

Mustangs edge Wildcats 57-54 to capture 'The Battle of Aurora' Senior Boys Basketball Tournament



St. Maximilian Kolbe Mustangs captured the Battle of Aurora Senior Boys basketball tournament by edging the Dr. G.W. Williams Wildcats 57-54 on last Thursday afternoon at Aurora High School.

Carlos Garcia San Miguel led the Mustangs' attack with 16 points and Darius McKain added 13.

In the championship final, Mustangs' Head Coach Mike Mattei attributed his team's win to 'team chemistry.'

'We had just lost a playoff game so this tournament final was the culmination of our season. There was lots of rivalry and passion in the game.'

Grade 11 Mustangs' Co-Captain Pierson Ribeiro echoed his coach's assessment about how cohesive his team was in the championship game as well as in their opening game versus Aurora High School: 'Our chemistry was the biggest factor. Our energy was there, too. We left it all on the court in both games. There were some fireworks, there was some talk, but we stayed disciplined when it counted. Maintaining energy in the final was a big factor. GW cut into our eighteen-point lead and got it down to three points so we had to play great together after losing our composure and nearly blowing a big lead.'

Coach Mattei concurred with his captain's insights into the keys to victory in the final versus the Wildcats, but also noted the importance of Game 1 against the Golden Eagles: 'We wanted to set the tone. We really wanted to prove to others in the area. Managing personalities was a big factor in winning Game One. We had to battle injuries all season - ankles and shoulders - so having the team healthy for the tournament was important, too.'

Grade 12 Mustangs' Co-Captain Pablo Garcia San Miguel - known as GSM to teammates - expressed his gratitude about playing in Game 1.

'I hurt my ankle just before our regular season Aurora game. I finally got a chance to play against three of my friends in their gym. Our starters set the tone. We came out strong.'

Garcia San Miguel set the tone in Game 1 by scoring 12 points in the first quarter and finished with a game-high 20. 'GSM' expressed the satisfaction of a local championship and noted lightheartedly about having bragging rights in Town: 'Because this is

Aurora, everyone in the tournament has played on other teams with each other so winning it is important. We were up by 20 in the first quarter, but then our shots stopped dropping. In the fourth quarter, we got it together. It was a great game. We knew GW would be tired after playing a quadruple overtime in Game 2 so we were able to pull away.?

In a great expression of fraternal recognition, GSM saved his final acknowledgement for his brother and teammate, Carlos.

?Another big factor was my brother Carlos who became one of our best shooters during the season after playing ?left bench' for us in previous seasons. He really stepped up as one of our main shooters, he led us in scoring in the final, and all three of us gave it our all.?

By Jim Stewart