

EHS Grad Kate Martin Comes Through In Clutch, Scores 11 Points, Hits Big Baskets In Fourth As Iowa Holds Off UConn

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CLEVELAND - Iowa's star and Edwardsville grad Kate Martin helped pick up the slack on Friday night, hitting key baskets in the pivotal fourth quarter in scoring 11 points to help Iowa defeat Connecticut 71-69 in the second semifinal of the NCAA Women's basketball Final Four at Quicken Loans Fieldhouse in Cleveland.

The win advances the Hawkeyes (34-4) to the championship game Sunday afternoon against undefeated South Carolina (37-0), which tips off at 3 p.m. and will be seen on ABC (KDNL-TV, Channel 30 in the St. Louis area). It's the second year in a row Iowa will play in the final.

Martin was clutch in the second half, especially after accidentally getting clipped by an elbow that resulted in a bloody nose. Martin went off for repairs, then sprinted right back out before the court was finished being cleaned. She then went on a tear, hitting a three with inside two minutes left to give the Hawkeyes a 70-64 lead.

The Huskies cut the lead to 70-69 late, and had a chance to win in the dying seconds, but a controversial illegal screen foul against UConn stopped the chance, and Iowa was able to run out the clock to win.

Clark ended up with 21 points, but was held to five-of-eight shooting in the first half, thanks to a swarming Connecticut defense that held her in check for most of the night.

In the first game, the Gamecocks defeated North Carolina State 78-59 to advance to the final and set up a rematch of a semifinal game from last year, a game won by the Hawkeyes 77-73 at American Airlines Center in Dallas. Iowa lost the final last year to LSU 102-85, but won over the Tigers in this year's regional final in Albany, N.Y. 94-87.

South Carolina enters the final undefeated, the same way as in last year's semifinal against Iowa, with the Hawkeyes' win ending their season.