

# NIT Tournmanent to open tonight

From the Associated Press  
Montana State got a brief taste of New York basketball last season. Now the Bobcats would like a chance to take their game to the Big Apple.

Montana State, regular-season champions of the Big Sky Conference, plays host to Washington tonight in one of three games that open the 32-team National Invitation Tournament.

Marquette is at Nebraska and Utah at Boise State in the other two opening-night games.

Montana State enters its game 21-7, far better than last season's 14-16. But last season, it made the NCAA tournament with a 14-16 record by winning the conference tournament.

This year, the Bobcats were upset by Weber State 106-101 in the postseason, so they had to settle for the NIT.

"It's a chance to redeem ourselves," guard Ray Willis said. "If the season was going to end, we didn't want it to end on that note, playing like we did against Weber State."

Last year, the Bobcats played creditably in the NCAA tournament — losing 83-74 to the 16th seed in the West to top-seeded St. John's in Long Beach, Calif. This year, three wins will put them in the NIT semi-

nals on St. John's sometimes-home court, Madison Square Garden.

"New York, that's the place to be," Willis said.

Washington, 18-14, lost in the Pac-10 final to UCLA and also had to settle for the NIT. The Huskies' offense revolves around 7-foot West German center Christian Welp.

But just the fact that it's Washington is enough for the Bobcats.

"I always wanted to play against a Pac 10 team, not necessarily to compare leagues but just for a chance to go up against that type of school to see how strong we are," said forward Calvin Andrews, a native of Richmond, Calif.

"It's a good opportunity to extend our season with some good postseason play," said guard Chris Conway. "It should be good experience for the team, playing a nationally-known opponent."

Marquette, 16-12, and Nebraska, 17-11, will be meeting from two different perspectives.

For Nebraska, where football overshadows basketball, this is a chance to get some needed exposure at home. For Marquette, it's routine business — this is the Warriors'

fourth straight NIT and its 21st postseason appearance.

Both coaches, Bob Dukiet of Marquette and Danny Nee of Nebraska are in their first seasons.

"Financially, the NIT's not as much help as the NCAA, but psychologically and prestige-wise, you can't put it in dollars and cents," Nee said.

On Thursday night, La Salle, 16-12, plays Villanova, 15-15, in Philadelphia; Rhode Island, 20-9, visits Florida State, 18-10; Cleveland State, 24-7, travels to Tennessee-Chattanooga, 21-7; Akron, 21-8, is at Illinois State, 17-12; Jacksonville, 19-10, visits Vanderbilt, 16-15; and Baylor, 18-12, is at Arkansas-Little Rock, 23-9.

The first round continues Friday night with Arkansas State, 21-12, at Arkansas, 18-13 in the first meeting between those schools.

In other games, Seton Hall, 15-13, at Niagara, 20-9; St. Peter's, 21-7, at St. Louis, 24-9; Mississippi, 15-13, at Southern Mississippi, 18-11; Fullerton State, 17-12, at California, 18-14; and Oregon State, 18-10, at New Mexico, 25-9.

# Spurs fall to Hawks in overtime

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The San Antonio Spurs clawed their way back during regulation only to throw it away in overtime Tuesday night as the Atlanta Hawks defeated them 113-106 in NBA action.

The Spurs erased a 16-point third-period deficit and tied it at 101 at end regulation, but literally threw it away in the overtime, committing five turnovers and missing badly on three shots.

"Most of those turnovers in the overtime should not have happened," Spurs coach Bob Weiss said. "They were most unfortunate and costly to us. I thought our guys showed a lot of guts coming back, but it is disappointing getting this close and not getting the win."

Spurs guard Jon Sundvold agreed.

"In overtime, it seemed like we were too much in a hurry and did

blocked a few shots and got a couple of guys hot offensively."

Wilkins also said he had to give the Spurs "a lot of credit."

"I know this is the first time I've won in this building," he said. "But give Atlanta credit also. We came back and made the big plays when we had to."

Kevin Willis added 24 points as the Hawks won their eighth game in a row.

The Spurs made a game of it in the third period when rookie Larry Krystkowiak poured in 10 of his season-high 20 points. Atlanta led by as many as 16 in the period, but held only an 81-74 advantage going into the fourth period.

San Antonio missed a last opportunity to win in regulation when David Greenwood, unable to find a teammate underneath, missed on a 3-point shot.



# Sonics defeat Rockets 136-127 in double OT

HOUSTON (AP) — Reserve guard Eddie Johnson hit a 3-point shot and two free throws in the last 28 seconds of double overtime to power the Seattle SuperSonics to a 136-127 NBA victory over the Houston Rockets Tuesday night.

The SuperSonics' win spoiled a triple-double performance by Rockets center Akeem Olajuwon, who scored 38 points, grabbed 17 rebounds and blocked 12 shots. In the first overtime, guard Dale Ellis scored eight of Seattle's 10 points, including two layups and two jump shots. But it was two free throws by Johnson with 13 seconds left that tied the score at 119.

Olajuwon and forward Jim Petersen led the Rockets with four points each in the first overtime.

The SuperSonics rallied from a seven-point deficit in the fourth quarter to take a three-point lead with 12 seconds left in regulation. Rockets point guard Allen Leavell then hit a 3-point shot to tie the score at 109.

Tom Chambers and Ellis combined for 19 fourth-quarter points to lead the rally.

The SuperSonics raced to a 34-25 first-quarter lead, paced

by Xavier McDaniel's 13 points. Seattle also held a 62-55 halftime advantage with Chambers leading the way with 17 points.

Houston, led by Olajuwon's 12 points and McCray's seven, outscored Seattle 33-21 in the third quarter to take a seven-point lead.

"After it left my hands, it felt good," Johnson said Tuesday night of his game-clinching three-point shot. "We didn't make too many mistakes in the overtimes, controlled the tempo and won the game."

The field goal Johnson hit in the second overtime was the only one he made in the game. The SuperSonics' victory was their fourth in five games with the Rockets.

"This is exceptional team effort," said Seattle Coach Bernie Bickerstaff. "Tom Chambers had a good night, but I don't want to single out one man. We made the plays when the money was on the line."

Rockets Coach Bill Fitch, meanwhile, was upset by the loss.

"It was a gut-wrencher," Fitch said. "A long night for no cigar. If you are a Rockets fan, this game was a lump in your stomach."

# Mets edge Astros 5-4 in exhibition

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Lee Mazzilli's two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth inning Tuesday gave the New York Mets a 5-4 victory over the Houston Astros for the defending World Series champions' first triumph this spring.

The Mets had lost their first three exhibition games. The Astros, who lost to the Mets in last year's National League Championship Series, are 0-3.

Left-hander Steve Engel walked Dave Magadan to start the eighth, and Mazzilli followed with his second home run in two days.

Houston had taken a 4-3 lead in the top of the eighth off Jesse Orosco. They loaded the bases on a walk to Chuck Jackson, a single by Glenn Davis and a walk to Gerald Young. Jim Pankovitz drove in one run with a fielder's-choice grounder, and pinch-hitter Bert Pena gave the Astros the lead with a sacrifice fly.

Davis homered off Mets starter Ron Darling in the second inning, but New York came back with an unearned run against Houston starter Danny Darwin in the third. Lenny Dykstra and Mookie Wilson singled to put runners on first and third. An error by shortstop Dickie Thon on a ground ball by Keith Hernandez allowed Dykstra to score.

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