rule book. I was getting angry about this time and said that no rule book was needed, that the decision had already been made. We finally got one and the rule book outlined the same procedure we had just gone through, consulting the timekeepers if the officials weren’t sure if the shot beat the buzzer or not.

The rule book stated that if the officials didn’t know if the shot counted and there was a split vote by the timekeepers, then the team on offense got the advantage.”

“There was not a split vote by the timekeepers, though” McGlaughlin continued. “One said he didn’t know and the other said it didn’t count. They went back to the first timekeeper though and the second time he said the shot definitely did count, making him guilty of an absolute lie.”

“I went back to the officials after the game and they even said the timekeeper said he didn’t know for sure the first time he was asked. One of the officials even said, and this is a quote, ‘Coach, you have to realize that we were on McCombs’s side of the court and there were a lot of angry fans sitting out there.’ “He has to make a decision whether the fans are there or not,” McGlaughlin stated.

McComb dashed off to an 18-10 first quarter lead but Miller City failed to fold, posting 17-14 and 15-10 advantages in the next two quarters to knot the score at 42-42 going into the final period. John and Brian Lammers and Jeff Siefker paced the Wildcat’s scoring to keep the game close when Al Siefker hit his third basket of the night to put Miller City into its final lead, 57-56. That set the stage for the final controversial shot and one of the most bizarre outcomes of the season.

“There were about three seconds on the clock when they took it out of bounds,” McGlaughlin stated about the closing moments of the game. “Their player {Moore} dribbled about three times and had his back to the basket and the ball on the floor when the clock ran out. Our player who was defending him dropped his hands and went over to congratulate the other players, knowing the time had run out and that we had won. We were behind early and didn’t play a good game but we came back and won it. Won it, that is, until it was stolen from us.”