

Smith's leadership hallmark of a gritty team

E.C. Drury's senior boys basketball team came within a heartbeat of upstaging the top-seated Oakville Trafalgar Devils Wednesday — losing 57-56 in first round playoff action.

Ross Smith put forth what was arguably the performance of a lifetime. The veteran point guard gave literally all he had, diving for loose balls with unparalleled determination while demonstrating an overall work ethic that was nothing short of inspiring.

In the end however, this just wasn't enough to counter an early hole the Spartans had dug for themselves.

"I've never seen anything like that in my life. He single-handedly controlled the second half," said head coach Kevin Houldcroft, referring to the effort given by his feisty co-captain. "Afterwards, coaches from all the OT teams came over and offered him words of praise."

The Devils went ahead by three in the final nine seconds of play. Mike Maynard, one of the local squad's most effective outside shooters, narrowly missed a field goal with three ticks left on the clock which would have forced overtime.

Dumping in the rebound was Bobby Hicks, who after a slow start picked up his game and became a dominant force under the boards.

Drury came out flat, with a number of mental errors, and trailed by a dozen points at the half.

Remarked Houldcroft, "I think we were suffering a little from anxiety. The guys were making bad passes and missing easy lay-ups. To give credit to OT, they were hot right from the start."

EC's passing and shooting dramatically improved down the stretch. Maynard, who was elbowed in the face during the second quarter and used that to fuel his fire, was among those who greatly elevated their game. He finished with 10 points.

Smith led offensively with 18 points while Dan Salvador contributed 14. Also showing strongly were Ryan Eacrett and Cam Ivens — a top grade 11 prospect who'll no doubt be looked at to take on a starring role next season.

The Spartans finished regular season league play at 7-3 and were 16-7 overall.

"For a short, slim team we went pretty far beyond our capabilities," said Houldcroft.

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 Delta Meadowvale Resort, Graydon Hall, 7:30 am – 9:00 am

PEPSI PRESENTS THE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL CHALLENGE PRELIMINARIES
 John Fraser Secondary School, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm

WED, MARCH 3
GLAXO WELLCOME C.P.R. TRAINING BLITZ
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FRI, MARCH 5
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For more information please call the Mississauga Sports Council at 896-5853.

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