

KCC women fall in regional finals

Written by Metro Sports Report

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MASON CITY - The Kirkwood women's basketball team is ranked No. 4 in the country, but the Eagles will not get a chance to compete for the national title this season.

Kirkwood lost to second-ranked NIACC, 77-70, in the championship game of the NJCAA Division II regional tournament Sunday in Mason City.

NIACC, enjoying the home-court advantage in the entire regional, advances to the national tournament March 19-23 in Harrison, Ark., with a 27-5 record and 15-game winning streak.

Coach Kim Muhl and the Kirkwood Eagles finished the season with a 27-7 record.

Kirkwood and NIACC tied for the conference title, but NIACC won the tiebreaker for the No.1 seed and home court. Kirkwood and NIACC played three times this season and the home team won each time, with NIACC prevailing twice in Mason City.

The game was tied, 38-38, at halftime. NIACC took a 57-54 lead in the final quarter and outscored the Eagles 20-16 in the last period.

Natalie Tomaszewski led Kirkwood with 16 points. Paige Bradford and Mackenzie Jenkins scored 15 apiece.

Mandy Willems topped NIACC with 16 points. The Trojans made 14 3-pointers in 47 attempts.

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KIRKWOOD (70): Bradford 7 1-2 15, Jenkins 6 3-4 15, Gaston 2 1-1 5, Hurst 0 2-2 2, Mullinnix 2 5-6 10, Lipsey 1 1-2 4, Kennedy 1 0-2 3, Myers 2 1-1 5, Tomaszewski 6 4-4 16, Robinson 2 2-2 6, Mensen 0 0-0 0. Totals 25 18-27 70.

NIACC (77): Willems 6 1-2 16, Hale 3 0-0 8, Mendez 4 4-7 14, Buford 5 4-6 15, Campbell 1 4-4 7, Longs 3 0-0 8, Walker 0 0-0 0, Loftus 2 0-0 6, Jones 0 0-0 0, Reese 1 0-2 3. Totals 25 13-21 77.

Halftime - Kirkwood 38, NIACC 38. 3-point goals - Kirkwood 3 (Mullinnix 1, Lipsey 1, Kennedy 1), NIACC 14 (Willems 3, Hale 2, Mendez 2, Longs 2, Loftus 2, Buford 1, Campbell 1, Reese 1).