

## Mustangs fall in final second, 67-65

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 27 February 2019 07:04 -

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A three-day reprieve did not help the Mount Mercy men's basketball team Tuesday night and now the Mustangs are in danger of missing the Heart of America Conference playoffs.

Mount Mercy lost to Central Methodist, 67-65, in a game that began Saturday and was postponed to Tuesday with 16:10 left in the second half due to moisture falling on the court at the Hennessey Recreation Center.

The Mustangs trailed 40-36 when the game resumed and took a few small leads, but they never got rolling and lost when Isaiah Thurmond made a driving layup with 1.1 seconds left.

Mychael Brawner-Henley hit a clutch 3-pointer for Mount Mercy with 20.5 seconds remaining to tie the game at 65-65, but the Mustangs were not able to stop Thurmond from getting to the basket for the game-winner.

"You have all this time to prepare for the last 16:10 and we didn't execute," said Mount Mercy Coach Aaron Jennings. "There were things we were supposed to take away and for some reason we did not do that.

"We talked a lot about defense and about keeping them out of the paint. And we didn't do it."

The loss dropped the Mustangs into a tie for ninth place in the Heart of America Conference with a 10-13 record. The Mustangs are only a half-game out of 11th place and only 10 teams will make the playoffs.

If Mount Mercy defeats Grand View in its final game of the regular season Wednesday night at home, the Mustangs will clinch no worse than a tie for ninth place in the league at 11-13. However, they could be tied with several teams for 9th, 10th and 11th with tiebreakers required

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to figure it all out.

Grand View whipped the Mustangs, 89-68, two weeks ago in Des Moines. Grand View has not played since its last game on Saturday, compared to Mount Mercy having to concentrate on Central Methodist all that time.

"Not really any time to prepare, playing a team that really took it to us two weeks ago," said Jennings. "And they're fresh. They've been preparing for us since they got done with their game on Saturday."

Mount Mercy never got rolling against Central Methodist, either on Saturday or Tuesday. The Mustangs committed 23 turnovers, shot only 7 for 23 on 3-pointers and gave up 16 offensive rebounds to a team of comparable size to themselves.

"Something has to change with us," said Jennings. "We have to make more plays, we have to have guys step up. Mike hit that 3, but we can't get a stop at the end. It's very disappointing."

Bailey Basala, one of Mount Mercy's top players, hit his head when he fell to floor with 8:05 remaining Tuesday and did not return to action. His status is questionable for Wednesday's game against Grand View.

Dennis McKinney, Mount Mercy's leading scorer, played only 11 minutes against Central Methodist due to foul problems and scored six points.

Mount Mercy fell to 15-14 overall.

Central Methodist (15-13, 10-12) was rewarded for making two trips to Cedar Rapids in four days from its campus in Fayette, Mo., which is about a 4 1/2-hour drive.

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Brawner-Henley scored 21 points for Mount Mercy. Antwain Strong finished with 13 points and nine assists, but also had six turnovers. Mike Evans contributed 12 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks. Basala scored 10 points.

Thurmond led Central Methodist with 16 points. The winners play at William Penn Wednesday night.

**CENTRAL METHODIST (67):** Thurmond 5 4-4 16, Sykes 5 0-2 11, Robinson 5 0-0 10, Soderholm 5 0-0 11, Miles 0 0-0 0, Meny 0 0-0 0, Bush 3 0-0 6, Stegeman 0 0-0 0, Locke 2 2-2 6, Ankrom 2 1-2 5, Isitt 0 0-0 0, Agnew 1 0-0 2. Totals 28 7-10 67.

**MOUNT MERCY (65):** Brawner-Henley 7 4-5 21, Evans 6 0-0 12, Villagrana 0 0-0 0, Albagami 1 0-0 3, Kehinde 0 0-0 0, Strong 4 4-4 13, McKinney 3 0-0 6, Reischauer 0 0-0 0, Johnson 0 0-0 0, Basala 4 0-0 10. Totals 25 8-9 65.

Halftime - Mount Mercy 34, Central Methodist 33. 3-point goals - Central Methodist 4 (Thurmond 2, Sykes 1, Soderholm 1), Mount Mercy 7 (Brawner-Henley 3, Basala 2, Albagami 1, Strong 1).