

Great Mills dodges scare from Raiders, winning 12 straight

Posted by [JeroldMassie](#) On 02/11/2019

Lexington Park, MD – Eight miles is all that separates St. Mary's County rivals Leonardtown and Great Mills. Basketball games are usually packed, with students, alumni, and fans coming out in droves to support their team. "Every time we play these guys it's a rivalry game, there's a large crowd, normally its close," stated Great Mills Head Coach Jeff Burrell.

Friday night was no different as Leonardtown traveled to Great Mills for their third meeting of the season. The (13-3) Hornets dominated the (10-7) Raiders in their two previous contests by a combined 49-points. It's not typical for two teams to play three times in the regular season but perhaps more atypical was the scare Leonardtown was able to give Great Mills, rallying back from a 17-point deficit with two minutes left in the game.

The Raiders were led by junior guard Tyreke Herbert who, as his head coach Jeb Barber put it, "makes the team run" on both ends of the court. Herbert hit a layup and a key three-pointer to cut the lead to 10 late. After Great Mills missed some free throws, senior David Tydings came off the bench to hit two threes in a row, making the score 66-61 with 31 seconds left in the game. "I'm really proud of our kids not giving up at the end, stated Barber who also commended junior Eric Long's play during his first varsity start. Long finished with a team-high 17 points, followed closely behind by Tyreke Herbert.

Unfortunately for Leonardtown, Great Mills' star players made two key plays late, with senior Bowie State commit Troy Herbert making a shot under the basket and freshman point guard Isiah Mills converting two free throws, securing their win and halting a comeback upset.

"We missed a layup and two free throws, but we were really right there," stated coach Barber after the game. Barber felt that the difference between Friday's contest and the teams' previous two meetings came down to defense and rebounds for the Raiders.

Though the close game may have come as a shock to Great Mills fans, with one even commenting at halftime that the game would be "54-32 by the end of the third," Coach Burrell and his team knew it would be a tough game. Between the rivalry aspect and the difficulty that comes with playing a single team three times, Burrell was "happy to come out with a win."

"It's cliché but tonight was one of those team wins... Troy took over the game in the last six minutes, he controlled the tempo and made big plays inside. He was the reason we won that last quarter." Troy Herbert finished with a game-high 18-points, the senior big man felt the team did a good job of getting the ball down low on offense but would like for the team to play better defensively.

Great Mills remains at the top of SMAC as the regular season enters its final weeks. The Hornets improved to (14-3) and are looking to win the conference for the second year in a row. Leonardtown fell to (10-8) but finished their last 4 games with three at home. "I'm hoping we can end the season on a high note going into the playoff," coach Barber concluded.

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