

Sports

Tulsa, Syracuse vie for NIT

United Press International
NEW YORK — Tulsa — happy to be playing postseason basketball anywhere and Syracuse, which isn't sure it wants to be there — will be competing Wednesday night for the championship of the 44th National Invitation Tournament.

ence guard Paul Pressey scored 11 of his team-high 20 points in the final eight minutes Monday night to lead unheralded Tulsa to an 89-87 semifinal victory over West Virginia and Dan Schayes scored three points in the final 61 seconds of the Madison Square Garden nightcap to propel Syracuse past Purdue 70-63 and set up an "odd couple" matchup for the title.

Tulsa coach Nolan Richardson, in his first year with the Golden Hurricane after leading Western Texas Junior College to a 37-0 record and a No. 1 ranking, saw Monday night's victory as a reward for services rendered over the years.

"As for myself, I was lucky enough to land this job at Tulsa and this is the whole ball of wax to me," said Richardson. "I've paid my dues and just want to be a good coach and a good recruiter."

Tulsa, 25-7, hadn't been over .500 since the 1974-75 season and were picked by many to end its season weeks ago. But the Golden

Hurricane's swarming defense allowed them to defeat three NIT opponents and helped put an end to a gritty West Virginia team's season.

Syracuse, 22-11, reeled off its seventh straight victory after a mediocre 15-11 regular-season record.

The Mountaineers led virtually the entire first half en route to a 44-40 advantage at intermission. Mountaineers forward Greg Nance scored 14 of his 22 points in the opening half, when West Virginia repeatedly beat Tulsa downcourt for easy layups off the fast break.

Center Greg Stewart, a New York native, added 19 points for Tulsa and Mike Anderson chipped in with 17 in the first meeting ever between the two teams.

Tulsa stayed in the game over the first 20 minutes on the strength of their 24-19 rebounding edge over a Mountaineers squad that had been outrebounded only six times the entire season.

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SPRING BREAK? WHAT SPRING BREAK WE'VE BEEN PLAYING BASEBALL ALL WEEK!



Saints looking for respect

United Press International
NEW ORLEANS — Saints owner John Mecom, with several months to meditate on a 1-15 season, a highly publicized change of head coach and a traumatic shakeup in the front office, says what he'd like most for his team is respectability.

"We aren't that bad of a ball club," he said.

"We still have some fine athletes. I'll admit we're not on a par with Dallas but in my opinion we were equal to some of the teams that made the playoffs. Now I'm looking for respectability, which in turn will bring the number of wins required to become a champion."

Mecom said confidence had to be re-established among the players — and among the fans. The team lost a cool \$1 million last year, a dismal showing he said can be turned around with the help of new coach Bum Phillips.

"Our job now is not only to bring back the confidence of the ball players but to the fans as well," he said. "I think that with the identification coach Phillips has, it shouldn't be the most difficult job in the world."

"Some changes will have to be made on the field, but that's football. We deserve a lot better a 1-15 season and so do the fans."

One change that will be made is at quarterback. Mecom said, despite the expressed interest of Oakland's Dan Fouts in moving to New Orleans, Phillips' old Houston pal became a Saint, it appears not to be to the detriment of an Archie Manning, though to Archie many times in the few months," he said. "I'm back. He and I have future other than football together. I don't think I would care if someone working with me for me — that's playing for a ball club."

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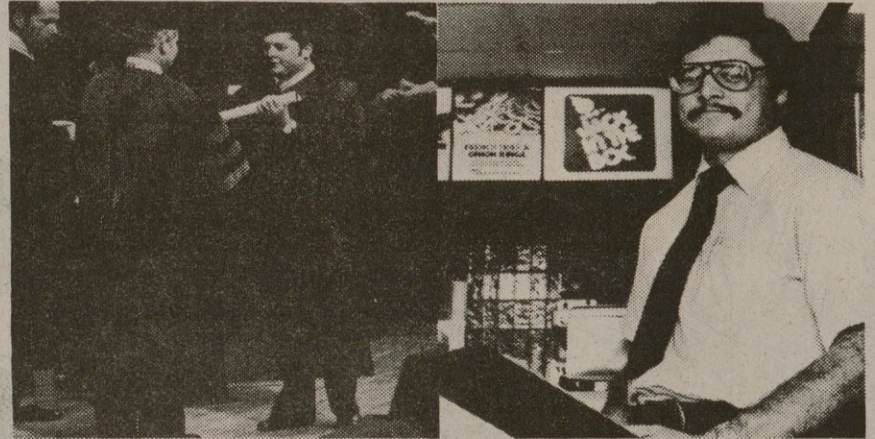
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