

No. 15 Mustangs edged by No. 11 Saints

Written by Metro Sports Report

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The Mount Mercy men's basketball team squandered a 17-point lead Sunday and lost to Saint Francis of Illinois, 94-92, in a battle of NAIA powers at the Hennessey Recreation Center.

Mount Mercy (5-2) is ranked No. 15 in the NAIA national poll and Saint Francis (6-0) is ranked No. 11.

The Mustangs took a 65-48 lead with 17:01 left on a 3-pointer by Tre Wagner, but the Saints staged a furious rally and surged into an 84-84 deadlock with 4:51 remaining.

Alex Houston tied the game for Mount Mercy, 92-92, on a layup with 1:12 left, but the Mustangs did not score again.

Jens Kennedy gave Saint Francis a 94-92 lead with 13 seconds left with a jump shot. Mount Mercy called two timeouts in the final seconds, but Wagner missed a 3-pointer with one second left that could have won the game.

Wagner made five 3-pointers and led Mount Mercy with 26 points. Houston and Sheawn Bedford Jr. scored 14 apiece for the Mustangs. Houston grabbed eight rebounds. Chris Ford collected eight points and eight assists.

Ilya Ilyayev poured in 28 points for Saint Francis and Kennedy finished with 27. Landus Anderson added 13 points for the winners.

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SAINT FRANCIS (94): Anderson 5 1-2 13, Presniakovas 1 1-1 4, Ilyayev 10 5-6 28, Pietrzak 2 2-2 7, Kennedy 11 5-5 27, Edwards 0 0-0 0, Peter 1 0-0 3, Timmons 2 0-0 6, Morison 2 2-2 6. Totals 34 16-18 94.

MOUNT MERCY (92): Houston 6 2-4 14, Struss 2 1-2 5, Wagner 5 11-12 26, Ford 2 4-4 8, Parker 2 2-2 8, Strong 2 1-2 6, Bedford 5 0-0 14, Blohm 0 0-0 0, Lamaak 1 0-0 2, Anderson 0 0-0 0, Gogg 2 5-5 9. Totals 27 26-31 92.

Halftime - Mount Mercy 51, Saint Francis 45. 3-point goals - Saint Francis 10 (Ilyayev 3, Anderson 2, Timmons 2, Presniakovas 1, Pietrzak 1, Peter 1), Mount Mercy 12 (Wagner 5, Bedford 4, Parker 2, Strong 1).