



**SPORTS INFORMATION  
SAINT JOSEPH'S COLLEGE**

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SUBJECT: SAINT JOE WOMEN EDGE NORTHERN IN FIVE OVERTIMES BY 131-130!

By CHUCK SCHUTTROW

RENSSELAER, Ind. -- "Saint Joseph's 131, Northern Kentucky 130, in five overtimes."

That simple statement of what happened here Saturday night in Alumni Fieldhouse brought responses like, "Are you serious?" from newsmen receiving telephoned reports of this game later that night.

But for the 1100 boisterous fans lucky enough to witness this hardwood classic, there were no doubts about the reality of what they had seen: an emotion-stoked Saint Joseph's women's team that absolutely refused to lose, fought back repeatedly against the nation's sixth-ranked NCAA Division II squad, and finally won it on Jeannette Yeoman's 15-foot baseline jumper with seven seconds left in the fifth overtime.

Various school, conference and national records tumbled during this three-hour, 17-minute marathon that left players, coaches and fans drained, and two post-game images will remain in the minds of Puma fans a long time: an ecstatic Puma coach Dave Smith running around the game floor and waving a towel over his head in celebration, and the Puma women's team returning to the floor several minutes after the final buzzer to acknowledge the roaring crowd that vociferously expressed its admiration for a team whose heart was as big as its basketball skills.

This contest was an uphill struggle much of the way for the Pumas after Northern erased a 21-13 SJC lead mid-way through the first half. The Lady Norse grabbed a 38-35 halftime lead and led most of the second half, including a 77-71 advantage with less than two minutes to play.

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ADD ONE

Now came the first time that the Pumas showed they wouldn't quit without a fight. Saint Joe blanked the visitors the rest of the way and scored two field goals plus two free throws to gain a 77-77 tie and force the first overtime.

The score was tied at 89-89 after the first extra session and 94-94 after the second five-minute session; the Pumas held brief leads in both periods but couldn't stay on top. In overtime three, Northern was up 107-101 with 1:44 left but the Pumas roared back to gain a 108-108 tie to necessitate a fourth extra session.

Saint Joe appeared in good shape after scoring the first seven points of this overtime, but two three-point baskets helped the Lady Norse come back for a 120-120 knot that required overtime number five.

Now it was Northern's turn to jump on top, and with less than two minutes left, the Lady Norse were up by 129-124. However, Tracy Payne capped a five-point Puma run with a pair of free throws with 59 seconds remaining to gain a 129-129 deadlock.

Northern's Julie Metzner bagged the second of two free throws with 34 seconds left to make it 130-129 before Yeoman took a pass from Jennifer Radosevic, dribbled to the baseline to the right of the basket and fired home the game-winner at the 0:07 mark.

Northern tried to hurry the other way for a last-second shot but committed a walking violation under SJC's defensive pressure at 0:02, and when Payne tossed the ball in to Radosevic, the victory celebration began.

"This is the biggest win in the history of our women's program, and it happened because our kids didn't quit; they wanted this game like you wouldn't believe," said an exhausted, hoarse Smith. "Our conditioning had a lot to do with our ability to keep pushing as the game went on and on -- if our kids wonder why they lift weights and work out in September and Oct-

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ADD THREE

"This game was an emotional roller coaster -- there were times when we worked the ball inside, got good shots, played tough defense and rebounded well," Smith said. "Then there were times when we just weren't rebounding and weren't showing the kind of patience on offense we should. We also had some problems at the free throw line, but a lot of this may have been due to plain tiredness."

Saint Joe converted 45 of 81 field goals (.556), seven of 12 three-pointers (.583) and 34 of 58 free throws (.586); Northern succeeded on 46 of 111 field goals (.414), two of five three-pointers (.400) and 36 of 54 free throws (.667). The Lady Norse dominated the boards, 79-59, but the Pumas led in assists (31-17) and steals (16-15).

During time-outs in the overtime sessions, Smith said he kept telling his team, "Play hard and something good will happen. This team has grown up a bit at a time all season long and now they should know they can come back against anyone."

Smith admitted the contest put him through a psychological wringer: "I thought we had it won a few times, and I agonized when I thought we had lost it," he said. "I was trying to think ahead to necessary strategies all the time, but I've never experienced so many highs and lows in one game."

The win gives the Pumas a 24-2 season record and moves them into first place in the GLVC with a 13-1 mark; Northern drops to 24-2 and second place in the conference at 12-2.

Saint Joe could clinch a tie for the GLVC crown by beating IUPUI-Fort Wayne next Thursday, and if that happens, Smith says the Pumas may be able to look back on Saturday's win as their ticket to the NCAA tournament.

Smith didn't lose his sense of humor, either. His first remark in a postgame interview was: "This game will wreck our defensive average."