

Eagles slay No.5 Illinois Central for title

Written by Metro Sports Report
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PEORIA, Ill. - The Kirkwood Eagles got their revenge against Illinois Central in the championship game of the Illinois Central holiday tournament on Saturday.

The eighth-ranked Eagles rallied to defeat the fifth-ranked Cougars, 52-44, with a strong performance in the fourth quarter. Kirkwood trailed 37-33 entering the final stanza, but the visitors outscored the home team 19-7 in the last 10 minutes for the victory.

Illinois Central trimmed Kirkwood, 59-58, in the final round of the Kirkwood tournament on Nov. 11, so the two premier junior college basketball teams are knotted at 1-1 for the season.

Kirkwood finished with a perfect 37-0 record last season when Coach Kim Muhl's club won the national championship. The Eagles are now 13-3 this year, making them 50-3 the last two years.

Tay Wilson led Kirkwood Saturday with 14 points, seven rebounds, three assists and two steals. Awal Ajak scored 13 points and Arika Wooldridge contributed 11 points off the bench.

Jasmine Levy scored 11 points for Illinois Central (11-3).

Kirkwood demolished Sauk Valley, 98-39, in the first round of the tournament and knocked off 10th-ranked Owens, 77-63, in the semifinals.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL (44): Faulkner 4 0-0 8, Magro 0 0-0 0, Williams 1 0-0 2, Henderson 1 0-0 3, Coates 0 0-0 0, Levy 3 5-8 11, Walker 3 0-0 6, Maynard 1 4-4 6, Pinnock-Branford 1 0-0 2, Larsen 1 1-2 4, Banks 0 0-0 0, Evans 1 0-1 2. Totals 16 10-15 44.

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KIRKWOOD (52): Wilson 3 7-10 14, Puok 1 1-2 3, Axccl 0 0-0 0, Ajak 5 1-1 13, Usher 2 3-3 7, Jenkins 0 0-0 0, Hurst 0 0-0 0, Taylor 0 0-2 0, Robinson 2 0-0 4, Mullinnix 0 0-0 0, Mensen 0 0-0 0, Coleman 0 0-0 0, Wooldridge 2 6-10 11. Totals 15 18-28 52.

Halftime - Illinois Central 25, Kirkwood 21. 3-point goals - Illinois Central (2 (Henderson 1, Larsen 1), Kirkwood 4 (Ajak 2, Wilson 1, Wooldridge 1).