By TOMMY BRYAN

Mt. Juliet survived a late 9-0 Wilson Central run and managed a thrilling 76-73 overtime win over the Wildcats in front of a packed house Tuesday night.

The Golden Bears improved to 17-3 overall and took control of the District 9AAA race with a 7-0 record, despite spotty free throw shooting down the stretch and in the extra period.

"I goofed up," said MJ coach Troy Allen, "I was telling my best friend today that I had never coached a team that was shooting 77 percent on free throws. Then we come out and miss all those late in the game."

The Bears had a seemingly commanding 61-52 lead and the ball with 2:45 to go in regulation, but Central went on a 9-0 run to draw even at 61-61 with 1:18 left on a mid-range jumper by Dee Oldham.

Mt. Juliet held the ball for the last shot, but Caleb Chowbay's stepback three was off the mark and DaShawn McMurry's putback was missed -- sending the game into overtime.

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50