

The Battalion Sports

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N.C. State dunks Phi Slama Jama

Wolfpack ends dream season by winning title

United Press International
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — The North Carolina State Wolfpack apparently was meant to be the NCAA basketball champion for 1983 — and it is.

Having executed the coach's game plan to perfection, then being the recipient of a large piece of good fortune at just the right time, the team came up with a 54-52 victory.

"We want to be careful, control the tempo and put ourselves in position to win," North Carolina State Coach Jim Valvano had said on the eve of the game. It all happened just the way he wanted.

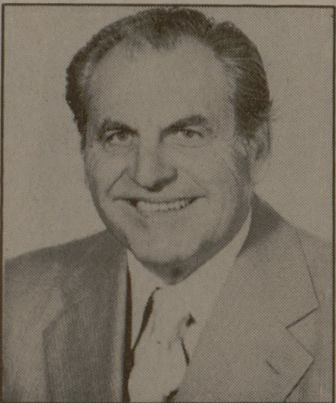
The Wolfpack did control the tempo. North Carolina State's zone defense sealed off the lane and kept Houston's ferocious dunksters from practicing their art (the Cougars had only one slam all night) and finally the self-proclaimed team of destiny found itself owning the ball with time running out and the score tied.

It no longer mattered that the first nine field goals North Carolina State could muster in the second half had come on long-range bombs or that Houston's Akeem Abdul Olajuwon had dominated the backboards.

It only added to the drama that the winning points came in a feckish fashion — Lorenzo Charles grabbing a desperation shot by Dereck Whittenburg that had fallen just short of the basket as the clock ticked from two seconds down to one.

North Carolina State thus became the first team ever to win the national title with 10 losses (8-10).

"You need luck in a national



Guy Lewis: Cougars weren't expecting an easy contest

tournament," said Valvano, the Joe Namath look-alike who charms his fans and the media with his wit, and plagues the opposition with his coaching talent. "Being in the right place at the right time is going to help you win a close game. This has been a dream for me, I'm almost speechless. I've got no funny lines. I'm simply in awe of this team."

Houston had won 26 games in a row and had overpowered its last two foes — the Villanova Wildcats and Louisville Cardinals. The Cougars were a seven-point favorite to win their first national crown.

"I guarantee we never did think this would be an easy game," said Houston Coach Guy Lewis, who despite a 31-3 season came up without his first national title. "It was billed as a game of slow tempo vs. fast tempo and slow won. It feels awful. I've never had a loss that didn't feel awful. But this was a special game."

For a time it appeared the Wolfpack's victory would be an

easy one since it raced to a 33-25 halftime lead. Forward Thurl Bailey scored 15 points in the first half (also finishing with 15 to be the Wolfpack's high scorer) and Houston could manage only 10 field goals in 32 tries.

But the Cougars scored the first 10 points of the second half, held the Wolfpack to just two points during the first 10 minutes and eventually built a seven-point advantage.

With just over 10 minutes remaining, however, Lewis went to a delay game and it backfired. The layups and dunks that Lewis hoped would come failed to materialize and North Carolina State, with Whittenburg, Sidney Lowe and Terry Gannon firing them in from long distances, whittled into its deficit.

Twice Houston had chances to help its cause in the final three minutes with free throws, but both Michael Young (with 2:55 to play) and Alvin Franklin (with 1:05 to go) missed the front end of 1-and-1 opportunities.

Franklin's miss came with the score tied and set up the winning points.

"I knew when Whit let the shot go that it was short," said Charles. "I didn't know where Akeem was. I just knew I was the closest one to the basket."

Olajuwon, who scored 20 points, grabbed 18 rebounds and was named the tournament's outstanding player, had drifted away from the basket and thus left the way open for Charles to stuff home Whittenburg's miss.

After the game Olajuwon was in tears and would not answer questions.

But what happened Monday night seemingly had been ordained all along.

North Carolina No. 1 State

Akeem silently accepts award, sad over loss

United Press International
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Akeem Olajuwon scored 41 points and claimed 40 rebounds during the course of the Final Four and was named the tournament's most outstanding player. But despite all of that, he was inconsolable Monday night.

Olajuwon became the first player since 1966 to be on a losing team in the Final Four and still be named outstanding player.

But when it came time to talk about what he'd done, the seven-foot center from Lagos, Nigeria couldn't face up to it. Immediately after North Carolina State had won 54-52, Olajuwon walked up a long ramp toward the Houston dressing room, his eyes filled with tears.

After entering the cramped locker facility, he ignored writers and broadcasters by turning his face to the wall. Moments later he was summoned back to the court for the post-game award ceremonies.

He sat in a chair beside the court, his face resting in the palm of one hand.

Houston fans called out from the stands, "We love you, Akeem. We'll be back." That did nothing to cheer him up.

Even when it was announced that he had won the outstanding player honor, easily beating North Carolina State's Dereck Whittenburg in the balloting, Olajuwon couldn't force a smile.

Then, on leaving the floor of The Pit for the final time, Olajuwon made only the briefest of detours into the locker room before heading for the team bus. He never spoke a word.

Metcalf says UH, State played well

by Frank L. Christlieb
Battalion Staff

He didn't make it to Albuquerque to watch North Carolina State win the NCAA basketball championship Monday night, but Aggie coach Shelby Metcalf was sitting in his own comfortable front-row seat as Lorenzo Charles and the Wolfpack slammed Phi Slama Jama back to Houston.

Not only did Metcalf not have to battle a crowd, but he didn't have to withstand the deafening shouts, the painted signs or the sea of red that flowed through University Arena.

To top it off, Metcalf had his own color television set. Putting it plainly, home was heavenly for Metcalf as he watched the Wolfpack's surprising 54-52 victory over the Houston Cougars.

But wouldn't Metcalf rather be in Albuquerque?

"Oh sure, but I enjoyed watching it here. Besides, I had a better view here anyway," Metcalf said 15 minutes after Charles' unexpected dunk sent the arena into a narrow emotional spectrum that had but two colors — the tearful ecstasy of the Wolfpack and the tearful agony of the Cougars.

In Metcalf's eyes, the NCAA title game couldn't have been better. But when the Cougars missed crucial free throws during the final three minutes of the game, Metcalf said, State was able to capitalize on the mistakes.

"I thought it was a great ballgame," Metcalf said. "Those missed front ends of the 1-and-1 by (Michael) Young and (Alvin) Franklin gave North Carolina State the chance to win. Those

last three field goals by State from way out were great."

When Sidney Lowe, the Atlantic Coast Conference's all-time assist leader, canned a long outside jumper to cut the Cougars' lead to 52-48, who would've thought the Wolfpack had enough bite left to win the whole ball of wax?

Dereck Whittenburg, the best shooter in the ACC's three-point wonderland this season, used two long-range bombs to answer that question without hesitation. That made the score 52-all, setting up Whittenburg's way-short prayer with 4 seconds remaining and Charles' uncontested dunk with 2 seconds left.

Akeem Abdul Olajuwon, the Cougars' 7-foot center, stood five feet from the basket when Whittenburg's jumper fell into Charles' waiting hands. By the time Olajuwon moved toward the basket, it was too late.

Too late for the Cougars, too late for senior forward Larry Micheaux, too late for 25-year-old UH guard David Rose and too late for 27-year Cougar coach Guy V. Lewis.

Numb from the impact of the dunk, the Cougars couldn't call a time out. Coach Jim Valvano and his North Carolina State players streamed onto the court to celebrate their 25th and final triumph of the 1982-83 season.

Even though he didn't witness the final chapter of State's Cinderella story in person, Metcalf had plenty to say about final game of the year.

"Man, Akeem is something else," he said of Olajuwon's overall season performance and his 20-point, 18-rebound effort
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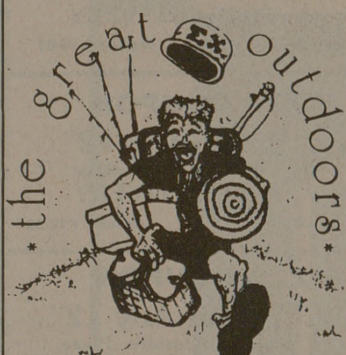
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