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Etiwanda boys basketball team's long winning streak ended by Mater Dei

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RIVERSIDE – It's been a long time since the Etiwanda boys basketball team lost a game, nearly two months.

But the second-seeded Eagles were dealt a rare one on Saturday, falling to third-seeded Mater Dei 76-66 in a CIF Southern Section Open Division semifinal at Cal Baptist University.

It will be the Monarchs (22-6) advancing to Friday's championship game against fourth-seeded Sierra Canyon (23-3) which upset top seed Bishop Montgomery 77-74 in double overtime earlier in the night.

Etiwanda, which saw a 24-game win streak snapped, will play a consolation game later this week against Bishop Montgomery on a day and time to be determined.

"We just didn't do a good job of blocking out and they were able to get some easy rebounds and points," Etiwanda coach Dave Kleckner said. "They have a good point guard (Spencer Freedman) he did a good job of picking us apart."

The game got away from Etiwanda midway through the fourth quarter. The Eagles only trailed by six, 48-42, heading into the final quarter.

Two free throws by Elijah Harkless put the Eagles within two points at 51-49 with 5:14 to play. But little went right for Etiwanda the rest of the way.

The Monarchs registered 11 of the next 14 points with the only points Etiwanda managing in that run coming on a 3-pointer by Harkless with 4:03 left the cut the deficit to 58-52.

Mater Dei answered on its end with Michael Wang making two free throws after a blocking foul had been called on the Eagles to make it 60-52.

Harkless kept coming up big for his team but it was a late. He had a 3-pointer to cut the gap to 62-55 and another the next trip down the floor to make it 64-58 with 2:58 to go.

It was a free-throw shooting affair the rest of the way and Mater Dei widened the gap.

Etiwanda made 21 of 53 shots from the field with Harkless netting a team-high 23 before fouling out with 1:23 remaining. Kessler Edwards added 15 points, six rebounds and two blocks and Krystian Wilson chipped in with 14 points and six rebounds.

Mater Dei made 24 of 51 tries from the field, including six of 11 shots from long distance. Wang scored 23 points with 10 rebounds and eight assists while Freedman, who is headed to Harvard, tallied 22 points and five assists.

Mater Dei finished with a 37-30 advantage on the boards.

“Wang killed us,” Harkless said. “We just didn’t play the way we can play. We have to come back against Bishop Montgomery and try and make a run in the state playoffs. We have to bounce back.”

 Southern California News Group's prep sports reporter Michelle Gardner August 2, 2017. (Photo by Leo Jarzomb, SGV Tribune/SCNG)

Michelle Gardner

Michelle Gardner has covered high school sports and local colleges for the Daily Bulletin and Sun since 2002. She previously covered a wide variety of sports from the high school level to the professional ranks in Florida with tenures at the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Naples Daily News and the Fort Myers News-Press and is graduate of the University of Florida.

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