

Etowah falls just short in upset bid Eagles put a serious scare into AAA powerhouse Blessed Trinity

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MARIETTA -- Blessed Trinity has won 12 straight games, but the hardest one might have come against Etowah.

The Titans of Roswell escaped a tight, 62-60 game Saturday in the SEBA Atlanta High School Hoop Festival at Cobb County Civic Center. Etowah's Tyler Blackwell scored 14 points and earned team MVP honors for the tournament. For Blessed Trinity, it was the Arris Brundidge show, as the junior totaled 18 points and had a number of defensive plays, earning MVP honors for the Titans.

Etowah coach Don Hurlburt said he was pleased with his team's performance, but said the Eagles came up just short. "I thought we came out and started the game very strong," he said. "I felt like it was a tale of two halves. In the first half, we got them out of their comfort zone. I have never seen them play anything but a 2-3 zone. We made them go to a man-to-man. They started putting some pressure on us and they got a 10-point lead.

"We just made too many mental mistakes. When you play a team as well-coached as Blessed Trinity is, you can't make as many mistakes as we made, but we are real close. We're really close."

Etowah hit early by opening with a 6-2 lead and extended the lead to 20-13 thanks to two 3-pointers from Zach Moore and baskets from Zack Okerblad, Ben Stone and Blackwell. Blessed Trinity tied it up early in the second quarter with a 3 from Ryan LeGates and consecutive baskets from Jordan Callahan. Etowah scored another 12 points to hold a 32-31 lead at half. The lead see-sawed briefly in the third quarter, but the Titans' Tyler Cerone put up eight points to claim the lead and distance Blessed Trinity away from the Eagles, 43-38. A spinning layup in traffic from Brundidge and baskets from Ryan Aquino, Patrick McCarrey, Cerone and Callahan moved the tally to 51-41 to end the third.

Etowah made its charge in the fourth, going on an 8-0 run with baskets from Blackwell, Jon Eargle and Michael Brantley to get within two. Consecutive baskets from Blackwell tied it up at 57-57 with 1:12 left. Aquino put up a basket to break the tie and a free throw from LeGates and tip-in from Brundidge to move it to 62-57.

Etowah surged back into the game with a 3 from Chris Brasher with 15 seconds left to make it 62-60. The Eagles killed the clock with a foul on LeGates, but when the junior stepped to the free-throw line, a Blessed Trinity player stepped in the box, negating the free-throw attempt. With 7 seconds left, Etowah looked for a lane to get the open shot, but Cerone stole the ball from Brasher to kill the clock.

Etowah fell to 4-5 and will next participate in the Deep South Classic beginning Wednesday morning, tipping off against Thomson at 11 a.m. at Brookwood High School in Snellville.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Blessed Trinity 62, Etowah 60

Etowah (4-5): Spencer Poer 2, Chris Brasher 9, Michael Brantley 8, Jon Eargle 3, Zach Moore 11, Ben Stone 6, Tyler Blackwell 14, Zach Okerblad 8

Blessed Trinity (12-0): Tyler Cerone 13, Ryan Aquino 11, Jordan Callahan 11, Ryan LeGates 7,
Patrick McCarrey 2, Arris Brundidge 18.
Etowah 20 12 9 19 -- 60
Blessed Trinity 13 18 19 11 -- 62

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