

B-Meg ascends to throne, ends an era

Written by Administrator
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James Yap of B-Meg moves past Donnell Harvey of Talk N Text for a twinner in Sunday's Game 7 at the Smart Araneta Coliseum. (Photo by Jun Mendoza)

MANILA — Denzel Bowles rescued B-Meg as time stood still in the very last second and did the damage in overtime as the all-conquering Llamados sent the Talk N Text Tropang Texters to their knees in an amazing turnaround and sealed a 90-84 win and the PBA Commissioner's Cup crown at the full-packed Smart Araneta Coliseum on May 6.

Bowles buried two free throws with 1.2 ticks left to force the extra period and then carried the

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Llamados all the way in overtime to give them their first title in three years.

B-Meg soared back to the pinnacle of glory as it ended the reign of Talk n Text and gained a chance to be the first team in 12 years to win four crowns over five conferences.

Tearing apart the Texters following Donnell Harvey's exit on fouls with over three minutes left in regulation, Bowles finished with a PBA career high of 39 points that went with 21 rebounds, three blocks, two assists and one steal.

James Yap made some crucial plays, wound up with 12 points and eight rebounds, and was later named the Excelroof Finals MVP.

"It looked that we lost that game so many times. I had no idea what happened. We won the game and it was really amazing," said coach Tim Cone, notching a first championship outside of Alaska Milk that put him a win shy of the all-time best record of legendary coach Baby Dalupan (15 with Crispa, Presto and Purefoods).

"I don't feel deserving but I take it. We're very fortunate to be here so quickly," said Cone, emerging a champion coach in his second conference with B-Meg.

Cone heaped praises on Bowles for making it happen.

"We realized Harvey getting into foul trouble, and so we spread the floor and kept on dumping the ball on Denzel. He showed his ability to take punishment and have the legs to take jump shots and make them. He was phenomenal," said Cone.

The tournament Best Import saved his best for last, scoring all of his team's last 16 points, including the charities that sent the game into OT.

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“The first one, I had a doubt. The second one, I could feel it going in,” said the young but talented 6-foot-10 player.

“I didn’t want to miss it. I didn’t want to mess up the game. That’s big and I overcame that,” added Bowles of the free throws forcing OT at 76-all.

Talk n Text had appeared to have wrapped up the crown in getting up 74-68 with two minutes left to play.

The Llamados, however, refused to give up, and the Texters suffered in missing crucial charities of their own.

Ali Peek went 2-of-2 from the line in the last 39 seconds, with his second missed freebie giving the Llamados the chance to tie with 13.3 ticks left.

Yap took matters into his hands, attacking the paint for a looping layup off Peek and missed.

The Llamados, however, grabbed the loose ball, and then Yap found Bowles underneath for a shot where he drew a foul from Kelly Williams.

A 68-percent free throw shooter, Bowles obviously felt the pressure but survived, keeping the Llamados’ hopes alive in the process.

And his heroics didn’t end there.

He piled up nine points in overtime and found his teammates piling up on him on the floor as the buzzer sounded, signaling B-Meg’s return to the top.

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It was B-Meg's ninth championship in all, tying Toyota at fourth in the all-time ladder behind San Miguel/Petron (19) and Crispa and Alaska with 13 each.

Jimmy Alapag came out of his shell, sizzling with seven three-pointers and a total of 29 points, leading Talk n Text's effort that went in vain.

As expected, both teams came out strong and tried hard to impose one's will over the other as they fought through four deadlocks and nine lead changes before the Texters edged the Llamados, 35-34, at the half.

Alapag, the 2011 MVP who averaged only 7.5 points in the first six games of the series, hit his strides early in this contest, going 3-of-5 from beyond the arc and burying 2-of-2 free throws for 11 points in the opening half.

Alapag failed to finish the game, cramping out with in the dying seconds of regulation play.

Ryan Reyes also went out with over four minutes left in the fourth after a bad fall.

B-Meg also had a player checking out a personal slump in PJ Simon who also made 11 first-half points on 3-of-4 clips from the field and from the stripe.

The Llamados had a better start, enjoying an eight-point lead at 19-11, but Jarred Dillinger, Larry Fonacier and Ranidel de Ocampo came off the bench firing, enabling TnT to race ahead at 30-25.

Notes: Even with the official tally not yet done, PBA officials said it's safe to say they drew new all-time highs in both gate attendance and gate receipts for the finals in this Texters-Llamados playoff.

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With a crowd of 21,046 watching Game 7, the series drew a remarkable average of 16,403.