

Area college cagers earn tourney berth

You won't see Dick Enberg and "Coach" Al McGuire at courtside.

Likewise, the NBC television cameras won't be there either.

They probably aren't even playing in the "Kodak Leggings" kit, "This Is It."

For the Michigan Christian College basketball team, this isn't.

It's the National Little College Athletic Association basketball tournament, and, for the first time in the history of the Rochester College, the Warriors will be a part of it.

The NLCAA — not quite a common acronym — is the governing body for colleges with an enrollment under 500. While it comes to playoffs, the NLCAA doesn't carry the prestige of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) or the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). But, to Michigan Christian coach Garth Pleasant, it's the pinnacle of the season for his Warriors.

"I know it's not the NCAA or the NAIA," Pleasant said, "but it's just as big to us."

The national tournament, which will take place March 8-12 in Oakland City, Ind., is comprised of 16 district winners. On March 8, Michigan Christian will open the tournament against the South Pacific district winner.

ABOUT 10 GAMES into the 1981-82 season, Pleasant realized the

team's goal of qualifying for the national tourney was indeed a possibility. In an earlier interview, Pleasant said, "I didn't think we could make it. I wouldn't believe it."

"Well, we made it," Pleasant said in an updated report, "and we're just elated. The kids are really excited. This is what we've worked so hard for all year."

The Warriors qualified for the national tournament after it won the Columbus, Ohio, District title during the weekend. Pleasant's troupe knocked out Josephinum, from Columbus, 95-71 in the championship game.

"They were bigger than us, and that concerned us going into the game," Pleasant said. "But we wore 'em down. We pressed them and ran on them, and that hurt them bad."

Mike Adams, with 29 points, Lester Dodd added 16, and Ray Brown and Rich Zalewski chipped in with 12 and 10 points, respectively.

The win lifted Michigan Christian's season record to 15-3.

LAST WEEK, the Warriors posted a pair of victories — a 76-62 win over Fort Wayne Bible College and a 105-79 shelling over Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music.

Friday, the Warriors host Marygrove at Oakland University,

and Saturday, the team will play

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