

Undefeated Ocelots win tourney opener in OT

By THE OBSERVER STAFF

Top-ranked Schoolcraft College cleared a major hurdle by winning its first-round game Tuesday in the National Junior College Athletic Association Division I men's basketball tournament.

In what many observers considered to be a championship-caliber game, the undefeated Ocelots (33-0) overcame last year's national runner-up, No. 8 Allegany from Cumberland, Md., in overtime, 84-81.

As a reward for its initial success, Schoolcraft earned two days of rest and advanced to the quarterfinals of the 16-team tourney. The Ocelots play Itawamba College (22-5) from Mississippi tonight in Hutchinson, Kan.

The Ocelots had a 38-28 half-time lead Tuesday, but Allegany (31-3) battled back to tie the score at the end of regulation, 69-69.

The second half ended with a bit of controversy when Allegany

was credited with a questionable three-point basket that allowed it to force overtime.

Schoolcraft point guard Rulon Harris, who scored a game-high 29 points, was fouled attempting a try with 36 seconds remaining. He sank all three free throws for a 69-69 tie.

After an Allegany turnover, Harris made one of his five triples to give the Ocelots the lead. But Trelle Galloway heaved a running one-hander that banked off the glass for the tying bucket with 1.4 seconds. Time was allowed to expire on the play, however, adding to the controversy.

"I thought he stepped inside the line," Schoolcraft coach Carlos Briggs said. "At least I thought one official saw that, because he ran off the court."

"It was a tough way to end the game for us. I thought our kids were able to play through it."

After some discussion and a certain amount of confusion, the teams headed to overtime.

'We kept our composure tonight, and we had a never-say-die mentality. Our guys were tough, and it could have been easy to quit in situations like that. We knocked down some shots in the clutch.'

Carlos Briggs
Schoolcraft coach

Six-foot-7, 280-pound Delvar Barrett made a key, three-point play in overtime when he scored inside and made the free throw to give Schoolcraft a 78-74 lead with 2:28 left.

It became a foul situation after that, and the Ocelots made their last 13 in a row, including six straight by Harris in the final 51 seconds.

Harris, who was 9-for-11 from the field and 7-for-7 at the line,

scored 24 of his points in the second half and overtime. He also had six assists.

"Rulon played a helluva game," Briggs said. "He stepped up when we needed it and made some big shots. He's hit some big shots for us this year when we've won some tough games on the road."

Barrett finished with 16 points, and Mike Williams had 15 points and 12 rebounds. The

Ocelots made 17 of 19 free throws.

Jamar Smith scored 23 points and pulled down 12 rebounds for Allegany. Erik Willis and Galloway had 14 points apiece, Shawn Wiggins 13 and 6-foot-6, 304-pound center Troy Godwin 12. Allegany was 16-of-27 at the line.

"They were strong, athletic and tough, and their coach did a great job," Briggs said of the Trojans. "We knew it would be a close game. The first five minutes of the second half they did a good job to establish the tempo."

"We kept our composure tonight, and we had a never-say-die mentality. Our guys were

tough, and it could have been easy to quit in situations like that. We knocked down some shots in the clutch."

Too many mistakes cost the Trojans, according to coach Bob Kirk.

"We had the tempo until the last two minutes and 50 seconds (of regulation)," he said. "We made a couple key mistakes in overtime."

"It wasn't just one guy. Everybody made one of those kind of mistakes during the course of the game."

"We battled back against the No. 1 team in the country, and we felt it was our game."

Triathlon events at YMCA scheduled

The Team Challenge Tri 2002 and Y-Tri will take place Sunday, March 24, at the Farmington Hills YMCA at 12 Mile and Farmington roads.

The two triathlon events are sponsored by the YMCA, Sunrise Runners Club and Ford Athletic Swim and Triathlon (F.A.S.T.). Participants can do one or both races.

The Team Challenge event (three athletes per team) consists of a 1K swim, 30K bike and 5K run, plus three modest-intensity mystery events of endurance, strength and coordination.

Each athlete participates in each event. Scores are based on time. Bonus points are awarded for speed, youngest and oldest teams.

The Y-Tri consists of swimming, riding a stationary bike and running/walking on a treadmill for 15 minutes each. Scores are based on distance.

There will be a mandatory,

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pre-race meeting and bike setup at 7 a.m. for the Team Challenge. Athletes must provide their own bike, computer and trainer. The event starts at 7:30 a.m. The start time for the Y-Tri will be on a first-come basis between 9 a.m. and noon.

The entry fee is \$10 per triathlete and should be payable to Farmington Hills YMCA. Mail or deliver to: Y-Tri, 28100 Farmington Rd., Farmington Hills, MI 48334, attn: P.J. Jones. For more information call Jones at (248) 553-4020, ext. 122.

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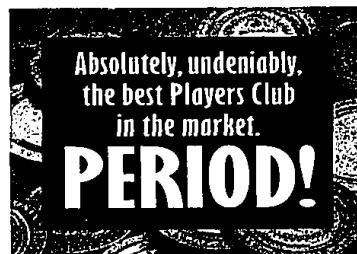


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