Lahyani’s game-winning buzzer beater confirms US Monastir’s revival

Firas Lahyani’s three-point buzzer beater that beat Petro de Luanda  70-67 on Saturday epitomised US Monastir’s revival this season.

For a team that started the season with a three-game losing streak to be now 4-3, this win says a lot about the 2022 BAL winners’ transformation since the end of the Kalahari Conference on May 12.

Patience, tenacity, self-belief, and more importantly, determination, were key factors in US Monastir’s three-point win.

And the biggest lesson that Petro de Luanda can take from the hurtful loss is that a basketball game is nott over until it’s over.

Petro de Luanda entered the final five minutes of the game leading by eight (65-57), but Monastir’s 10-0 run changed the course of the game.

An overtime was on the horizon until Lahyani hit the game at the buzzer.

Both teams were 7-for-27 from behind the arc in the waning seconds of the game, but, somehow, Petro de Luanda left Lahyani wide open who then capitalised on the opportunity.

Lahyani scored 12 of his game-high 19 points from behind the arc. He was also a rebound shy from a double-double.

George Williams and Ater Majok, are other US Monastir players to score in double digits, finishing with 12 and 17 points, respectively.

Nicholas Faust, who scored his first BAL points with a three-pointer, led Petro in scoring with 12 points off the bench; Childe Dundao, who started the game off the bench for the first time in the BAL, added 11 points.

“It was a good way to start the Finals,” said US Monastir guard Oussama Marnaoui, who finished with 9 points.

“That was our conversation before the game. We needed to start this game with confidence,” Marnaoui pointed out when asked to reflect on how they needed to beat Petro de Luanda for a second time since their 2022 BAL title.

He went on to say that US Monastir’s 0-3 start to the BAL season is now a thing of the past. “We lost the first three games because there was some misunderstanding within the team. Nobody knew what was going on. Thankfully, we figured that out and our team’s potential is showing now”.

Reflecting on Petro de Luanda’s decision-making Faust insisted that Petro de Luanda can do better,  “We went back and forth. The last play was a defensive slip. Great job to Monastir, they did a great job executing down the stretch.”

“We missed a couple open shots that really would have put us up and in a better position.”

“I wouldn’t say mental lapse. [But], Defensive breakdowns down the stretch; they had a couple of rebounds and put backs, and.we missed shots that we usually make.”

While US Monastir improved to 4-3, Petro de Luanda dropped to 2-3 this season.