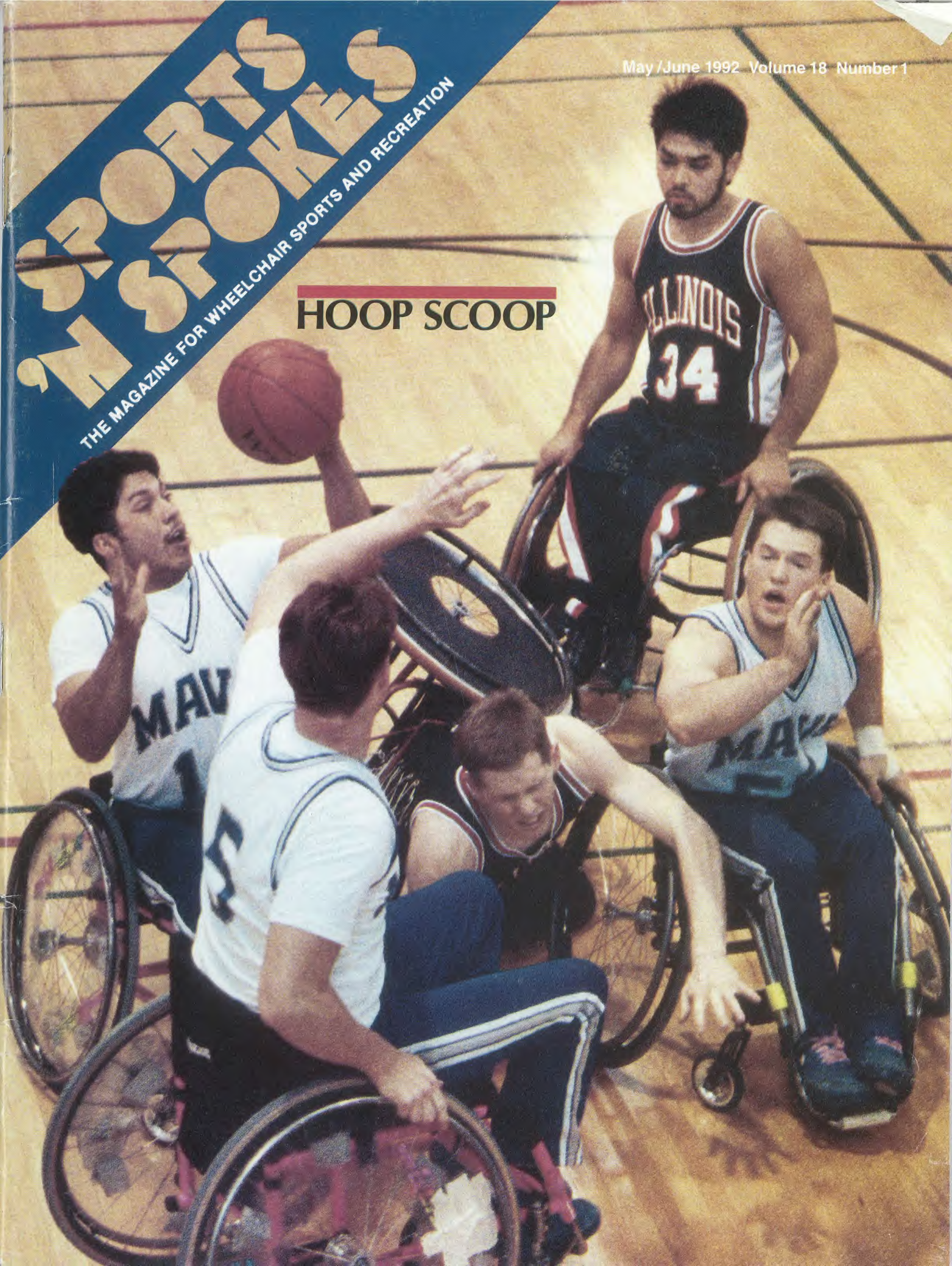


## HOOP SCOOP







## SPORTS 'N SPOKES

May/June 1992

Volume 18 Number 1

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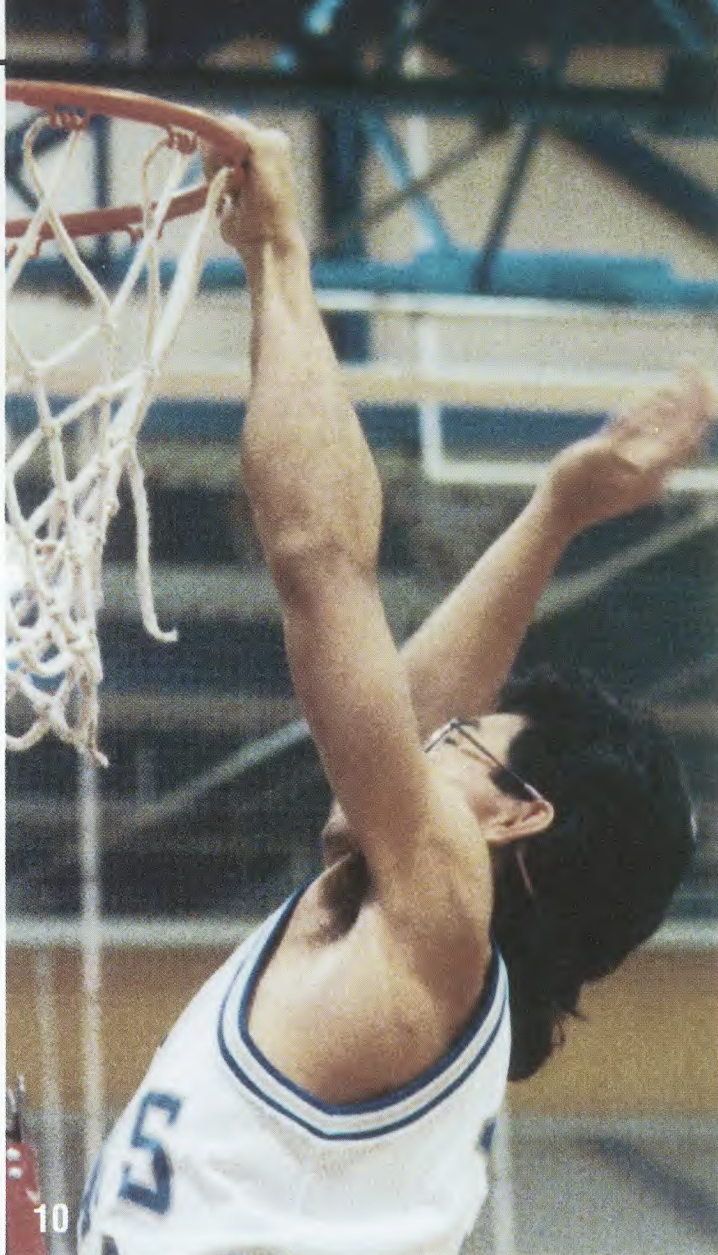
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Sports 'n Spokes (ISSN 0161-6706). Published bimonthly at 5201 North 19th Avenue, Suite 111, Phoenix, AZ 85015. (602) 246-9426. Second-class postage paid at Phoenix, AZ, and at additional entry offices. Send subscriptions or changes of address to Sports 'n Spokes, 5201 North 19th Avenue, Suite 111, Phoenix, AZ 85015. Subscription fee: \$12 annually. Foreign orders: \$16 US annually.



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*The Mavs' jubilant Chhayly Mak hangs one on as the traditional victory net-cutting begins. Jason Van Beek waits his turn.*



# HOOP SCOOP

## 15TH NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT: MOVIN' MAVS SUCCESSFULLY DEFEND TITLE

story by Jeffrey Shuck, Joanne Shuck, and Norma Wilke

photos by Curt Beamer and Delfina Colby

**T**he University of Texas-Arlington (UTA) Movin' Mavs rolled into Carbondale, IL, fired up and ready to defend their intercollegiate title.

The conversation around the Southern Illinois University (SIU) Student Recreation Center included these questions: "Is it too early to call UTA a dynasty?" "Are the Illini the team to dethrone the Mavs?" And, "Will the Illini look past SIU and be upset?" The answers to these questions would be "Yes," "Not this year," and "No."

The tournament opened with the top-seeded Mavs facing the fourth-seeded Raiders of Wright State. The course of the game was evident from the tip: Within the first minute, the Mavs' Stephen Welch had a steal and 6 points, while the Raiders had not yet gotten into their front court. Throughout the game, the quickness and height of the Mavs proved more than Wright State could handle. UTA destroyed the Raiders, 91-19, with Welch scoring 25 points and Jason Van Beek adding 30. Todd Cox led the Raiders with 13.

UTA coach Jim Hayes said his team went into the tourney expecting to beat Wright State. "Given the status of the teams, the games went as well as they could," Hayes said. "UTA and Illinois are both well-developed programs, while SIU and Wright State are still developing. I'm looking forward to when all the teams will be equal."

The second game pitted second-seeded University of Illinois against the number-three seed, the Southern Illinois Rolling Salukis. Illinois had been the perennial power at the intercollegiate level, winning six titles, including five of the last seven.

*Charlie Hustle—aka Steve Welch—of the Mavs completes one of his patented steals in 15th NIWBT action.*

SIU had not won since 1977, at the first intercollegiate tournament. Now, after a stretch without a team, the Salukis were back in the Central Intercollegiate Conference, rebuilding their program. With the mid-season addition of freshman Earl Jorden, SIU had hopes of upsetting the favored Illini.

In the early minutes, the Illini rattled the Salukis with their full-court press. SIU was behind 9-2 before Saluki coach Todd Hatfield called a timeout to settle his players. The two teams battled evenly the rest of the half, with the Illini taking a 34-23 lead at intermission.

A tenacious team defense and a balanced offense allowed the Illini to pull away, slowly but surely, from SIU in the second half. Earl Jorden's spirited ball handling, passing, and shooting (22 points) were not enough to hold the Illini. SIU lost, 76-40, with Illinois placing four players in double digits: Curtis Lease

(31), Josh Fabian (16), James Briggs (12), and Tony Iniguez (11).

Hatfield pointed out that key to his team's loss was Illinois' shutting down David Niemann inside. Niemann, who averages 13 points and 12 rebounds a game, was held to 6 points and 6 boards.

"If we were going to beat them, we needed a balanced attack," Hatfield said. "I felt like we played well. They had beaten us by much more before. We were up for the game, but they shot well in the second half. Right now their players are much more athletic, but I think

we're only a player or two away from competing with UTA and Illinois."

The consolation game between the Raiders and the Salukis was next on the agenda.

The Dawgs scored first when Jorden fed Niemann underneath for the lay-up. At the other end, Wright State's Todd Cox missed a 3-pointer. Teammate Matt Reis got the rebound but failed to connect. After Jorden hit freshman Chris Millette for a lay-up, Raider coach Andy Krieger called a timeout. The cold-shooting Raiders still couldn't hit. They were down 10-0





# HOOP SCOOP

with 9:15 gone on the clock before Cox hit a shot from the baseline. Their frustration was beginning to show in their defensive play as Steve Paxton fouled Jorden on a wide-open 12-foot set shot. Jorden converted to put SIU up 13-2.

The Saluki defense was causing problems for the Raiders, who couldn't get any shots from the paint. Rich Swanson had the range and sank shots from 16 and 18 feet. Niemann made two charity tosses with 11 seconds left in the first half, and Cox brought the ball across half court to sink a 3-pointer, making the score 26-11 at intermission.

Both teams came on strong at the beginning of the second half. After making three of four shots in the first five minutes, Cox went to the perimeter but could not connect. Jorden used his quickness to beat the Wright State defense repeatedly. A quick pass to SIU senior Dan Lerner underneath produced a heart-stopping rimmer that just wouldn't go down. Cox tried to lift his teammates, but SIU's defense and offense kept them safely out front as they won the game, 49-27. Cox had 20 for Wright State. Niemann scored 18

points and grabbed 11 rebounds for SIU. Jorden added 17 points and 8 assists, while Swanson's stats included 12 points and 11 rebounds.

The stage was set for the championship game. The sidelines were filled with excited fans cheering both squads. It would be a showdown between two talented and well-coached teams. UTA coach Hayes said he expected it to be a real war against Illinois, and he was right.

Illinois controlled the tip, and from the outset it was clear that UTA was going to play aggressive, pressing defense. Briggs scored first for Illinois on a put-back from the baseline. After a miss from Welch, Briggs dished to Lease for a short shot in the lane. Not to be denied, Welch pulled up at the line

and banked one in. Back at the other end, Fabian broke free to drive the lane for a lay-up.

When Fabian hit Briggs driving the lane, the Illini were up 8-2 with 2:30 off the clock. Illinois was holding up well against the swarming, pressing, man-to-man defense of the Mavs. Trading fouls and baskets over the next six minutes, the Illini continued to lead.

A turning point for the Mavs came when Illinois captain Iniguez picked up his third foul with 11:03 left in the first half. Illini coach Brad Hedrick substituted Chris Billings. The Mavs saw their opportunity and took it. A quick lay-up from Welch was followed by an Illini time-out. Hedrick put Iniguez back in after only 30 seconds on the bench, but facing foul trouble, his defensive play slackened.

When Jesus Alamillo lobbed a pass to Van Beek for a basket with seven minutes on the clock, the Mavs took a 16-15 lead. Alamillo then drained a 16-footer to add to the lead. Briggs retaliated, but UTA ran off five unanswered hoops to

put the Mavs up 28-17 at half-time.

*Scrambling fingertips, as the Mavs' Stephen Welch and the Illini's Josh Fabian (#22) fight for control of the ball.*

*Tony Iniguez (#34) and UTA's Jason Van Beek (#5) wait for the spoils.*





The brutally tough defense displayed by both teams in the first half continued in the second. Illinois faced an 11-point deficit that they could not overcome. Faint hope came to the Illini when UTA's Willie Hernandez picked up his fourth foul. Hayes substituted Greg Speed, and the Mavs lost little, if any, ground.

"Our strength is that we go eight deep," Hayes said. "Illinois came in with only six players. We can sub in any of our three guys off the bench and not lose anything."

UTA's lead hovered between 11 and 15 until Fabian hit two foul shots and a set shot from the line to pull Illinois within 7 points, 40-33, with 13:30 remaining. At the 11:30 mark, Iniguez picked up his fourth foul going for a steal.

With Van Beek and Brad Michael controlling the boards for UTA, Illinois was getting only one shot a trip. Fabian hit a 12-footer to bring the Illini back to a 7-point deficit, 46-39, but time as well as the foul situation was on the Mavs' side. UTA ran time off the clock with each possession. Welch circled near half court, using up the shot clock before initiating each play.

The death knell for Illinois came at 2:01, when Iniguez fouled out trying to force a steal from Welch. Welch connected on both ends of a one-and-one to put UTA ahead by 10. Three-point attempts by Lease and Fabian down the stretch would not fall, and the Illini bowed to the defending champions, 56-43.

Fabian led Illinois with 24 points, shooting 60% from the floor and hitting six of seven from the line. Welch paced the Mavs with 24 points, shooting 55% from the floor. Alamillo had 20 points for UTA.

Hayes said Illinois' approach was to slow down the Mavs. "We're a fast-paced team, but this game came down to a real muscle match," he commented. "My team works very hard for what they get. They



*Illini James Briggs defends the Mavs' brilliant playmaker, Stephen Welch.*

don't back off, and they keep coming at you. Persistence and work ethic are what I like about the team."

UTA's Welch won the tournament MVP award for the second straight

year. He was joined on the all-tournament squad by teammate Alamillo, Illinois' Lease, and Jorden and Swanson of SIU. Jason Lawrence of SIU won the Sportsmanship award.



*The championship game of the 15th NIWBT was nonstop hustle. The Mavs finally took control, winning 56-43. Dallas's Stephen Welch clears 'em out under the basket, as Illini Tony Iniguez hits the deck.*