SUNY Cortland Men’s Basketball

SUNYAC Semifinals
SUNY Cortland vs. SUNY Oswego
Friday, February 25, 2005; Utica Memorial Auditorium; Utica, N.Y.

FINAL SCORE: Oswego 56, Cortland 48

CORTLAND, N.Y. – Senior Dave Ponza’s (Solvay) 12 points and 10 rebounds, including a crucial jumper in the final 20 seconds, lifted Oswego past Cortland, 56-48, in the SUNYAC men’s basketball semifinals at the Utica Memorial Auditorium. The Lakers (22-5) will play in the title game on Saturday at 4 p.m. versus either Potsdam or Plattsburgh. Cortland (18-9) will await a potential ECAC Division III playoff berth next week.

Senior Ben Oliver (Batavia) scored 13 points, 10 in the first half, for the Lakers. Ponza played only three minutes in the first half after picking up two quick fouls, but recorded eight points and eight rebounds in 16 second-half minutes. Sophomore Mat Burridge (Oswego/Hannibal) added 12 points, eight rebounds and three blocked shots.

Cortland was led by sophomore Dave Jutton’s (Red Hook) 15 points on 5-of-10 shooting from three-point range. Junior Frank Ranieri (Cicero/Cicero-North Syracuse) scored 12 points and dished out four assists and junior Simon Skrelja (Hastings-on-Hudson/Hastings) pulled down 10 rebounds.

Cortland led 29-27 at halftime and took a 35-29 lead on Ranieri’s layup with 17:18 remaining. Oswego went on an 18-3 run over the next 10 minutes, capped by a Ponza layup, to take a 47-38 lead. Cortland narrowed the margin to three points on Jutton’s three-pointer with 2:23 left and again at 51-48 on a Ranieri layup with 1:36 left.

The Red Dragons got the ball back but missed a driving layup with 52 seconds left that would have cut the Oswego lead to one. Cortland tried to hold the Lakers on their next possession, but Ponza hit a tough turnaround jumper in the lane with 18 seconds left and the shot clock running down to give the Lakers a five-point lead. Following a Cortland missed shot, Oswego’s Ahmad Mims (Syracuse/Cicero-North Syracuse) was fouled and hit a free throw with seven seconds left. He missed the second shot, but put in his own rebound to create the final margin.

# # #