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Late free throws send Tigers to semifinals

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By TRAVIS LAZARCZYK, Staff Writer **KENNEBEC JOURNAL Morning Sentinel** Saturday, February 16, 2008

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AUGUSTA -- His entire life, if Cody Gilboe wanted to go to the Western Maine Class D boys basketball semifinals, he had to buy a ticket. Now, thanks in no small part to his strong play, Gilboe and the Forest Hills boys are on to the regional semis for the first time since 1992.

Gilboe's layup with 41 seconds left put No. 3 Forest Hills on top of No. 6 Elan for good, and Mitch Lumbert's free throws with 2.9 seconds left sealed the 45-42 win for the Tigers at the Augusta Civic Center.

Forest Hills (15-4) will face No. 2 Valley in the semis at 10 a.m. Wednesday. Elan ends the season at 11-5.

"It means a lot. It's been 16 years," said Gilboe, who scored 20 points and grabbed 12 rebounds while being guarded by Elan's top player, Malcolm Turner, most of the game.

"I didn't expect (Gilboe) to get that many looks, because Turner is a big kid. He's a tremendous athlete, so we kind of thought they would counter balance," Forest Hills coach Anthony Amero said. "But they focused so much on (Jeff) Mulhall, taking him away, that it opened up the middle for us."

Gilboe scored 10 of his points in the second quarter, as he led a 13-0 Forest Hills run that saw the Tigers build a 25-15 lead. Forest Hills led 30-24 with 5 minutes, 43 seconds left in the third quarter, when Gilboe picked up his fourth foul and had to sit.

That was the opening Elan needed, and Turner took over the game. Turner scored eight of his 19 points in the third quarter, and Elan took a 36-35 lead into the fourth quarter. Turner also grabbed a game-high 16 rebounds.

"Without (Gilboe), defensively we struggled. He's everything in the paint," Amero said.

The teams traded the lead five times in the fourth quarter. Sean Waddleton scored to give Elan a 42-41 lead with 56 seconds to play. Gilboe was fouled on his go ahead bucket, but missed the free throw. An Elan turnover with 8.2 seconds left gave the Tigers the ball back, and Lumbert hit both his foul shots for his only points of the game to give his team some breathing room.

"I don't know what I'd have done if I'd missed those," Lumbert said.

Elan had time to try and tie the game and got the ball the length of the court, but Lee Gach's baseline 3-point try at the buzzer went off the back of the rim.

"We did what we wanted to," Elan coach Peter Rowe said. "The play was to run Malcolm down the center

and look for the guard down the wing, and actually it went a little deep, but (Gach) caught it, and he got the shot. It just didn't drop."

After a scoreless first half, Mulhall finished with 10 points for the Tigers, while Cory Plante had 10 boards. Gach had 14 points for Elan.

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