

Mixon Bankston hit a bank shot under the rim with 5 seconds left to propel the St. Mary's boys' basketball team past Tioga, 45-44, Friday at home.

The Tigers (15-5) were able to pick up the win despite a nightmare game at the free throw line. St. Mary's was just 8-for-21 from the charity stripe for the game before Bankston's heroics.

"Yeah, but we made up for it (free throw struggles) in several ways," said SMH head basketball coach Jake Bankston. "We didn't shoot it well and the line, but we got big stops on the defensive end all night and then Mixon coming through for us in the clutch like that. It's not always pretty but we'll take it. It was a great team win from all of our players and all of the support from our fans."

The final minute of the game featured several wild plays. SMH trailed 42-40 with 55 seconds left when Ayden Warren drilled a three-pointer to give SMH the brief lead, 43-42. After Tioga (15-10) responded with a go-ahead bucket to make it 44-43 with 16 seconds left, the stage was set for Bankston's heroics.

"I wasn't sure if we had enough time to run a play" said Mixon Bankston. "But we had the shooters spread out to give me some room to create and fortunately I was able to get in there and make the shot."

SMH was led by Ben Bienvenu with 14 points, Bankston added 11 and Warren had nine as the Tigers picked up the heart-stopping win.

Next up, St. Mary's will return to district action Tuesday when they hit the road to face Montgomery.