

West Stars Pull Off Sweep In Greensboro

Written by Mike Kelly
Tuesday, 17 July 2012 09:21

The North Carolina Coaches Association All-Star Basketball Games had a western flavor on Monday night. The West won both the men's and women's games at the Greensboro Coliseum. The West women, led by Ashe County High coach Laura Foster, defeated the East 82-65 in the 38th annual game. The West won the men's game, 107-97 in the

64th annual game. Zeb Richardson of the Huskies played for the West team. Paige Love of Wilkes Central, who will attend UNC-Asheville this fall, was named the Most Valuable Player in the women's game. She led the West with a team-high 15 points. Alexis Cooper of Rocky Mount paced the East with 16 points.

"I'm just glad she was on my team," Foster said. "I've gone up against her for four years. She's a great player and was outstanding tonight. But all of our girls were great tonight. We had a great effort. I was a little concerned about our size, but I thought we were a little faster and a little more athletic."

And it was a special way for Love to close out her high school career, especially after the Eagles lost to Jordan Matthews in the Class 2A championship game back in March.

"I really wanted to win this game against the East," Love said. "I can still remember that feeling after we lost the state championship. There was a huge disappointment in the locker room. But we won this game, and now I'm ready for my next challenge in college (at UNCA). And playing for coach Foster was great.

"It was a lot of fun. There's a lot of similarities between her and (Wilkes Central) coach (Scott) Waugh. And that made it easy for me to adjust. They run the same things. It was a smooth transition for me."

The West trailed early, 5-2, but a 16-4 run gave the West Stars an 18-9 lead and they were in control from there. The West, which led 40-31 at halftime, opened an 11-point lead on a bucket by Love to start the second half. The East never got any closer than three points at 51-48 on a three pointer by Katisha Hyman with 3:02 left in the third quarter. But the West, which has won four of the last five games, pulled away from there and led 57-49 after three quarters. The West eventually broke the game open with a 25-point fourth quarter. The West built its biggest advantage at 82-63 with 40 seconds left.

"This wasn't a fluff game," Foster said. "Both teams played extremely hard. They left everything on the floor. And I wanted to win this game. This is a once in a lifetime thing to coach in this game. Losing wasn't in the game plan."

The West had four players in double figures. Tori Cook of West Forsyth finished with 11 points and six rebounds; Ashton Fleming of R.J Reynolds had 10 points and seven boards; Jordan Hiatt of Mount Airy had ten points. Ciara Morris of South View had 14 points for the East. The East leads the all-time series 20-18.

In the men's game, Zeb Richardson played 17 minutes and scored six points with five rebounds. It was Richardson's second all-star game this season. The Mountain Valley Conference Player of the Year, played in the Carolinas All-Star Classic in March in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

"It's obviously an honor to play in two all-star games," said Richardson, who will attend Guilford College a Division III school in Greensboro this fall. "I felt I could have played better, but I was pleased with the outcome."

West Stars Pull Off Sweep In Greensboro

Written by Mike Kelly
Tuesday, 17 July 2012 09:21

Richardson will major in physics and chemistry at Guilford. The West wiped out an early 7-1, first-quarter deficit and built a commanding 22-point lead by the third quarter. But the East put together a furious rally and got within two points at 68-66 with 2:10 left in the period. But the West staved off that charge to win the game. The West extended its lead to 74-68 after three, and led 83-75 with a little more than seven minutes left in the game.

The East came charging back, though, and got within 87-85 on a free throw by Daniel Ingram with 4:20 to play. But a six-point run by the West made it 93-85 with 3:26 to go and the East never got any close than four points the rest of the way.

Shawn Lester of Mooresville led five players in double figures with 20 points and was named the game's Most Valuable Player. Lester also had eight rebounds and eight assists. Tracy Gathings of Greensboro Smith had 12 points and 11 rebounds; Rob Noyes of Freedom had 15 points and seven boards. Ingram of Chapel Hill paced the East with 23 points. The West has won the last two meetings and leads the all-time series, 33-31.