

Cover Story: State basketball game sparks national controversy

by Sara Herzberg



The Pleasant Valley boys' basketball team made a repeat appearance at the Iowa State Tournament at the Wells Fargo Center in Des Moines.

After defeating Dubuque Senior 57-42 on March 9, the boys went on to play Des Moines Valley in the 4A semi-final game on March 11.

The teams were tied at 42 all at the end of regulation time, and continued into a four-minute overtime. At the end of the first overtime, senior Will Carius made two free throws to tie the score at 48—sending the teams into a second overtime.

Valley won the ball at the beginning of the second overtime. They passed and dribbled around half court, in a sense playing keep-away from the skilled PV defense.

Time kept ticking away, and Valley continued to hold the ball. With mere seconds left on the clock, Valley's Turner Scott drove to the hoop and scored, right as time ran out.

"We got the tip, and were moving the ball around and I looked up and saw there was 2:35 left," Valley coach B.J. Windhorst told the Des Moines Register after the game. "I figured we'll just whittle it down, use our timeouts and get the last

shot and make sure they can't have a chance to win it."

As heartbreaking and frustrating as it is, this kind of finish is not uncommon in high school basketball. Our loss to Valley only added to the ongoing discussion and debate of if there needs to be a shot clock in high school basketball.

Multiple news sources picked up the story of PV's frustrating finish at the state tournament. Sources like online media outlet, Deadspin, USA Today sports, the Des Moines Register and even as far as The Columbian—a daily newspaper in Vancouver, Washington—reported on our game.

Shot clocks are timers that increase the pace of a game and generally increase scoring levels. The offensive team must shoot before the shot clock expires and have the ball either touch the rim or enter the basket. Shot clocks are present in collegiate and professional games, and the time limit of the clock varies between levels of play.

Use of a shot clock would eliminate any future games like the one we faced at the state tournament. Teams would be forced to shoot more, and no longer would be able to hold the ball simply to stall gameplay.

In theory, shot clocks would be a great addition to high school basketball. However, many argue against them due to the financial burden and lack of available personnel.

Shot clocks can cost between \$2,000 and \$5,000 depending on the model, and although larger schools with lots of sports funding could fit that into their budget, smaller, more rural school districts would not have the extra money to spend.

Additionally, once implemented, there would need for a knowledgeable clock keeper to operate the shot clock during games. Many schools would struggle to find someone who knows shot clock rules and would volunteer their time to help during game time.

Despite a few problems, many are still in favor of a shot clock. A 2012 nationwide survey from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) said 63 percent of responding coaches were in favor of adding a shot clock.

In the state of Iowa, especially following this year's state tournament, the push for shot clocks is in full force.

Todd Tharp, assistant executive director at the Iowa High School Athletic Association said in February, "If we have administrators, athletic directors, principals or superintendents that want to contact us, we're an administrator-driven organization. If there's interest, we'll take a look at it."

Despite being a tough end to the season, our game has played a major role in igniting local and state-wide discussion on a pressing, national issue.