

Miller City Edges Kalida on Controversial Call

**“That’s two straight years Bruno has taken us out of the
tournament,” claims Coach Kortokrax**

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A foul called by official Bill Bruno with 0.02 to play produced the cool of Dan Hermiller, turned on the heat of Kalida Coach Dick Kortokrax and sent Miller City into the Class A District Tournament next week at Elida High School

Hermiller, Miller City’s 6-5 senior center, dropped through two free throws before an overflow crowd of 2,500 at Ottawa-Glandorf high Friday night to give MC a 52-50 victory in the Sectional Title game between the top two teams in the Putnam County League.

“I had a little pressure on me,” said Hermiller, “but it was better than having to go into overtime. I was confident I could make them, at least one of them.”

It was a classic, superbly played game between what have to be two of the top Class A teams in the state.

Miller City never led by more than four while Kalida’s biggest edge, 37-30, came with 3:20 to go in the third quarter. Nether team led by more than two as the lead see-sawed throughout the final period.

A jump shot by Miller City’s Dean Rosengarten with 2:50 left tied the game at 50. Kalida worked the ball for more than a minute, then was saddled with the last of only six turnovers committed by the Wildcats in the game.

Miller City worked for a good shot from the 1:52 mark until the clock showed 1:02, then Coach Kevin McGlaughlin called time and decided to hold for the last shot. MC again called time at 0.19 to set up that final effort.

“We wanted to go to Hermiller’s side of the court,” McGlaughlin said, “although nothing specific was set up. Hopefully, he’d get it close to the basket because there’s nobody in Class A ball stronger underneath that he is.”

Bruno made the all against Kalida’s Tim Schroeder and Hermiller, who has made more than 70% of his free throws this season was unflappable at the line.

“I’m a good sport,” said Kortokrax, whose team bowed out at 17-5, “but I guess I have to speak up. I just can’t

take that man (Bill Bruno) any more. That’s two straight years he’s taken us out of the tournament.”

“It was a classic game, and to let a call like that decide it was a crime. All I can ask as a coach is for consistency. He let people get hammered for 31 minutes and 58 seconds and then, when the pressure’s on, he calls a foul on a good defensive play.”

“The kid is a senior and he’s been coached for four years on how to defend the base line in that situation. Right like this,” Kortokrax said, standing straight with his arms extended. “What am I supposed to say to the kid (Schroeder). I wonder how Bruno would explain it to him.”

“I don’t want to knock Miller City or Ottoville (which beat Kalida in the District Tourney last year). They were and are fine ballclubs. But I hate to have our kids keep coming in second best because of an official.”

“How can you be a man and call yourself an official and then allow yourself to decide a game as good and crucial as that one was with a cheap call. My kid did everything right, but he’ll remember being called for that foul the rest of his life.”

“That’s all I have to say. You go over and ask Bruno to explain the call. I certainly can’t.”

Bruno said “the kid was definitely fouled on the right forearm, but I was a little slow with the whistle. I admit I was just a hair late and I’m sure that made it look bad.”

Hermiller himself wasn’t sure what the call would be when he heard the whistle. “We’d been getting hammered around all night and they hadn’t called anything, so I was afraid maybe he was going to call traveling.”

Bruno called the foul, however, and the rest is history. According to McGlaughlin, the game marked the first time since the 1950s that Miller City had beaten Kalida in tournament play. They split in two meetings during the regular season.