

No. 3 KCC men win title in thriller

Written by Metro Sports Report

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CRESTON - The third-ranked Kirkwood men's basketball team claimed the outright ICCAC conference title Saturday afternoon and they did it by edging the 2017 national champs in a thriller.

Doug Wilson had a monster game for the Eagles with 23 points and 13 rebounds, including the go-ahead tip-in with 16 seconds left in an 82-80 verdict over 18th-ranked Southwestern in Creston.

Kirkwood raised its records to 22-4 overall and 10-0 in the conference with its 14th win a row. There are two games left in the regular season, but nobody can catch the Eagles now.

Kirkwood trailed, 80-79, when Wilson tipped in a shot to give the Eagles an 81-80 advantage. The Eagles stopped Southwestern from scoring to preserve the lead, then the Spartans fouled Kirkwood freshman Jay Small to stop the clock and prolong the game.

Small made 1-of-2 free throws for an 82-80 lead, then Wilson stole the ball in the final seconds to preserve the victory.

Chris King popped in 24 points for Kirkwood. LJ Stansbury contributed 14 points for the Eagles.

Alijah Thomas scored 25 points for Southwestern (22-7, 7-4).

Kirkwood climbed from No. 6 to No. 3 in the NJCAA Division II national rankings this past week.

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The Eagles trimmed Southwestern, 89-84, in their first meeting last month in Cedar Rapids.

KIRKWOOD (82): Stansbury 4 4-4 14, Kale 3 0-0 7, Small 0 1-2 1, Meeker 3 0-0 6, King 8 6-8 24, Marble 1 0-0 3, Wilson 9 5-11 23, Arrington 2 0-1 4. Totals 30 16-26 82.

SOUTHWESTERN (80): Thomas 8 7-8 25, Edwards 3 0-1 6, Whittington 3 0-0 9, Warren 4 1-2 11, Moran 1 2-2 5, Kueth 2 3-5 8, Shelby 2 2-2 7, Barze 4 1-2 9. Total
s 27 16-22 80.

Halftime - Southwestern 44, Kirkwood 42. 3-point goals - Kirkwood 6 (Stansbury 2, King 2, Marble 1, Kale 1), Southwestern 10 (Whittington 3, Thomas 2, Warren 2, Moran 1, Kueth 1, Shelby 1).