

The Bandera PROPHECY

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Bulldogs fall to Eagles in OT thriller
Bandera hosts Llano today at Bandera High School

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It's Game Day in Bandera! The Bulldogs (16-5) have won 11 of their last 12 games and are back at home for the first time since Dec. 7.

After going 2-0 in pool play with wins over Aransas Pass and Alice and a semifinal win over Calallen, the Bandera varsity boys' basketball team came within seconds of taking home the championship trophy at the Coach K Classic in Rockport.

The Bulldogs, who finished the trip with a 3-1 record to improve to 16-1 on the season, took Salado to overtime in the championship game before eventually falling to the Eagles in a heartbreaking 50-47 finish. The loss to Salado snapped an 11-game winning streak for Bandera, marking the program's longest win streak since the 2006-2007 season (12 games).

The Bulldogs took home second place but remain hungry and motivated with the district season right around the corner.

Despite opening the tournament fresh off a six-day break from the court, the trip to the Coastal Bend saw the Bulldogs continue to dominate on the defensive end of the court. After entering the tournament allowing an average of 40 points per game in their previous eight wins, Bandera came out of the gate with an abundance of energy against Aransas Pass and held the high-powered Panthers to just 14 first-half points. The energy continued through each game in Rockport - Bandera went on to hold Aransas Pass to 45 points in a 52-45 win and allowed an average of 46.25 points across the four games. Noah Barnett (11 points), Tyler Moore (10 points) and Liam DeMarchi (10 points) were the scoring leaders against Aransas Pass.

After defeating the Panthers, Bandera took on Alice Monday evening and used a strong second quarter to fuel another victory. The Bulldogs outscored Alice 29-18 in the first half and cruised to a 54-47 win with Moore (16 points) and Ryan Perez (15 points) leading the charge on the offensive end. After winning their pool and moving on to the Gold Bracket, Bandera defeated Calallen 48-43 in the tournament semifinals. A strong fourth quarter was key to the win as the Bulldogs got a handful of big stops down the stretch and were able to convert a number of opportunities in transition to gain a slim lead. Moore again led the way with 16 points in the win while Bandera held the Wildcats to their second lowest-scoring output of the season to advance to the championship game. Salado, which defeated Robstown, Port Aransas and Rockport-Fulton enroute to the championship, boasted an offense averaging 60 points per game for the season. The Bulldogs jumped out to a 6-point lead entering the halftime break before the Eagles caught fire in the second half. The game turned into a back-and-forth battle with 10 lead changes before Salado pulled ahead for good with just under three minutes remaining in overtime.

The Bulldogs stayed in the game with their defensive intensity but failed to capitalize on a number of chances to tie or take the lead on the offensive end in the final minutes.

Moore and Perez were named to the All-Tournament Team for their efforts across the four games in Rockport. Moore averaged 13.3 points and 8.5 rebounds and posted two double doubles while Perez averaged 7 points, 4 rebounds, 2 assists and 2 steals per game.

After moving to 16-5 on the season, the Bulldogs now have three straight home games before the start of District 28-4A play. Bandera hosts Llano on Tuesday Jan. 4 (4, 5:15 and 6:30 p.m.), Pearsall on Friday Jan. 7 at Bandera Middle School, and San Antonio Fox Tech on Tuesday Jan. 11. The Bulldogs open district play on the road against Davenport on Friday Jan. 14.

Coach's Notes: "I'm so proud of the way our guys represented Bandera in front of some strong competition. They were the most excited team to

take the floor in each game and played with unmatched passion and energy, which is something we focus on in practice on a daily basis. Our defense continues to be the strength of our team and we are playing really well on that end. We were able to pick up three quality wins, but know our offensive execution is going to have to improve to accomplish our goals by the time district rolls around in two weeks. I'm so proud of our guys for their performance in Rockport and we're looking forward to being back on our home floor in front of a big crowd for a nice three-game homestand."