If D.J. Cooper's final shot of regulation were a mere six inches to the left we would be talking about one of the biggest upsets in NCAA Tournament history. However, the Ohio Bobcats will have to live with a moral victory.

Cooper's mid-court fling as the second-half horn sounded bounced off the right side of the rim, and then the Bobcats watched as top-seeded North Carolina out-score them 10-2 in overtime as the Tar Heels advanced to the Elite Eight with a 73-65 overtime victory in the Midwest Region semifinal.

With North Carolina starting point guard Kendall Marshall not able to play in the contest due to a fractured wrist, most experts expected Ohio's leading scorer, all-Mid-American Conference First Team point guard D.J. Cooper, to have his way with replacement Stillman White. White, a true freshman, played scant minutes during the regular season before the injury to Marshall during the Tar Heels' third-round victory over Creighton thrust him into the starting lineup.

White held his own against Cooper, who struggled offensively all evening. After averaging 20.0 points per game in the first two games of the tournament, Cooper was able to score only 10 on 3-of-20 shooting. He hit just one of his 10 3-point attempts and turned the ball over four times.

He also had a mental lapse that cost Ohio dearly. The Bobcats held a 61-60 lead with under a minute left in regulation. On the offensive end, Cooper drove to the basket and appeared to get hit in the eye by Tar Heels guard Reggie Bullock as he missed the shot. UNC pulled down the

rebound and took off the other way while Cooper bent over and held his eye as Ohio coach John Groce screamed from the bench for him to get back on defense. Cooper trotted back, but was late as the Tar Heels were able to take advantage with Bullock draining a 3-pointer from the right baseline to give his team a 63-61 lead.

Walter Offutt, who led Ohio with a game-high 26 points, blew past White at the other end, scoring on a left-handed lay-up and drawing a foul on White.

With the game tied at 63-63 and just 25.3 seconds remaining in regulation, Offutt could have put quite a bit of pressure on the Tar Heels by converting the ensuing free throw to give Ohio a one-point lead.

He missed...the only Bobcats misfire from the free throw line all game.

North Carolina took a timeout to figure out what it wanted to do for the last shot, and decided to give the ball to All-ACC forward Harrison Barnes at the top of the key and clear out for him. Offutt got a hand on the ball when Barnes pulled up from the left elbow, and the ball bounced to Cooper. With three seconds left, Cooper only had time to take a couple of dribbles to half-court and let the ball fly. It bounced off the rim as the State of North Carolina held its collective breath and Groce used as much body English as he could to try to coax the ball into the net.

Barnes scored five of his 12 points in overtime as the Tar Heels pulled away.

"In the overtime we just didn't make as many plays as they did," Groce, who watched his team miss all six of its shots from the field in the extra session, said. "It was that simple."

North Carolina (32-5) shot just 40 percent from the field in the game, but enjoyed huge advantages in rebounding (56-26) and free throw attempts (24-8). Tyler Zeller, the ACC Player of the Year, paced the Tar Heels with 20 points and 22 rebounds while Bullock (17 points, 10 rebounds) and John Henson (14 points, 10 rebounds) also recorded double-doubles for UNC.

"Probably the ugliest win I've ever been a part of," Bullock said. "But we won the game and, hopefully, we'll do better on Sunday."

Along with Offutt's 26 points, Nick Kellogg scored 14 points and connected on 4-of-5 shots from beyond the 3-point arc.

"One free throw away," Offutt, a junior, said of his miss late in regulation. "As a leader on this team, I take responsibility that I've got to hit that free throw. ... It just feels terrible to kind of let my team down in that sort of way."

North Carolina advanced to play the winner of the Kansas-North Carolina State game in the Midwest Region final Sunday.

Groce, who saw his team win a school-record 29 games this season, will have to be content with knowing he has every starter back next season. In fact, the Bobcats had just one senior on the 2011-12 roster. But that was little consolation for his team.

"Awful proud of our guys for the way that they fought," Groce said. "But as I told them in the locker room, there's nothing I can say to them at this point that's going to take away the sting of getting beat in that one. They've got a lot of pride and they believed all year that we could

compete and beat anybody that we played. That was no different heading into tonight's game."