1989 NCAA Men's East Regional

(#1) Georgetown
[FRIDAY]
(#16) Princeton
(#8) Vanderbilt
[FRIDAY]
(#9) Notre Dame
[SUNDAY]
(#5) N.C. State
[FRIDAY]
(#12) South Carolina
(#4) Iowa
[FRIDAY]
(#13) Rutgers
[SUNDAY]

To East Rutherford, N.J.
EAST REGIONAL
March 24 & 26, 1989

Felton returns to tournament

By KEVIN ADAMS
Sports editor

Little did young George Felton know in 1974 that it would be 15 years before another USC men's basketball team would make it to the NCAA postseason tournament.

What he probably also couldn't have guessed was that he would be the man to lead the Gamecocks there.

In 1974, Felton was a seldom-used junior guard on the legendary Frank McGuire's 1973-74 Gamecock basketball squad, a team that finished 22-5 with a loss to Furman in the first round of the NCAA East Regional.

After graduating from USC in 1975, Felton was an assistant coach at Appalachian State, North Carolina A&T, East Carolina and Georgia Tech before accepting the head coaching post at his alma mater prior to the 1986-87 season.

Felton led USC to a 15-14 record in his first year, and last year coached the Gamecocks to a 19-10 mark. That might have been good enough for an NCAA bid were the Gamecocks not on probation for rules violations during the tenure of Bill Foster, Felton's predecessor.

Sunday afternoon, with probation and the loss to Furman 15 years earlier all but forgotten, the 36-year-old Felton looked once again like a bright-eyed college student after finding out that his USC team had received an NCAA tournament bid. The Gamecocks will face North Carolina State in the East Regional Friday at Providence, R.I.

"We're in," were the first words a beaming Felton said at a crowded press conference at the conclusion of the Metro Tournament championship game between Louisville and Florida State Sunday at Carolina Coliseum. He said he found out the good news from USC Sports Information Director Kerry Tharp while watching the second half of the championship.

"I had made up my mind I wasn't going to watch it on TV (the tournament selection process was aired nationally by CBS Sports)," Felton said. "I decided I would stay out there and watch the game instead. It was the first time I could be a fan."

Felton said he wasn't sure whether he team would receive a bid or not.

"I really don't know," he said repeatedly throughout the weekend whenever the question was asked — again and again.

"I really didn't know," he said Sunday when the question was raised once more.

"It's a great thing," he said. "It's even more special 15 years later to get in. It's just a great opportunity to be one of the 64 teams."

That much he knows.

Louisville captures Metro Conference title — again

First Round

USC 63
S. Miss 62

By KEVIN ADAMS
Sports editor

M.K. Turk was livid.

George Felton was relieved.

Thus began the 14th annual Metro Conference Tournament this past Friday night at Carolina Coliseum.

In what was expected to be an easy first-round breather for Felton's USC squad over a team that the Gamecocks had defeated by 42 points on the same court a little over a month earlier, Turk's Southern Mississippi squad gave Felton and USC a tougher time than expected.

Only after an inadvertent whistle blew with two seconds left and the Gamecocks' John Breckenridge grabbed the ensuing rebound could Felton, his team and the partisan crowd of 10,025 relax over a narrow 63-62 victory that sent the Gameococks into the Metro semifinals and Turk into a frenzy on the Golden Eagle sideline.

With Southern Miss coming in with a 2-10 conference record and USC playing in front of its home crowd and with an NCAA tournament bid on the line, most observers figured an easy Gamecock win was in the cards. Especially considering USC had defeated the Golden Eagles twice already, with one of those wins a lopsided 105-63 decision Feb. 6 in Columbia.

But Turk's Eagles gave USC's NCAA hopes more than a brief scare by jumping out to an early 8-2 advantage in the first four minutes and, after a brief USC comeback, grabbing as much as a 5-point lead at 22-17 with 6:21 left in the half.

Led by eight first-half points from freshman Joe Rhett and a short jumper by Bill Vernau with :30 left, USC came back to take a 31-29 lead into the locker room at halftime.

After the teams traded baskets for the first six minutes of the second half, USC went on a 10-2 run to take a 48-38 lead with 10:12 left in the game.

Down 59-52 with 4:12 remaining, Southern Miss came charging back with a 9-2 run of their own to tie the score at 61 with 2:04 left. USC senior forward Dozier hit two free throws with a minute and a half to play to give his team a 63-61 lead. After a foul by Dozier, the Eagles' Jimmy Smith closed out the scoring by making one of two foul shots with :49 on the clock.

But Smith didn't close out the excitement, as a pass from USC guard Brent Price wasn't met by Dozier, and Southern Miss got the ball back with 20 seconds left. With about four seconds left, Randy Pettus launched an 18-foot jumper from inside the top of the key that bounced high off the back iron.

Mayhem followed. A half-dozen players went up for the rebound and a whistle blew. After a brief hesitation, Breckenridge grabbed the tipped rebound and the final horn blew.

Turk immediately found the referee and yelled in his face for several seconds after the game had ended.

"Obviously, the play at the end of the game is a major concern," Turk told the media after the game. "You were there. You saw it. You know the whole story. It's not a very classy thing for a coach to blast the officials and I'm not going to do that. Naturally, I had to pursue it. I owed that much to my team. That situation was handled very poorly, to say the least."

SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI (62)

Hinton 2-5 0-0 4, Weatherspoon 2-5 2-6 6, Brown 1-2 0-0 2, Pettus 2-6 1-2 7, Chancellor 8-16 6-9 24, Boyd 3-4 2-2 8, Smith 4-7 2-4 11, Bates 0-1 0-0 0, Crowell 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 22-48 13-23 62.

USC (63)

Dozier 2-7 7-8 11, Hudson 2-6 3-6 7, Breckenridge 1-1 0-0 2, Price 1-7 4-4 6; Manning 5-12 3-5 13, Vernau 1-2 0-0 2, Roulston 0-0 0-2 0, Rhett 7-9 0-1 14, English 2-5 0-0 4, McKoy 2-2 0-0 4. Totals 23-51 17-26 63.

Halftime — USC 31, Southern Miss 29. 3-point goals — Southern Miss 5-10 (Hinton 0-1, Pettus 2-4, Chancellor 2-3, Smith 1-2), USC (Dozier 0-1, Price 0-2). Rebounds — Southern Miss 25 (Weatherspoon 10), USC 38 (Dozier, Rhett 8). Assists — Southern Miss 17 (Pettus 6), USC 11 (Dozier 4). Total fouls — Southern Miss 17, USC 19. Attendance — 10,025.

Semifinal

Louisville 71
Memphis St. 70

By JEFF NICHOLS
Staff writer

After 36-and-a-half minutes of Saturday's opening Metro Conference Tournament semifinal, Memphis State had Louisville right where they wanted them.

Up 70-61 with 3:34 remaining, the Tigers' only task was to hang on.

That proved to be a task they weren't up to as the Cardinals ran off 10 unanswered points to beat Memphis State 71-70 at Carolina Coliseum, advancing to the tournament championship for the ninth time.

The Cardinals trailed most of the contest, but the nine-point deficit was the largest they faced all day.

"I told our guys when we got down late in the game that we were going to have to win it with our defense," Louisville head coach Denny Crum said. "We got to make sure we stop them so we get enough opportunities to get the ball in the basket."

The Cardinals immediately responded, starting with a Pervis Ellison stickback and an Ellison feed to guard Keith Williams for a breakaway slam.

Felton Spencer's free throw trimmed Memphis State's lead to four points and guard LaBradford Smith converted a 3-point play by making a 10-footer plus the free throw to make it 70-69 with 1:46 remaining.

Memphis State could not find a way to answer the Cardinals' game-ending surge. Both offensively and defensively, the Tigers looked panic-stricken in the final minutes, forcing shots on their end, while falling apart defensively. They seemed to be worried about not losing rather than winning.

When freshman Everick Sullivan tied the game at 70 with a free throw, then connected on the front end of a one-and-one with two seconds remaining, the Tigers' fears were suddenly a reality as Louisville earned the right to defend their Metro title, and MSU was left to ponder what went wrong.

Memphis State was led by guard Cheyenne Gibson's 26 points. Elliot Perry scored 20 points, 15 in the second half.

Smith was the high scorer for the Cards with 18 points. All-American Pervis Ellison had 17 to go with 11 rebounds. Forwards Kenny Payne scored 12, and Williams added 11.

LOUISVILLE (71)

Payne 6-12 0-1 12, Kimbro 0-4 0-0 0, Ellison 8-14 1-1 17, Williams 5-12 0-2 10, Smith 6-10 6-6 18, Sullivan 2-5 2-6 7, Spencer 2-3 3-6 7, Holden 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 29-61 12-24 71.

MEMPHIS STATE (70)

Smith 2-11 3-4 7, Douglas 1-3 0-0 2, Ballard 0-2 3-4 3, Gibson 6-12 12-14 26, Perry 7-16 3-3 20, Mundt 2-8 0-0 4, Madlock 3-4 0-0 6, McClain 0-0 0-0 0, McLaughlin 1-2 0-0 2, Watson 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 22-58 21-25 70.

Halftime — Louisville 34, MSU 34. 3-point goals — Louisville 1-8 (Payne 0-2, Williams 0—2, Smith 0-2, Sullivan 1-2), MSU 5-15 (Gibson 2—5, Perry 3-10). Rebounds — Louisville 40 (Ellison 11), MSU 37 (Ballard 12). Assists — Louisville 15 (Payne 4), MSU 12 (Douglas 4). Total fouls — Louisville 17, MSU 25. Attendance — 10,433.

See METRO *page 14*

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