

## ***YEAR ENDS WITH 33-3 RECORD***

FRANKFORT, KY -- No. 6-ranked Cumberland's dream season came to a screeching halt Monday in the semifinals of the NAIA National Championships with a narrow 43-41 loss to No. 7 ranked Lee University of Cleveland at the Frankfort Convention Center.

Lee's Hollie German knocked down a pair of free throws with 3.7 seconds left in regulation for the final margin. CU guard Briannica Tye had a good look at a potential game-winning 3-pointer, but back-rimmed the shot at buzzer.

"I couldn't have been any more proud of these girls -- even if we had won the game," said Cumberland head coach Jeremy Lewis. "Our kids fought tooth and nail, battled through some early foul trouble, but I think the big thing was our inability to convert some offensive rebounds into baskets.

"We had some point-blank bunnies we didn't make. It was a tough game for both teams, no media timeouts and the level of play got pretty sloppy."

Lee (34-2) made only three field goals in the second half but connected on 11-of-14 free throws, including the club's final nine points of the game.

The contest also featured seven ties and two lead changes in the second half, as Cumberland erased a six-point deficit at the break, tying the game less than five minutes into the period on London Elie's bucket, two of her team-best nine points. No team led by more than three points the rest of the game.

German's one foul shot with 14:34 to play gave Lee a 31-30 advantage and Rachel Lockhart added one free throws at 11:31, but the Bulldogs failed to score for almost eight minutes after Elie's field goal. Josette Campbell's layup off an in-bounds play finally ended the scoreless stretch with 7:08 remaining, tying the contest at 32.

Jenna Adams' field goal, also off an in-bounds play, was the last bucket of the game for the Flames with 6:44 to play. Lee made 9-of-10 free throws in the last 6:18 while missing all five shot attempts and committing a pair of turnovers.

A steal by Yalonda Davis and subsequent two free throws on the other end tied the game at 34 and Campbell's field goal knotted the score at 36. Elie made the front end of the bonus and Jessica Pace got the offensive rebound on the second shot and was fouled, but Pace missed the first shot of the bonus and two more free throws from Adams gave the Flames a 40-37 advantage.

Tye was fouled driving to the basket the next time down for CU but made just one free throw, but the point guard found Simone Ryan under the goal for a layup and the foul with 1:55 remaining, putting the Bulldogs ahead, 41-40, the team's first lead since the 7:28 mark of the first half.

German was fouled driving to the goal and tied the game with one foul shot with 1:36 remaining, but Pace's pass in traffic was stolen. Lee failed to get a shot off the next time down the floor, committing a shot clock violation, but Tye's 15-footer hit the back iron, giving the Flames the ball for the last shot.

German drove hard to the goal and was fouled in traffic with 3.7 seconds left and made both free throws. The Bulldogs set up Tye to take the ball the length of the floor and the senior got a good look from the top of the key, but the ball clanged off the back rim, Tye unable to score her third game-winning shot of the season.

Cumberland shot just 29 percent from the field in the game while Lee was just a little worse, making just 27 percent of its shots, including 3-for-18 from 3-point range. Both teams missed multiple layups, some in traffic and some all alone under the goal.

Tye finished with nine points and four assists while Pace and Campbell both posted six points. Elie added six rebounds and four blocks despite battling foul trouble, especially in the first half.

Adams and German combined for 29 points for the Flames, 16 by Adams along with nine rebounds. The Bulldogs harassed Lee into 12 second-half turnovers and the club shot just 3-for-22 after the break, opening the door for CU.

Both teams started slowly, but Tye's 3-pointer gave the Bulldogs a 7-2 edge in the first four minutes of the game. German's trifecta and drive off the glass cut the CU lead to 11-9 with 10:04 left in the period.

Tye nailed another 3-pointer, this time with the shot clock winding down, and Pace's putback pushed the Bulldog advantage to 16-12 with 7:28 remaining, but from there Cumberland went ice cold, making just two field goals (out-of-10) the rest of the half and missing a bunch of layups and putbacks.

Lee took advantage, putting together a 14-4 spurt highlighted by a pair of trifectas from Adams, one banked in from about 24 feet. A short jumper in the lane from TaCouya Allen ended a four-minute scoring drought for CU, but Brooke Hamby's up-and-under and a baseline jumper from German put the Flames ahead, 26-20, at the break.

Cumberland shot just 30 percent in the half and committed eight turnovers after accounting for only 12 turnovers per contest in its first three games of the national tournament.