

Michigan State beats Texas 63-61

Neitzel drove right down the lane for the winning points

[box score](#)

NEW YORK (AP) -- In a game that saw 43 3-pointers launched, it came down to a drive by one of the few upperclassmen on the floor.

Drew Neitzel scored on a drive with 2.4 seconds left to give Michigan State a 63-61 victory over Texas (No. 18, ESPN/USA Today, No. 19 AP) on Thursday night in the semifinals of the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic.

Neitzel, the only junior in the Spartans' starting lineup with two sophomores and two freshmen, took an inbound with 8.4 seconds left. He dribbled behind the 3-point line, from where both teams seemed to be taking the majority of their shots, put the ball on the floor, took advantage of a defender slipping and drove right down the lane for the winning points.

"Give him credit, he did a heck of a job," Spartans coach Tom Izzo said of Neitzel. "He busted right through. I think they were worried about a shot and they were pretty spread apart."

Texas called a timeout and had a final chance, but A.J. Abrams' long shot from a step inside halfcourt bounced off the rim.

Michigan State (4-0) will play Maryland for the championship on Friday night at Madison Square Garden. The Terrapins (4-0) beat St. John's 92-60 in the other semifinal.

In a game of two young teams, freshmen were key for both.

Raymar Morgan had 18 points for Michigan State, while Kevin Durant had 21 for the Longhorns (2-1), one less than Abrams, a sophomore.

Durant, who had only five points on 1-for-7 shooting in the second half, finished with nine rebounds and four blocks.

"They played a great game but I couldn't hit open shot and couldn't make easy putbacks," Durant said. "This was our third game, we'll be OK."

Texas coach Rick Barnes didn't seem too concerned about Durant's rough second half.

"He played 39 minutes and except for the 1-for-8 on 3-pointers, it was a pretty good 39 minutes," Barnes said. "We had five freshmen out there a lot and I thought overall things went pretty well."

Michigan State finished 9-for-17 from 3-point range, while Texas was 7-for-26. Abrams was 6-for-13 on 3s, well off the 11-for-17 he was in the Longhorns' first two games.

"We decently guarded Abrams on 3s, he can hot then from all over," Izzo said. "Overall, we did a decent job on him."

The Spartans used a 12-0 run -- nine of the points coming on 3s -- to take a 54-47 lead. Abrams hit consecutive shots from behind the arc to get the Longhorns within one.

Abrams hit his last 3 of the game with 5:26 left to pull the Longhorns within 59-58 and Durant made one free throw with 4:02 left to tie the game.

Abrams made two free throws with 2:48 left to tie the game for the last time at 61, and there were five missed shots and five timeouts before Neitzel came up with the winning play.

Neitzel finished with 15 points and six assists and Maurice Joseph added 12 points for the Spartans.

Barnes said it was the rebounding that did in his team, especially Michigan State's 26-18 advantage on the boards in the second half.

"Our defense kept us in it and our rebounding let it get away," he said.

