SUNY Cortland Women’s Basketball

SUNYAC Finals
SUNY Cortland vs. SUNY Oswego
Saturday, February 25, 2006; Utica Memorial Auditorium; Utica, N.Y.

FINAL SCORE: Oswego 61, Cortland 56

UTICA, N.Y. – Tournament Most Valuable Player Samantha Driscoll (Lisle/Whitney Point) scored 16 points and all-tournament selection Sarah Lombard (Saratoga Springs) scored nine points and grabbed 14 rebounds as Oswego defeated Cortland, 61-56, in the championship game of the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) women’s basketball tournament at the Utica Memorial Auditorium.

Oswego (21-6) won its first-ever SUNYAC tournament title and will receive an automatic bid to the NCAA Division III tournament. The Lakers will be making their second straight NCAA appearance – they received an at-large berth last season after losing in the conference finals.

Cortland (23-4), the SUNYAC regular-season champion, will await a possible NCAA at-large bid. The tournament field will be announced late Sunday night, with brackets released on Monday morning. The Red Dragons were making their 12th SUNYAC championship game appearance and seventh in the last eight years.

Cortland senior Kaylin VanDusen (Schuyler/West Canada Valley) and sophomore Sara Cavanaugh (Hastings-on-Hudson/Hastings) were named to the all-tournament team. VanDusen scored a game-high 21 points, including 11-of-13 free throws. Cavanaugh led the Red Dragons with nine rebounds and three blocked shots.

Driscoll made three shots from three-point range in an 11-point first half as Oswego took a 27-24 lead. Cortland committed 17 turnovers in the opening period, but made 5-of-8 three-pointers and held Oswego to 32 percent shooting to stay close. The Red Dragons finished the game with 24 turnovers to 17 for the Lakers.

Oswego never trailed in the second half, but still only held a four-point lead at 45-41 with 6:11 remaining. The Lakers scored eight of the next nine points, however, and held what appeared to be a comfortable 53-42 lead with less than two and a half minutes remaining.

Cortland quickly got back in the game, though, with a 9-0 run in less than a minute and a half. VanDusen scored seven of those points, including a three-pointer with 1:03 left to draw the Red Dragons within 53-51. Oswego turned the ball over with 55 seconds left, and a Megan Assmus (Syosset) three-pointer from the right baseline that would have given Cortland the lead rattled in-and-out with 40 seconds left. Cortland grabbed the offensive rebound, but junior Lyndsey Marquit (Castleton/Columbia) stripped the ball away from a Red Dragon player.

Junior Lacey Kimpland (Fulton/G. Ray Bodley) made two foul shots with 31 seconds left, but VanDusen hit a pair of charity tosses with 26 seconds left to keep Cortland within two points. Oswego, however, made its final six free throws to put the game out of reach. Cortland freshman Maggie Byrne (Pearl River/Albertus Magnus) hit a three-pointer with four seconds left to create the final margin. Byrne finished 3-of-3 from three-point range for nine points.

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