

Mustangs open with Southern Oregon

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The Mount Mercy men's basketball team begins its quest for the NAIA Division II national championship next Wednesday with a 10:15 a.m. game against Southern Oregon at Keeter Gymnasium in Point Lookout, Mo.

The 14th-ranked Mustangs (25-7) earned an automatic berth in the national tournament by winning the 2016 Association of Independent Institutions (All) Men's Basketball Championship last weekend in Cedar Rapids. Mount Mercy is seeded No. 4 in its bracket. Southern Oregon is 24-8 and seeded No. 5.

It's the second-straight appearance at nationals for Mount Mercy, which has also been there three times in four years and four times overall (1996, 2013, 2015, 2016).

Last year, the Mustangs advanced to the second round for the first time in school history, defeating Cal Maritime, 64-61. Mount Mercy fell to eventual Fab Four qualifier Davenport (Mich.), 70-67, in the round of 16.