

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL WORLD



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**ROUNDBALL
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**Feature
Article:**

**National Wheelchair Basketball Tournaments -
Men's, Women's & Intercollegiate**

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL WORLD



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National Wheelchair Basketball Tournaments

Front Cover Photo: Men's Championship Final

Casa Colina Condors vs. Ottawa Royals

Back Cover Photos: Women's Winners

University of Illinois Fighting Illini &

Intercollegiate Tournament Southern Illinois

Rolling Salukis vs. Wright State Raiders

Photos by Curt Beamer, PVA & Ken Storey

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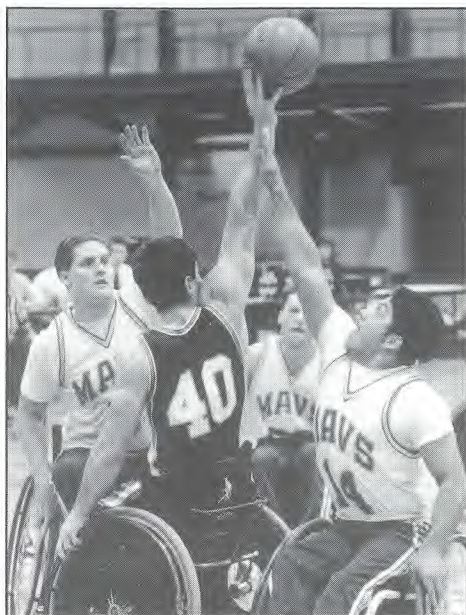
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15th National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball Tournament

by Jeffrey Shuck, Joanne Shuck & Norma Wilke



The University of Texas-Arlington Movin' Mavs arrived in Carbondale, Ill., fired up and ready to defend their intercollegiate title. The conversation around the Southern Illinois University Student Recreation Center included questions like: "Is it too early to call UTA a dynasty?" "Are the Illini the team to dethrone the Mavs?" "Will the Illini look past SIU and be upset?" The answers to these questions would prove to 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 this 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 were more than Wright State could handle. The Mavs destroyed the Raiders 91-19. Welch scored 25 points for the Mavs, and Jason VanBeek added 30. Todd Cox led the Raiders with 13.

UTA coach Jim Hayes said the team went into the tournament 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."

"I'd like to commend Todd Hatfield (SIU coach) on the excellent job he did on running the tournament. SIU had excellent facilities and also people."

The second game pitted the No. 2 seed University of Illinois against the No. 3 seed Southern Illinois Rolling Salukis. Illinois had been the perennial power at the intercollegiate level, winning six titles, including five of the last seven. 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 Jordan, SIU had hopes of upsetting the favored Illini.

At first, the Illini rattled the Salukis with its usual, hard full-court press. SIU were behind 9-2 before Hatfield called a time out to settle his players. For the remainder of the half, the two teams were an even match.

The Illini led 34-23 at halftime, giving the Salukis hope for a second

half rally.

The tenacious team defense and balanced offense displayed by the Illini allowed them to slowly but steadily pull away from SIU in the second half. Earl Jordan's spirited ball handling, passing and shooting (22 points) were not enough to hold the Illini. SIU lost 76-40. Illinois had four players in double digits. Curtis Lease had 31 points, Josh Fabian had 16, James Briggs had 12 and Tony Iniguez had 11.

Hatfield said one major thing that Illinois did was to shut down David Niemann inside. Niemann, who averages 13 points and 12 rebounds a game, was held to six points and six rebounds.

"If we were going to beat them, we needed a balance 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 Jordan fed Niemann underneath for the layup. At the other end, Wright State's Todd Cox missed a 3-pointer. Teammate Matt Reis got the rebound but failed to connect. After Jordan hit freshman Chris Millette for a layup, Raider coach Andy Krieger called a timeout. The cold-shooting Raiders still couldn't hit. They were down 10-0 with 9:15 gone on the clock before Cox hit a shot from the baseline on an in-bounds pass. Their frustration was beginning to show in their defensive play as Steve Paxton fouled Jordan on a wide-open 12 foot set shot. Earl converted the foul shot to put SIU up 13-2.

The Saluki defense was causing problems for the Raiders, who couldn't get any inside shots.

(continued on next page)

15th National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball Tournament

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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 the half.

Both teams came on strong at the beginning of the second half. After making three or four shots in the first five minutes, Cox went to the perimeter but could not connect. Jordan used his quickness to beat the Wright State defense repetitively. A quick pass to SIU senior Dan Larner 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 winning the game 49-27. Cox had 20 for Wright State. Niemann had 18 points and 11 rebounds for SIU. Jordan added 17 points and eight assists, and Swanson had 12 points and 11 rebounds.

The stage was set for the championship game. The sidelines were full of 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 the Illini on a put-back from the baseline. After a miss from Welch, Briggs dish-ed 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 layup.

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 the Illini 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 layup from Welch was followed by an Illini time out. Hedrick put Iniguez back in the game after only 30 seconds on the bench, but facing foul trouble, his defensive play slackened.

When Jesus Alamillo lobbed a pass to Jason VanBeek underneath with seven minutes on the clock, the Mavs took a 16-15 lead. Alamillo then drained a 16-footer of his own to increase the lead. Briggs retaliated, but UTA ran off five unanswered hoops as their press took its toll on the Illini. The Mavs led 28-17 at halftime.

The brutally tough defense displayed by both teams in the first half continued in the second. Illinois faced an 11-point deficit which they could not overcome. A possible break for the Illini came when 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. The team has also played together for two years now, and they know when a player is down on the team."

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 VanBeek 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 within 7, 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 around half court using the shot clock time before initiating each play.

The death knell came for Illinois at 2:01 when Iniguez fouled out trying to force a steal from Welch. Welch connected on both ends of one-and-one to put UTA ahead by 10. Three-

point attempts from Lease and Fabian down the stretch would not connect for the Illini, and they bowed to the defending champions 56-43.

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

Hayes said Illinois' approach was to slow the Mavs down.

"We're a fast pace team, but this game came down to a real muscle match," Hayes said. "My team works very hard for what they get. They don't back off, and they keep coming at you. Persistence and work ethic is what I like about the team."

Tournament Awards

Tournament MVP:

Stephen Welch, UTA

Sportsmanship Award:

Jason Lawrence, SIUC

All-Tournament Team:

Stephen Welch, UTA

Jesus Alamillo, UTA

Curtis Lease, Illinois

Earl Jordan, SIUC

Rich Swanson, SIUC

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