



Paris Junior College Dragons

- ▶ Unranked PJC storms through national tournament
- ▶ First national basketball championship for PJC
- ▶ Students, fans, alumni turn out to celebrate victory

2005 NJCAA CHAMPS

PJC 70, Moberly 61

Saturday, March 26, 2005

Hutchinson, Kansas

Foy honored by both tourney, NABC

*Roderick Earls tournament's MVP; Alexander Starr wins Sportsmanship Award
Earls and Michael Battle named to the All-Tournament team*



A COMMEMORATIVE LOOK BACK AT THE DRAGONS' DIVISION I CHAMPIONSHIP

DRAGONS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP RECOGNITION BANQUET
SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2005 • MCLEMORE STUDENT CENTER BALLROOM

Paris Junior College



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To the 2005 NJCAA Champions:

What a memorable year you provided PJC! You gave Paris Junior College, the City of Paris, and Texas something to cheer about. You made us all proud.

All that watched you play during the regional and national tournaments or listened to the radio broadcasts from Kansas, labeled you a "class act". You gave our young people new role models and are role models that parents admire. You showed us what character is all about. You exemplified the true meaning of teamwork. You taught us to set our goals high and to never give up on that lofty goal. You proved that hard work and dedication is rewarded. Your demeanor on and off the court demonstrated what fine young men you are.

This year will go down in the NJCAA and PJC history books. You will be the team that we talk about for many years to come. It has been a pleasure to watch you play and grow together as a team. The Paris Junior College Board of Regents, faculty, and staff join me in wishing you the best of luck in all your future endeavors. Thanks for making this a remarkable year!

Pam Anglin
President
Paris Junior College

It has been 46 years since their last appearance, but the Paris Junior College Dragons are returning to the NJCAA national basketball tournament in Hutchison, Kan.

The Dragons (24-9) defeated the nation's No. 2 team, San Jacinto College, in the finals of the NJCAA Region XIV tournament to earn their first trip to the national finals since 1959.

Paris Junior College will face NJCAA Region VI champion

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Moberly.

Leading by 2 points, 29-27, at halftime, the Dragons went on a 6-0 run to begin the second half, but Moberly came back to take a 44-41 lead with 9:33 left in the game. But Earls and Mile Battle led a 9-2 Dragon run and helped stretch a Paris lead to 64-55 with just over a minute left in the game.

Searight hit six of eight free throws down the stretch to ice the victory for the Dragons.

Dragons ride Ponies, advance to semifinals

TYLER CLIFTON
Sports Writer

LUFKIN — Bill Foy is no stranger to success at Region 14 Tournaments, and told his team before Saturday's first-round game against Panola that rebounding and defense would be the keys to advancing out of the first-round game.

Foy was right on the money, as the Ponies took 74 shots to the Dragons' 55, but PJC won the rebound battle, 45-41, and held Panola to 34 percent shooting en route to an 89-74 win during Saturday afternoon at Angelina College's Shands Gymnasium.

Brian Burrell led the Dragons (23-9) with 19 points on 5 of 7 shooting from three-point range. Alexander Starr had a double-double with 12 rebounds and 10 points to go with five assists. Donnell Franklyn finished with 16 points and eight rebounds.

"Our guys guarded well and did a good job of keeping them off the boards," Foy said. "We didn't allow them to come down the floor and make easy transition baskets. We made them work hard for what they got, and it was a solid team effort. If we get that every night, we'll have a chance."

With the win, PJC advances to the Region 14 semifinals at 6 p.m. today against No. 7 seeded Navarro, which upset second-seeded Lon Morris, 79-70, in another quarterfinal game on Saturday.

Panola (18-14) shot just 3 of 21 from beyond

the arc, and the Dragons held their top two players in Darian Green and Jamar Finley to a combined 23 points.

Burrell's first of four second-half threes, along with three points by Starr, gave PJC a 47-32 lead two minutes into the second half. The Ponies got within 10 points on two occasions and drew two within six with 14:39 left in the game, but the Dragons didn't lose their fire.

Burrell hit two straight threes, both off assists from Mike Battle to get the lead back up to 12. Battle answered a Darren Hopkins three-pointer with a jumper, and Panola never got closer than eight the rest of the way.

Franklyn scored five straight points midway through the half, Burrell had seven points, Charles Stoker hit a pair of free throws and Lamar Searight added a layup for a 78-59 advantage with 5:37 left in the game. Franklyn answered a Hopkins' three-point play with four of the next six points and fed Starr under the basket for a dunk to give the Dragons a 20-point advantage (86-66), their biggest lead of the game.

Starr finished off the three-point play, and even a late 7-0 run by the Ponies wasn't enough. Earls scored PJC's final two points at the line for the final margin, as the team finished 77 percent at the charity stripe.

"We were happy to get the first game out of the way and handle our business the way we did," Franklyn said. "We set the tone early and

DRAGONS, Page 38

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Dallas; Lamar Searight, 6-1, Soph, Pontiac, MI; Donnell Franklyn, 6-6, Soph., Gary, IN; Rickey Quarles, 6-2, Soph,

Lamar Searight scored 18 points, while Rod Earls and Alexander Starr each added 10 points in the victory over

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Paris Junior College will face the NJCAA Region VI Pratt Community College (19-15) in the semifinals at 1:45 p.m. Wednesday.

A victory could send them into the championship bracket a game on Thursday. Should they lose, they would move into the consolation bracket and play on Thursday. Semifinals will be played on Wednesday in both brackets.

"We finally did it," Coach Bill Foy said after winning the game. "We've knocked them out many times - and finally ended their dynasty."

It has been several years for Foy and his teams. They have their way into the game of the Region and East Texas. Five of the last six titles went to them last week, turning up the bridesmaid.

During the Foy's teams had a 155-71 record. Sophomores have gone on to play basketball.

This year's third in the regular season. San Jacinto and Lee College, respectively, were the way to rise to the top of the tournament play.

"I knew we had the confidence, and was on a mission. We were going to win this one."

They were some of the best players in the country (6-4) by John and Coach Desor. Last season, they went to the championship game, where they were runner-up.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

we were able to execute our offense and concentrate on our defense. It's still not time to get ahead of ourselves."

The Dragons shot 53 percent from the floor (29 of 55), but were a bit sloppy with 22 turnovers. They jumped out to an 8-0 lead on a jumper by Starr sandwiched between threes by Earls and Burrell.

Bobby Joshua scored his only points of the game inside, but Panola scored seven of the next nine points, including five by Finley and a running jumper by Kadiran Bryant to trail 10-7. Tyler Best and Lamar Searight each made two at the line to go along with a Franklyn putback and a Stoker layup, giving PJC a an 18-11 lead.

Mykal Riley scored from long distance, and baskets by Hopkins and Green cut the deficit to 20-19 midway through the half. An Earls three-point play and Stoker layup along with four Battle points, a Searight jumper and a Battle three-pointer got the PJC lead to double digits for the first time at 34-23.

Green scored the Ponies' final five points of the half, before a pair of Starr free throws and a Searight jumper just before the buzzer sent the Dragons into intermission with a 40-28 lead.

"We did a good job of denying the passing lane and containing their top two players," Starr said. "We committed a few fouls we shouldn't have and still have some things to work on defensively, but we were focused and played well together. If we continue to do that, it will be hard to beat us."

Battle scored 14 points on 6 of 10 shooting, and Searight added 10 points for PJC.

Earls and Stoker each finished with eight points, as the Dragons were 7 of 18 from three-point range (39 percent).

Hopkins led the Ponies with 28 points. Finley finished with 15 points and five rebounds, Green was held to eight points

and seven rebounds while Rontreal Braxton added seven points and five boards. Hopkins was 9 of 26 from the floor and combined with Green and Finley to finish 18 of 54. Panola was 21 of 38 (55 percent) from the free throw line.

Notes: PJC returned to Lufkin for the second straight weekend after defeating host Angelina in last Saturday's regular-season finale. ... The semifinal round has been kind to the Dragons in their last four trips to the tournament under Foy, as they are a perfect 4-0. PJC has made the regional tournament finals four of the last six years, but have yet to win the final game ... Starr said Panola's frequent misses from three-point range were due to a tight rim and that it took just the right touch for the ball to go in ... PJC's Stoker returned to action for the first time since breaking a bone in his big toe during a home game against Lee College. "I didn't know when I was coming back but just wanted to fit in the rotation," Stoker said. "I was a little nervous when I first went out there, but it eventually felt like normal."

tyler.clifton@theparisnews.com

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Panola	28	46	—	74
PJC	48	48	—	88

Panola (19-14) — Darren Hopkins 28, Jamar Finley 15, Darian Green 8, Rontreal Braxton 7, Kadiran Bryant 5, Darrell Cox 4, Keon Grant 4, Mykal Riley 3, FT 21-38, FG 25-74 (34 percent), Threes 3-21 (Braxton 1-1, Riley 1-6, Hopkins 1-6, Finley 0-1, Green 0-5), Rebounds 41 (Green 7), Assists 12 (Mike Davis 4), Steals 11 (Green 3, Hopkins 3), Blocks 1 (Braxton), Turnovers 13, Fouls 25, Fouled out — Braxton, Green.

PJC (23-9) — Brian Burrell 19, Donnell Franklyn 16, Mike Battle 14, Lamar Searight 10, Alexander Starr 10, Rod Earls 8, Charles Stoker 8, Tyler Best 2, Bobby Joshua 2, FT 24-31, FG 29-55 (53 percent), Threes 7-18 (Burrell 5-7, Earls 1-3, Battle 1-4, Ricky Quarles 0-1, Starr 0-1, Searight 0-2), Rebounds 45 (Starr 12, Franklyn 8), Assists 22 (Starr 5, Franklyn 4, Searight 4), Steals 5 (Searight 2), Blocks 1 (Joshua), Turnovers 22, Fouls 29, Fouled out — Joshua, Starr.

REGIONAL QUARTERFINAL RESULTS

No. 7 Navarro 79, No. 2 Lon Morris 70

LUFKIN — Ed Horton scored 17 points, and Charles Dotson finished with 16 to lead Navarro to the upset of Lon Morris, 79-70, in the second Region 14 quarterfinal game Saturday afternoon.

Chaz Dykes and Shawn Reynolds each had 11 points, while Thomas Morgan added eight points for the Bulldogs.

Michael Neal led the Bearcats with 19 points. Hernal Hall finished with 12 points, Chuma Awaji had 11 points while Norbey Aragon and Melvyn Richardson added nine points each. Navarro led 35-30 at the half and finished 19 of 28 at the free throw line.

Lon Morris was only 6 of 17 at the charity stripe.

No. 4 Trinity Valley 62, No. 5 Kilgore 60

LUFKIN — Kilgore missed a pair of tip-ins at the buzzer that would have sent the game into overtime, as the No. 4 Trinity Valley held on to score a 62-60 win over the No. 5 Rangers. Trinity Valley advances to the semifinals to face No. 1 San Jacinto at 8 p.m. today.

San Jacinto began the game with a 10-0 run and never looked back, beating Tyler, 74-56, in the final Region 14 quarterfinal game Saturday night.

IN: Rickey Quarles, 6-2, Soph,

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the NJCAA tournament to the national

Paris Junior College won the NJCAA Region 14 Basketball Championship (19-15) in a game that ended at 1:45 p.m. on March 23.

A victory over San Jacinto will send them to the national championship bracket game on Thursday. Should they win, they will move into the national championship bracket on Thursday.

They will be played in both brackets. "We finished the game with a 73-62 lead. We've known for many years that we would finally end this drought.

It has been several years since we won a national title on teams, but we won our way in the game of the year and East of the Mississippi. We've won five of the last seven titles.

During the game, Foy's team led 155-71. The sophomore team have gone to the national championship.

This year, they finished third in the regular season. The regular season was a regular season, respectively to rise to the top of the regular season play.

"I knew I just didn't want to lose. This team had the confidence, and was on a mission.

They were some of the best players in the country. They were a 6-4 team. They were led by John and Charles. They were a 24-9 team. They were a 24-9 team.



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PJC overpowers Navarro, advances to championship

TYLER CLIFTON
Sports Writer

LUFKIN — Paris Junior College entered the 2005 Region 14 Tournament with only one thing on its mind — winning the Region 14 Basketball Tournament.

Bobby Joshua scored 16 points, Lamar Searight had 15 points and the third-seeded Dragons took the next step by advancing to their fifth tournament final in the last seven years with an 87-62 win over No. 7 seed Navarro on Sunday night at Angelina College's Shand Gymnasium.



Bobby Joshua
PJC Dragon

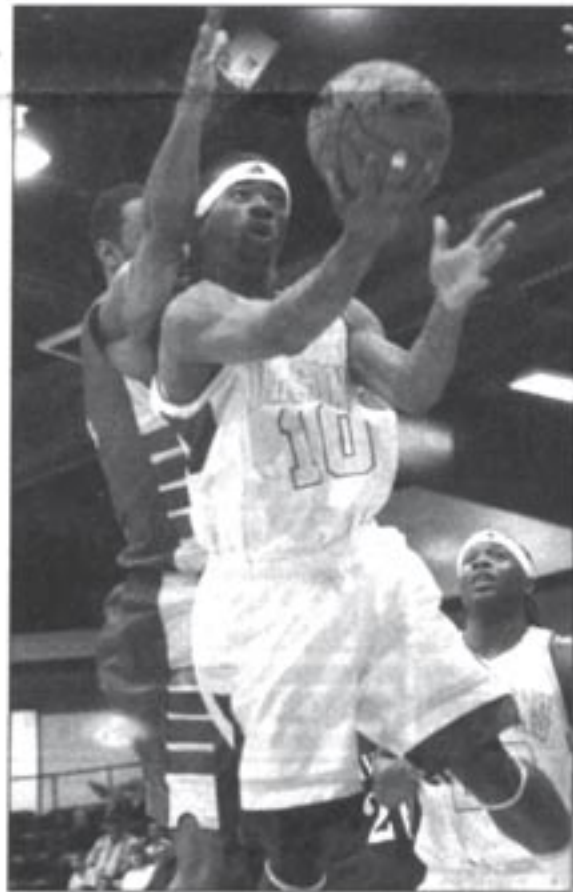
Charles Stoker scored 11 points in his second game back from injury, and Alexander Starr followed up Saturday afternoon's double-double with 10 points for the Dragons (24-9), who will play top-seeded San Jacinto at 7 p.m. today in the Region 14 Tournament final. San Jacinto beat No. 4 Trinity Valley, 73-62, Sunday in the other semifinal.

PJC improved to 5-0 in semifinal games and will try to win its first tournament title under Foy and advance to next week's NJCAA National Tournament in Hutchinson, Kan.

"This was one of the best games I've ever been associated with," Foy said after Sunday night's win. "We strive to do what everyone saw on the floor tonight, and this was the kind of performance we're looking for tomorrow in the championship game."

"I tried not to think about the final, even though a lot of people came up and talked to me about it. Everybody understands their role on this team and played good, hard defense. The offense took care of itself."

The Dragons took a 42-24 first-half lead and began the final 20 minutes with a 6-0 run on bas-



Sam Craft / The Paris News

PJC's Lamar Searight soars past a Navarro defender to score a layup during Sunday's Region 14 Tournament semifinal game.

kets by Joshua, Starr and Rod Earls. Navarro got within 20 on a pair of offensive putbacks, but a fade-away jumper by Starr along with a Searight three-pointer got the lead back to 24.

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Franklyn, 6-6, Soph., Gary, IN: Rickey Quarles, 6-2, Soph,

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The Dragons (24-9) defeated the nation's No. 2 team, San Jacinto College, in the finals of the NJCAA Region XI tournament to earn their first national title since 1959.

Paris Junior College won the NJCAA Region VI championship at Pratt Community College (19-15) in the opening round at 1:45 p.m. Wednesday, March 23.

A victory over Pratt sends them into the championship bracket and an 8:30 p.m. game on Thursday, March 24. Should they lose, they would move into the consolation bracket and play at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday. Semifinal games will be played on Friday and in both brackets on Saturday.

"We finally made it," Coach Bill Foy said following the game played in Little Rock, Ark. "We've knocked on the door many times - and now we've finally ended the drought. It has been a frustrating 46 years for Foy and his teams. They have found their way into the championship game of the Region XIV (East Texas) tournament five of the last seven years. Until last week, they always played as the bridesmaid.

During those seven years, Foy's teams have compiled a 155-71 record and the sophomores from those teams have gone on to play Division I basketball.

This year's team finished third in the conference during the regular season behind San Jacinto and Lon Morris College, respectively, but found a way to rise to the top in the tournament play.

"I knew we would make it, but I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This team had the confidence, and was on a mission."

They played some (6-4) by Joshua and Charles Desoto. season tournament experience to the Dragons.



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Layups by Tyler Best and Stoker along with a thunderous two-handed dunk by Michael Battle kept Navarro at bay, while a Best three-pointer and two free throws by Battle increased the advantage to 29 midway through the second half.

Chaz Dykes scored six straight points for the Bulldogs, but another Searight three and a tip-in by Stoker answered the run, and Donnell Franklyn added a dunk with 2:30 left for PJC's biggest lead of the game, 86-53. Navarro scored nine of the game's final 10 points when the outcome was well decided.

"We expected nothing less than making it to the final game," Joshua said. "This could be the last game for us as sophomores, so we're happy to be back."

"Navarro is a good team, but we got off to a very good start and didn't look back. Coach told us all to go out, stay calm and cool and do the best we can."

The Dragons won the semifinal game in similar fashion to Saturday's 89-74 quarterfinal victory over Panola. They played stout defense, took good shots and held their opponent to less than 40 percent shooting.

PJC shot 52 percent from the floor (34 of 66) and held the Bulldogs to a 39 percent clip (28 of 72). Searight was 3 of 3 from long distance, and Best was 2 of 2.

The Dragons committed only 13 fouls the entire game, and Navarro attempted only three free throws in the first half and seven overall.

Charles Dotson scored Navarro's first six points, and the teams went back and forth the first four minutes. The Dragons scored six straight on an Earls jumper and layups by Joshua and Brian Burrell for a 10-6 lead.

"We knew they liked to penetrate on the one-on-one situations, so we had to shut down their elbow drives," said Burrell. "This is such a diverse team, and we've got such a nice connection on the floor."

"We knew we had to get off to a good start, and our goal before the season started was to be No. 1. We have to win conference to take a trip to the nationals, and like Bobby said, this could be the last game for a lot of us, and we don't want that."

Searight scored four straight for an 18-11 lead midway through the first half, and the Bulldogs didn't get closer the rest of the way.

PJC went on a 10-0 run on threes by Best and Searight, a Joshua putback and two Burrell free throws. Dotson's jumper ended a 2:14 drought, when the Dragons scored six more points, four from Joshua and a layup by Starr for a 34-17 advantage with 3:11 left in the half.

Joshua and Stoker answered a Dykes three-pointer with a pair of baskets, and PJC gained all the momentum heading into the second half.



Sam Craft/The Paris News

Paris Junior College's Rod Earls drives to the lane during the second half of PJC's game against Navarro.

Starr drove to the basket for a score with six seconds left, stole the ensuing inbounds pass and fed Stoker for another score, giving PJC a 42-24 lead at intermission.

"That was such a big play," Foy said. "We're up 16 and are all of a sudden up 18, and Alexander did such a good job of having the presence of mind to make the fake and get the pass to Charles for the layup."

Best finished with eight points for the Dragons. Battle, Burrell and Franklyn each had six points, Ricky Quarles had five points and Earls added four.

Dykes led Navarro (16-16) with 20 points and five rebounds. Dotson had 14 points and 11 rebounds, Brandon Thomas had six points and six boards, while Barea Ward added six points.

The Dragons outscored Navarro 45-19 off the bench.

Navarro	24	28	—	42
PJC	42	46	—	81

Navarro (16-16) — Chaz Dykes 20, Charles Dotson 14, Brandon Thomas 6, Barea Ward 6, Torrey Campbell 4, Shawn Reynolds 4, Eric Horton 3, Leandrew Stewart 3, Thomas Morgan 2, JT 3-7, FG 28-72 (39 percent), Threes 3-19 (Dykes 2-6, Horton 1-6, Ward 0-7), Rebounds 42 (Dotson 11), Assists 13 (Reynolds 4, Ward 3), Steals 2 (Stoker 2), Blocks 2 (Shelby James 1, Dotson 1), Turnovers 18, Fouls 25.
PJC (24-9) — Bobby Joshua 16, Lamar Searight 15, Charles Stoker 11, Alexander Starr 10, Tyler Best 8, Michael Battle 6, Brian Burrell 6, Donnell Franklyn 6, Ricky Quarles 5, Rod Earls 4, JT 14-21, FG 34-66 (52 percent), Threes 9-11 (Searight 3-3, Best 2-2, Earls 0-5, Franklyn 0-1), Rebounds 42 (Franklyn 8, Earls 3, Joshua 4, Starr 4, three tied with 3), Steals 10 with 7, Assists 27 (Quarles 5, Earls 3, five tied with 2), Steals 8 (Searight 3, four players tied with 1), Blocks 2 (three tied with 1), Turnovers 12, Fouls 14.

Franklyn, 6-6, Soph., Gary Alexander, Starr each added 10 points in the victory over Pratt.

It has been 46 years since their last appearance, but the Paris Junior College Dragons are returning to the NJCAA national basketball tournament in Hutchinson, Kan.

The Dragons (24-9) defeated the nation's No. 2 team, San Jacinto College, in the finals of the NJCAA Region XIV tournament to earn the right to compete in the national finals.

Paris Junior College defeated San Jacinto College in the NJCAA Region XIV championship game on Thursday, March 23, at 1:45 p.m. Wednesday, March 23.

A victory over San Jacinto will send them into the championship game on Thursday, March 23. Should they lose, they will move into the consolation bracket and play at 7 p.m. on Thursday. Semifinals will be played on Friday, March 24, in both brackets.

"We finally made it," said Coach Bill Foy. "We've knocked off the No. 1 team many times - and finally ended the drought."

It has been a frustrating 46 years for Foy and his teams. They have never made their way into the championship game of the Region XIV (North Texas and East Texas) tournament in the five of the last seven years. Last week, they were defeated by the bridesmaid, San Jacinto.

During those years, Foy's teams have compiled a 155-71 record and produced 11 sophomores from the program who have gone on to play professional basketball.

This year's team finished third in the conference during the regular season. San Jacinto and Lone Star College, respectively, were the way to rise to the top of the tournament play.

"I knew we would win, but I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This team had the confidence, and was on a mission."

They were some of the best players in the conference (6-4) led by Joshua and Stoker played on the Paris team last season to the top of the conference.

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PJC beats No. 1 San Jacinto for trip to national tourney

TYLER CLIFTON
Sports Writer

LUFKIN — Lamar Searight couldn't control his emotions, as he and the rest of the Paris Junior College basketball team accomplished something the school hasn't done in quite some time.

Searight, Mike Battle and Bobby Joshua each scored 10 points, and the Dragons got over a personal hurdle in claiming their first Region 14 championship since 1959 with a 58-57 win over No. 1 San Jacinto on Monday night at Angelina College's Shands Gymnasium.

It was the first tournament championship for the Dragons under Foy and was the team's fifth tournament final in the last seven years. PJC can begin packing its bags for the NJCAA national tournament that begins March 22 in Hutchinson, Kan.

"The guys just had a confidence about them the whole time they were down here," Foy said. "They acted the right way and had the demeanor of a winner."

"We showed good balance defensively and kept competing. Things got a little bit ugly early, but our defense allowed us to stay in the game."

Bobby Joshua's jumper off an Alexander Starr assist to start the second half gave the Dragons their first lead at 29-27. Joshua answered a Patrick Andrepont three-pointer with another basket down low, and a Rod Earls three gave PJC its biggest advantage of the game at 34-30.

San Jacinto (31-3) pulled to within one, when Trey McDowell scored from long distance and put the Ravens back in the lead with a rare four-point play. Joshua scored his third straight bucket of the half and hit 1 of 2 at the free throw line to tie the game 39-39.

Andrepont and Ricky Quarles exchanged baskets for the third tie of the half, when a Kentrell Gransberry layup and a pair of jumpers by Courtney Captain and JQuincy Jones put the Ravens up 47-41 with 8:22 left in the game. A pair of Brian Burrell free throws and a Travis



Mike Battle
PJC Dragons



Sam Craft / The Paris News

PJC's Tyler Best looks to pass while being defended by San Jacinto's Tafari Jones during Monday night's Region 14 final at Angelina College's Shands Gymnasium. The Dragons advanced to next week's NJCAA national tournament in Hutchinson, Kan.

Best layup brought PJC within two, and three Battle points trimmed the deficit to 49-48 with 3:52 remaining.

The Dragons went on a 6-0 run on three points each by Searight and Battle. Gransberry's layup brought San Jacinto to within a field goal, but Searight and Earls both went 2 for 2 at the line for a 58-54 lead.

DRAGONS, Page 16

Franklyn, 6-6, Soph., Gary, Alexander Starr each added 10 points in the victory over

Should they lose, they would

Moberly.

Leading by 2 points, 29-27, at halftime, the Dragons went on a 6-0 run to begin the second half, but Moberly came back to take a 44-41 lead with 9:33 left in the game. But Earls and Mike Battle led a 9-2 Dragon run and helped stretch a Paris lead to 64-55 with just over a minute left in the game.

Six of eight free throws during the stretch to ice the game for the Dragons.

Little Rock, Ark., MVP of the tournament, Alexander Starr received the Jerry Sportsmanship Award. Earls, Starr and Searight were named to the All-Tournament team.

The national title is the first for the Paris Junior College Dragons in basketball. The team made it to the national semifinals and came home with the runner-up trophy.

Earls (winning the MVP) and Starr (winning the very few coaches' votes) were named MVP of the season by winning the national championship."

The first unranked team to win the national championship since 1966 when Sullivan University, Ky., won the title.

In 46 years since their last appearance, but the Paris Junior College Dragons are returning to the NJCAA national basketball tournament in Hutchinson, Kan.

The Dragons (24-9) defeated the nation's No. 2 team, San Jacinto College, in the finals of the NJCAA Region XIV tournament in their first trip to the national finals since 1959.

Paris Junior College will face San Jacinto in the Region VI championship game on Wednesday, March 23, at 7 p.m. in the opening round of the tournament.

Should they lose, they would be eliminated from the tournament. The game will be held at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 24, at the Shands Gymnasium.

SEE NEXT PAGE

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The Dragons (24-9) defeated the nation's No. 2 team, San Jacinto College, in the finals of

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to earn their first trip to the national finals since 1959. Paris Junior College defeated San Jacinto College at Pratt Community College (19-15) in the opening round at 1:45 p.m. Wednesday, March 23.

A victory over San Jacinto would send them into the championship bracket and a game on Thursday. Should they lose, they would move into the consolation bracket and play at 7 p.m. on Thursday. Semifinals would be played on Friday in both brackets on the same schedule.

"We finally made it," Coach Bill Foy said. "I'm signing the game player." "We've knocked on the door many times - and now we've finally ended the drought."

It has been a frustrating 46 years for Foy and his teams. They have made their way into the championship game of the Region VI (North and East Texas) tournament five of the last seven years. Last week, they were up the bridesmaid.

During those seasons, Foy's teams have compiled a 155-71 record and 11 sophomores from the team have gone on to play professional basketball.

This year's team finished third in the conference during the regular season. San Jacinto and Lone Star College, respectively, were the way to rise to the top of the tournament play.

"I knew we would win. I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This team has confidence, and was on a mission."

They scored some points. Play (6-4) by Jones and Courtney Desobry led to the Dragons.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Captain scored the Ravens' final five points of the game. Earls missed the first free throw on the other end before a timeout and missed the second attempt on purpose to force San Jacinto to take a long shot at the end.

Battle was named to the all-tournament team, while Searight was the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

"There are no words to describe what this feeling is like," Battle said. "We came close last year and came into this season knowing we had to win it, but it wasn't easy."

"Our defense wins games with the offense feeding off it. We set goals last year and came up a bit short but were able to bring it home this time."

PJC struggled the first 5:11 of the game, with Gransberry scoring four points in the paint, and Andrepoint adding a pair of three-pointers.

Jumpers by Starr and Donnell Franklyn got the Dragons on the scoreboard, and the Dragons continued to chip away at the deficit. PJC got within six three times in the half, when a Gransberry layup and a Kevin Widemond three-pointer put San Jacinto up by 11 with 3:44 left.

Three Joshua points, two Franklyn free throws, a layup by Starr and a Best three-pointer led the Dragons on a 10-0 run to close within 26-25. Jones made 1 of 2 at the line, when Searight drove the length of the court and sank a jumper from the free throw line to tie the game 27-27 at intermission.

"This is a team thing, and all of our hard work paid off," Searight said. "Hats off to San Jacinto, because they have a good team with great players, but we gave ourselves a chance to pull out a victory and came through in the end."

Best finished with seven points and has made 3 of his last 4 three-point attempts. Earls had five points, Starr had nine rebounds, five assists and four points while Franklyn and Quarles added four points each.

McDowell led the Ravens with 15 points. Gransberry had 14 rebounds and 12 points before fouling out. Andrepoint had 11 points and Captain added nine points.

Both teams shot 38 percent from the floor, were subpar at the free throw line and were even in rebounding (32-31 PJC). The difference was the Dragons' stout defensive play that caused 15 turnovers, including eight PJC steals.

The Dragons gathered around midcourt after one of if not the biggest wins in recent history.



Sam Craft/The Paris News

Paris Junior College's Donnell Franklyn shoots over San Jacinto's Joseph Polite during Region 14 finals action Monday night.

It was an especially bittersweet night for Searight, who said the MVP award was the result of the team's desire to take the next step.

"This is a once in a lifetime thing," Searight said. "I dedicate this to my auntie, uncle and friend who have all passed."

"My older sister is coming to Kansas, and I hope my mother can make it as well."

For Foy, it was a personal milestone that went above and beyond anything he's accomplished in his 10 years of coaching.

"This is the first championship I've won in my life," Foy said. "I haven't won anything this big since my PAL football league when I was 12 years old."

PJC	27	31-58
San Jacinto	27	30-47

PJC (24-9) — Mike Battle 10, Bobby Joshua 10, Lamar Searight 10, Tyler Best 7, Earl Earls 5, Alexander Starr 4, Donnell Franklyn 4, Ricky Quarles 4, Brian Burnett 2, Charles Staker 2, FT 17-30, Threes 3 (Best 1, Earls 1, Searight 1), Fouls 19. San Jacinto (21-2) — Tray McDowell 15, Karibel Gransberry 14, Patrick Andrepoint 11, Courtney Captain 9, Quincy Jones 5, Kevin Widemond 3, Joseph Polite 2, FT 8-17, Threes 6 (McDowell 3, Andrepoint 2, Widemond 1), Fouls 24, Fouled out — Gransberry, Jones, Polite.

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Searight hit six of eight free throws down the stretch to ice the victory for the Dragons.

Coach Foy gets 200th win, Dragons advance in big way

TYLER CLIFTON
Sports Writer

HUTCHINSON, Kan. — Paris Junior College didn't leave the Hutchinson Sports Arena without a little scare during its first-round tournament game, but like good teams do, the Dragons found a way to win in the end.

Alexander Starr had 13 points and eight rebounds, Donnell Franklyn finished with 12 points and six boards while Mike Battle added 11 points in PJC's 79-68 win over Pratt (Kan.) Community College on Wednesday to advance in the winner's bracket of the NJCAA Division I National Basketball Tournament.

Bobby Joshua had 10 points and seven rebounds for PJC, who won its sixth straight game. Brian Burrell, Rod Earls and Lamar Searight each added eight points for the Dragons (25-9), who will play Highland (Ill.) Community College at 8:30 p.m. today in a quarterfinal game. The Highland Cougars beat North Dakota State College 72-69.

"We went into today looking at this as a road game, with Pratt being only 60 miles away," said PJC head coach Bill Foy, who recorded his 200th coaching career victory. "We knew it was going to be tough after a grueling regional final against San

Jacinto, and Pratt is a streaky team that has done a good job considering what's happened to them with coaching changes and all."

The Dragons scored the first six points of the second half on layups by Joshua and Franklyn, and a Burrell jumper that left the Dragons ahead by 12 points.

Pratt's Jared Young temporarily broke the run with a three-pointer, but Joshua answered twice more inside to put PJC ahead, 46-33, less than four minutes into the half.

Franklyn answered four straight points by Pratt's Josh Randall with seven of his own, including three layups, to keep the lead in double figures with 12:50 left. Pratt's Richard Stone scored his only points of the game on a three, but jumpers by Searight and Battle put PJC back up by 16 midway through the half.

Battle and Jarvis Nichols swapped three-pointers, but another long-range jumper by Young quickly changed the momentum.

The Dragons led by as much as 18 points, when the Beavers went on a 9-0 run, capped by Nichols'

DRAGONS, Page 11

Pratt C (19-15) at 1:45 23.

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"I knew we would make it - I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This team had the confidence, and was on a mission,

predict they will continue to be successful at a four-year institution."

The Dragon team roster includes:

Alexander Starr, 6-4, Soph., Dallas; Lamar Searight, 6-1, Soph., Pontiac, MI; Donnell Franklyn, 6-6, Soph., Gary, IN; Rickey Quarles, 6-2, Soph.,

sixth-ranked College of Southern Idaho and sixteenth-ranked Moberly (Mo.) Area Community College, which they defeated 70-61 in the tournament finals to win the NJCAA title.

Lamar Searight scored 18 points, while Rod Earls and Alexander Starr each added 10 points in the victory over

NJCAA Region VI champion Pratt (19-15) in the opening round at 1:45 p.m. Wednesday, March 23.

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A victory would send them into the championship bracket and a game on Thursday. Should they move into the championship bracket and play on Thursday, the game will be played on the same court in both brackets.

"We finally did it," said Coach Bill Foy, who led the team to the championship. "We've known for many years that we were going to finally end this drought."

It has been several years for Paris Junior College, but the Dragons are returning to the national tournament for the first time since 1959. Foy's teams have won 155-71 regular season games and 155-71 regular season games. This year's team is predicted to be successful at a four-year institution.

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"I knew we would make it - I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This team had the confidence, and was on a mission."

They are some of the best players in the conference during the regular season behind San Jacinto and Lon Morris College, respectively, but found a way to rise to the top in tournament play. "I knew we would make it - I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This team had the confidence, and was on a mission."



Joining them on the Dragon team are leading scorer Lamar

Paris Junior College Coach Bill Foy Junior College Coach of the Year.

Foy, who led the Dragons to the NJCAA Division I national

er Jr., Michael Moberly. Leading by 2 points, 29-27, at halftime, the Dragons went on a 6-0 run to begin the second half, but Moberly came back to take a 44-41 lead with 9:33 left in the game. But Earls and Mile Battle led a 9-2 Dragon run and helped stretch a Paris lead to 64-55 with just over a minute left in the game.

Searight hit six of eight free throws down the stretch to ice the victory for the Dragons.

Earls, from Little Rock, Ark., was named MVP of the tourna-

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

fourth three of the afternoon, to pull within six points with 4:08 left.

Searight was called for his fifth foul on a charge during that run and PJC had to find a way to finish without him.

Randall scored twice at the line a minute later, drawing Franklyn's fifth foul in the process, to trail by only five points, 69-64.

That was the closest that the Beavers would get as PJC responded with a 7-0 spurt, highlighted by Starr, who scored off a length-of-the-floor inbounds pass by Earls to go back up 12 with 1:30 left.

Earls was a perfect 6 of 6 at the line, all in the second half, and the Dragons didn't succumb to the pressure and kept their national title hopes alive.

"We came out in the second half, kept our composure and didn't let up," Franklyn said. "We stayed aggressive, kept attacking and things worked out for us."

Franklyn's free throw, followed by a Burrell jumper and Starr's dunk off a miss led a 5-0 PJC run to start the game. Marvin Lee's layup broke a 3:43 Beaver drought, and Randall scored six straight for a brief 8-7 lead.

The Dragons went back on top, and every time Pratt scored, PJC would answer on the other end.

Battle and Young each scored five straight points, with Searight and Lee swapping buckets to keep the score deadlocked. Four different

Dragon players scored the next seven points to give them a 28-21 lead.

Nichols hit two three-pointers, before Joshua responded with a layup, and Starr added another dunk off an alley-oop pass from Earls. Marcus Wimberly and Battle each hit a pair of free throws, but Young added 1 of 2 at the line as Pratt trailed 36-30 at intermission.

Earls and Franklyn both spent significant time on the bench. Franklyn picked up his second foul five minutes into the game, and Earls picked up three fouls in the half after being whistled for a charge with less than three minutes left.

Both teams rebounded well, with each grabbing 39 boards on the day, but the difference was PJC's 49 percent shooting clip (27 of 55) compared to the Beavers' 36 percent (22 of 61). The Dragons were 14 of 26 from the floor in the second half (54 percent).

Young led Pratt (19-16) with 19 points and seven rebounds. Randall finished with 17 points and six rebounds, while Nichols added 17 points and five boards.

Notes: Foy notched his 200th career win and averages 20 victories per season, but the 10th-year head coach remains adamant about focusing on the task at hand. "It's just 200 wins," Foy said. "It's not 500 or 600. I don't want to take away from what we've done, because it's not about me. It's about them."

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Dragons rally from 13-point deficit to defeat Highland CC

TYLER CLIFTON

Sports Writer

HUTCHINSON, Kan. — Throughout all the success the Paris Junior College men's basketball team has endured during the 2004-2005 season, the Dragons learned something about themselves during Thursday night's national quarterfinal game against Highland (Ill.) Community College at the Hutchinson Sports Arena.

PJC refused to wilt under pressure and erased a double-digit deficit in the second half for a 77-72 win over the Cougars to advance to the NJCAA semifinals, where they'll face the College of Southern Idaho, a last-second winner against Midland College at 8:15 p.m. Friday.

Rod Earls scored 18 points, including 11 of 14 at the free-throw line. Alexander Starr had 13 points and five rebounds, while Lamar Searight added 11 points for PJC (26-9). The Dragons moved one victory away from their all-time high set last season with their seventh straight win and assured themselves of no worse than fourth place.

"I thought the turning point in the game was our run, because they had out-played us at that point," PJC head coach Bill Foy said. "We made a few more plays than they did down the stretch, and our guys kept their

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT NEWS & NOTES

WELCOME HOME CELEBRATION PLANNED FOR DRAGONS

Paris Junior College is planning a celebration Monday to welcome home the Dragon basketball team from Hutchinson, Kansas and to congratulate them on their success at the NJCAA national tournament.

The event will be begin at 1:30 p.m. in the Hunt Center. The public is invited to come out and congratulate the team that made it to the final four of the NJCAA tournament. It was PJC's first appearance in the national tourney in 46 years.

Members of the college administration, coaches, and possibly some of the Dragon team members will make comments.

Refreshments will be available and plenty of time will be given to visit with coaches and players.

composure, turned things up a notch and got back in the game."

Highland (31-4) scored eight straight points during the first three minutes of the second half for a 12-point lead. Bobby Joshua and Searight kept the Dragons close, but Kourtney Calvin scored six straight points for a 50-37 lead.

DRAGONS, Page 16

Pratt C (19-15) at 1:45 p.m. Wednesday, March 23.

A victory over Pratt would send the Dragons into the championship bracket and an 8:30 p.m. game on Thursday, March 24. Should they lose, they would move to the consolation bracket. Thursday's game will be played in both halves.

"We've coached in the past, but this is the first time we've won a national championship since 1959."

Paris Junior College head coach Bill Foy said. "We've won many titles in the past, but this is the first time we've won a national championship since 1959."

This year's team is led by senior forward Lamar Searight, who averaged 15.5 points and 7.1 rebounds per game during the regular season. He also led the team in scoring with 155 points and 71 rebounds.

"I knew we would make it - I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This team had the confidence, and was on a mission.

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The Dragon team roster includes:

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"We finally made it," Dragons Coach Bill Foy said following the game played in Lufkin. "We've knocked on the door many times - and now we have finally ended the drought."

It has been a frustrating several years for Foy and his Dragons teams. They have played their way into the championship game of the Region XIV (South and East Texas) tournament five of the last seven years. Until last week, they always came up the bridesmaid.

During those seven years, Foy's teams have compiled a 155-71 record and the last sophomores from those teams have gone on to play Division I basketball.

This year's team finished third in the conference during the regular season behind San Jacinto and Lon Morris College, respectively, but found a way to rise to the top in tournament play.

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Earls came to the forefront, scoring nine points in a 14-0 run over a span of 2:31, with the Dragons causing six turnovers in the stretch, including a 10-second call, a back-court violation and steals by Searight, Earls and Franklyn. Searight added a pair of free throws in the stretch, and fed Battle for a layup to give PJC a 51-50 lead.

"Our defense speaks for itself," Earls said. "We know playing tough defense brings our offense up, and coach tells us every day that if we play hard-nosed defense, then the offense will come."

The lead changed hands on five more occasions, before the Dragons took the lead for good with 5:25 left. Battle grabbed a long rebound and drained a three-pointer, and Starr scored on an off-balanced jumper in the lane for a 66-61 advantage. Charles Stoker scored two of his six points at the line, and a Battle layup off a Donnell Franklyn assist gave PJC its largest lead at seven, when Aaron Spears and Soyebobo both scored inside.

The Dragons had an answer for every Highland comeback, but things got interesting, when Starr was whistled for a foul on a three-point attempt. The Cougars made only 2 of 3 at the line, but Soyebobo drove the length of the court for a three-pointer to draw within 74-72.

Earls made his first free throw but was called for a lane violation after trying to rebound an intentional miss on the second, giving Highland one final chance, but a desperation three was off the mark.

"Our offense wasn't going well," Starr said. "Good defense allowed us to stay in the game in the end."

PJC answered a Parker three-pointer with eight straight points, four each by Starr and Franklyn, who finished with seven points. L.C. Robinson and Soyebobo hit consecutive threes but were answered by Tyler Best and Stoker on the other end.

The Cougars were dominating inside in the early going with buckets by Parker and Phillips along with a Calvin dunk off an offensive rebound to go up by five. A jumper by Phillips and a Soyebobo layup kept Highland on top by seven, and John Chappell's three-pointer increased the lead to eight with three minutes left in the half.

Battle slammed home a Joshua pass but was answered on the other end by a Robinson three for a 36-30 Cougar lead at intermission. The Cougars were 5 of 11 (46 percent) from three-point range in the first half.

"Our experience helped us, and the sky is the limit," Battle said. "We stayed together, remained focused and didn't crack when things got down."

Highland shot 46 percent (26 of 56) from the floor and were 13 of 18 (72 percent) at the free throw line. The Dragons shot only 37 percent (22 of 60) but overcame their poor shooting by out-rebounding Highland 41-36 and making 30 of 42 free throw attempts.

Battle finished with nine points and eight



Earl Craft/The Paris News

Paris Junior College's Michael Battle (23) drives to the basket against Highland Community College's Matthew Burks (30) during the Dragon's 77-72 victory over the Cougars at the Hutchinson Sports Arena in Hutchinson, Kan., on Thursday night.

rebounds, Joshua had 11 rebounds and eight points while Best added five points and five boards.

Soyebobo led the Cougars with 20 points and eight assists. Calvin had 12 points and six rebounds, while Phillips added 12 points.

Notes: Chipola College (Fla.) beat Seminole State College (Okla.) 73-66 and will face Moberly Area Community College (Mo.), a 73-65 winner against Iowa Western Community College, at 6:30 p.m. tonight

in the other semifinal game. Arizona Western entered the tournament as the nation's No. 1 team but left with a 31-3 after losing its second game in three days, 80-73 to Northeastern Junior College (Colo.). ...In other consolation bracket games, Shelton State Community College (Ala.) edged Globe Institute of Technology (N.Y.) 77-76; North Dakota State College of Science beat Pratt (Kan.) Community College 84-76 while Iowa Western rebounded from its loss to Moberly with a 75-66 win against Seminole State 19-14.

PJC 21, Highland 16; Community College 13

PJC 26 42 - 72

Highland 26 38 - 72

PJC (26-9) — Earl Earls 18, Alexander Starr 12, Lamar George 11, Mike Battle 9, Bobby James 8, Donnell Franklyn 7, Charles Stoker 6, Tyler Best 5, PJ 30-42, PG 22-40 (37 percent), Three 3-11 (George 1-1, Battle 1-0, Earls 1-0, Best 0-1), Brian Burdell 2-2; Rebounds 41; Louisa 11, Battle 8, Best 5, Starr 5, Franklyn 4; Assists 12 (Franklyn 3), Steaks 1 Louisa 2, Searight 2); Blocks 1; Fouls 10; Turnovers 11; Fouls 18.

Highland (27-4) — Todd Soyebobo 20, Acourthie Cannon 12, Lamar Phillips 12, Raymond Parker 9, Aaron Spears 7, L.C. Robinson 6, Matthew Burks 3, John Chappell 2, PJ 13-18, PG 28-38 (46 percent), Steaks 7, 25; Robinson 2-2, Louisa 2-0, Chappell 1-1; Burks 1-0, Parker 1-0; Rebounds 36; Spears 9, Cannon 6, Chappell 6; Steaks 18; Steaks 6; Steaks 3; Steaks 4; Blocks 1; Cannon 1, Starr 1; Turnovers 22; Fouls 27; Fouled out - Chappell, Phillip, Spears

tyler.clifton@the-parisnews.com

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Searight hit six of eight free throws down the stretch to ice the victory for the Dragons.

Earls, from Little Rock, Ark., was named MVP of the tournament, while Starr received the Charles Fesher Sportsmanship Award. Foy was named Coach of the Tournament. Earls, Starr and Battle were named to the All-Tournament team.

The national title is the first for the PJC Dragons in basketball. PJC made it to the national tournament in 1959 and came home with a fourth place trophy.

"It feels great (winning the title) because very few coaches get to end their season by winning a national championship," Foy said.

PJC is the first unranked team to win the national championship since 1996 when Sullivan College of Louisville, Ky., won the title.

It has been 46 years since their last appearance, but the Paris Junior College Dragons are returning to the NJCAA national basketball tournament in Hutchinson, Kan.

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Dragons complete run to final

BY BRAD HALLIER

The Hutchinson News
bhallier@hutchnews.com

A reporter mentioned to Paris, Texas, coach Bill Foy on Friday that his team didn't have any stars.

"They're stars in my eyes," Foy said with a smile.

While no particular Dragon has stood out at the NJCAA tournament, the remarkable balance Paris has shown has been a pri-

mary reason it is playing in tonight's national championship game. Friday the unranked Dragons continued their run by downing No. 6 Southern Idaho 77-69 at the Sports Arena. They will play Moberly, Mo., at 8 p.m. today for the title.

Take your pick as to who the Dragons' top player was Friday. Guard Lamar Searight hit all three of his first-half shots and had eight points at halftime, finishing with 12. Forward Michael Battle added seven points in the first 20 minutes and ended up with 10. Guard Roderick Earls also had eight points while hitting 2 of 3 3-pointers in the first half, and he finished with a team-best 18 points.

"We're very balanced," Foy

● See DRAGONS / D3

● Continued from Page D1

said. "We've got a lot of good, solid basketball players that are willing to share the ball. They have good chemistry, and they've been great to work with. I've really enjoyed coaching them this year."

Paris shot 46.4 percent from the field (26 of 56), including a sizzling 57.7 percent in the first half. All 10 Dragons who played scored and nine had at least one field goal. Nine Dragons had at least one rebound and seven had at least one assist.

But there's little questioning who came up the biggest for the Dragons (27-9). It was their biggest player - 6-foot-6 inch, 245 pound sophomore forward Bobby Joshua.

Joshua was scoreless for the first 35 minutes, 45 seconds. His first bucket came with 4:15 left in the game, and it gave Paris a 61-59 lead. He later scored with 3:36 left, breaking a 61-61 tie and sparking a 15-2 run. Joshua's three-point play after an offensive rebound with 2:16 left gave Paris its biggest lead at that point, 68-61.

"I don't think I hit any shots in the first half," Joshua said. "The second half, I was thinking this was a team effort. I really wanted to win, so I figured if I crashed the boards hard enough, it would create opportunities for me, and it did. I got my game going a little bit in the second half, and it helped us out."

The first half was played at a high pace and from the 15:35 mark to the 3:01 mark, with both teams scoring at a frantic pace. The score was knotted 39-39 with 3:01 left, and that was also the score at halftime.

Paris controlled the tempo in the second half. While the Dragons didn't necessarily slow it down, they forced the Golden Eagles into more half-court settings, and they couldn't find their two primary post players - Mohammed Kone and Abdoulaye Ndiaye, who combined for 18 first-half points but only seven in the second half.

Instead, Southern Idaho shot more from the perimeter with little success. It made 27.6 percent in the second half (8 of 29) and hit

only one field goal from the 10:43 mark until there was 18 seconds left in the game.

"They were contesting our shots," Southern Idaho coach Gib Arnold said. "We didn't have any wide-open looks. They contested all of our shots, and that's a credit to them. They played hard, and they were very athletic and strong."

Southern Idaho point guard Jamaal Brown scored 20 of the Golden Eagles' 30 second-half points. He had five of their eight field goals in the last 20 minutes. He finished with a game-high 22 points.

Brown also provided one of the game's best moments. Paris was shooting free throws with 9.1 seconds left and victory was all but assured. At that time, Brown walked over to the Paris bench to shake the Dragons coaches' hands.

"I wanted to congratulate them," Brown said. "There isn't much you can do then unless you pull a Reggie Miller on the New York Knicks.

"I want them to win (tonight)."

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"We finally made it," Dr. Coach Bill Foy said following the game played in Little Rock. "We've knocked on the door many times - and now we finally ended the drought."

It has been a frustrating 46-year drought for Foy and his 11 teams. They have pushed their way into the championship game of the Region XIV (Southwest and East Texas) tournament five of the last seven years. Until last week, they always came up the bridesmaid.

During those seven years, Foy's teams have compiled a 155-71 record and the last of the sophomores from those teams have gone on to play Division I basketball.

This year's team finished third in the conference during the regular season behind San Jacinto and Lon Morris College, respectively, but found a way to rise to the top of the tournament play.

"I knew we would make it. I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This team had the confidence, and was on a mission."

They got the job done against some very strong competition."

Players like Alexander Starr

Shreveport; Charles Stoker Jr., 6-4, Soph, Desoto; Michael Battle, 6-4, Soph, Waldorf, MD;

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Leading by 2 points, 29-27, at halftime, the Dragons went on a 6-0 run to begin the second half, but Moberly came back to take a 44-41 lead with 9:33 left in the game. But Earls and Miles Battle led a 9-2 Dragon run and helped stretch a Paris lead to 64-55 with just over a minute left in the game.

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PJC wins national championship

Dragons celebrate 70-61 victory

TYLER CLIFTON
Staff Writer

HUTCHINSON, Kan. — Mission accomplished.

The Paris Junior College men's basketball team made the 426-mile journey to Hutchinson, Kan., determined to bring home a national championship. The Dragons accomplished that task Saturday night with a 70-61 victory over 16th-ranked Moberly Area Community College (Mo.) in the NJCAA Men's Division I Basketball Tournament final.

After the Dragons beat sixth-ranked College of Southern Idaho in Friday's semifinal game, sophomore forward Bobby Joshua said nothing but a championship would be accepted. PJC players delivered, placing their stamp on PJC basketball with the historic championship.

Delivery today is delayed in order to offer complete coverage of the Dragons' national title run.

For more coverage see Section 8.

This is the first national basketball championship for PJC in only two tournament appearances. The last time a Dragon squad made it to Hutchinson, Kan., for the national tournament was 46 years ago — 1959, when Dwight D. Eisenhower was president. Elvis were unheard of. They finished fourth that year.

DRAGONS, Page 7A

Members of Paris Junior College's basketball team celebrate with the NJCAA National Tournament Champion trophy Saturday after a 70-61 win in the championship game of the NJCAA tournament.



SEE NEXT PAGE

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Joining them on the Dragon team are leading scorer Lamar Searight of Pontiac Michigan, Brian Burrell of Nacogdoches (the only freshman on the team), Roderick Earls of Little



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The Paris News

Dragons

No one knows how much of an impact the championship will have on the junior college and its athletic program, but Dr. Pam Anglin, PJC president, said the success of the Dragons could carry over into other endeavors undertaken at the college.

"Incredible is the first word that comes to mind," Anglin said. "What these young men have done is wonderful for the college. They were a special once-in-a-lifetime group."

Saturday's championship victory was also the second national championship in the college's history. PJC won a baseball national championship in 1959.

About 500 of the 7,000 fans in Hutchinson Sports Arena Complex on

"This is the best thing that's happened to PJC in 50 years. It's a moment the guys will never ever forget."

— Kenneth Webb
Director of student life

Saturday night were cheering for the Dragons.

"This is the best thing that's happened to PJC in 50 years," said Kenneth Webb, PJC's director of student life, who made the seven-hour journey to Kansas for the game. "It's a moment the guys will never ever forget. This is the biggest thing that I've been a part of in my

17 years at the college. I brought my family up here for a chance at seeing history. Now, my kids can grow up knowing they were a part of it."

It was also a special game for PJC English and reading instructor Bill Neely, who has instructed all but one of the players.

"I've taught a lot of good student-athletes, but as a group, this has been the best that I've been associated with," said Neely, who has taught at PJC since 1983. "They work hard, listen well and are the most teachable bunch that I've ever seen. They're all around good kids, and it's been a privilege to have been their teacher."

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During those seven years, Foy's teams have compiled a 155-71 record and the last 10 sophomores from those teams have gone on to play Division I basketball.

This year's team finished third in the conference during the regular season behind San Jacinto and Lon Morris College, respectively, but found a way to rise to the top in tournament play.

"I knew we would make it - I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This team had the confidence, and was on a mission.

"This team has been a pleasure to coach," Foy said. "They have won 50 games (26-7 last year) in their two years and have represented PJC well, both on and off the basketball court. I am proud of them and predict they will continue to be successful at a four-year institution."

The Dragon team roster includes:

Alexander Starr, 6-4, Soph., Dallas; Lamar Searight, 6-1, Soph., Pontiac, MI; Donnell Franklyn, 6-6, Soph., Gary, IN; Rickey Quarles, 6-2, Soph.,

team that won the NJCAA national title March 26 has compiled a 54-16 record over the last two seasons.

The unranked Dragons swept through a four-game schedule in Hutchinson, Kan., that included sixth-ranked College of Southern Idaho and sixteenth-ranked Moberly (Mo.) Area Community College, which they defeated 70-61 in the tournament finals to win the NJCAA title.

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Earls, from Little Rock, Ark., was named MVP of the tourna-

PJC upends Moberly in finals, 70-61

TYLER CLIFTON
Sports Writer

HUTCHINSON, Kan. — Paris Junior College ended its Cinderella season with its biggest win in school history Saturday night at the Hutchinson Sports Arena.

Lamar Searight scored 18 points, including 10 of 12 from the free throw line, while Rod Earls and Alexander Starr added 10 points each in the Dragons' 70-61 victory over 16th-ranked Moberly Area

Community College (Mo.) during the NJCAA Division I Men's Tournament championship game.

Earls, a sophomore from Little Rock, Ark., was named the William E. French Most Valuable Player, in the tournament. He averaged 13 points a game in the tournament to lead PJC in scoring.

"It was a wonderful experience and I can't really explain what I'm feeling right now," said Earls of winning the national title. "We set two goals during the year of winning conference and a national championship. Fortunately for us, things were able to work out in the end."

Starr received the Charles Fesher Sportsmanship Award, while PJC coach Bill Foy won the Coach of the Tournament award. Mike Battle

was also named to the all-tournament team.

It was only the Dragons' second trip to the national tournament and it came 46 years from their first visit in 1959.

"It feels great because very few coaches get to end their season by winning a national championship," Foy said. "I'm happy for PJC, and the city of Paris, but most of all I'm happy for my players."

Moberly was making its seventh trip to the national finals and 26th overall NJCAA tournament appearance. The Greyhounds had won four previous national titles.

PJC led by two points, 29-27, at halftime, and went on a 6-0 to start the second half on jumpers by Earls, Brian Burrell and Donnell Franklyn.

Moberly's Marty Wise scored three consecutive baskets to tie the game at 39-all. The Greyhounds later took a 44-41 lead on a three-point play by Eddie Smith with 9:33 left.

Over the next 4 1/2 minutes, the lead would change hands five times, as the game became a see-saw affair.

PJC took the lead for good by going on a 9-2 run, highlighted by three three-pointers, two by Earls and one by Mike Battle.

"That was the turning point of the game for us" said Foy of those three. "They had taken the lead on us, but we did a better job of moving with the basketball. It created some open looks and our guys knocked down the big shots."

The lead stretched to as much as 64-55 on four Lamar Searight free throws and a Charles Stoker put-back with 1:05 left in the contest, which all but sealed the win.

The Greyhounds pulled to within 67-61 with 25 seconds left on a Wise three-pointer, but Searight scored 6 of 8 from the line down the stretch to seal the victory.

The two teams were tied at 6-6 after three minutes of play, but Moberly led by 23-16 at the 7:02 mark of the first half. Maurice Gibbs nailed a three-pointer to highlight the Moberly run.

Paris followed with a 9-0 run,

highlighted by five points from Brian Burrell and layups by Rod Earls and Alexander Starr.

The two teams battled back-and-forth and were tied at 27-all, but a Lamar Searight layup off a Charles Stoker assist with 51 seconds left in the half gave PJC a 29-27 lead at intermission.

NATIONAL CHAMPS, Page 2B

third in the conference during the regular season behind San Jacinto and Lon Morris College, respectively, but found a way to rise to the top in tournament play.

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A victory would send them into the championship game on Thursday. Should they lose, they would move into the consolation bracket and play on Thursday. Semifinals will be played on Wednesday in both brackets.

"We finally did it," Coach Bill Foy said after winning the game. "We've knocked them out many times - and finally ended the drought."

It has been several years for Foy and his Dragons to win the national title.

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Searight hit six of eight free throws down the stretch to ice the Dragons. The Rock, Ark., of the tournament received the sportsmanship award named Coach Earls, Starr named to the team. He is the first coach in basketball to the national home with trophy. (winning the few coaches season by win- championship."

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

Starr had eight points in the first half to lead PJC.

Moberly (30-7), Region 16 champions, had 15 turnovers in the first half, but out-rebounded the Dragons 17-8. Eight of Moberly's 27 points came on offensive put-backs.

PJC had eight turnovers.

PJC shot 44 percent in the first half (11-of-25), but Moberly was 11-of-22 (50 percent).

For the game, PJC shot 46 percent and Moberly shot 45 percent from the floor.

The Dragons were out-rebounded 36-29, but over-

came it with timely defense, which included Battle and Earls taking charges late in games.

The Dragons (28-9) ended the season with nine consecutive wins and set a school record with 28 victories in a season.

"The guys were talking about (winning the national title) for awhile and it was important for the team to play its best basketball at the end of the season," Foy said. "It was the ultimate goal, and we were able to accomplish it."

Unranked PJC (28-9) beat two ranked teams en route to the national championship. In the first game, the Dragons

defeated unranked Pratt Community College, 79-68, on Wednesday, then defeated Highland (Ill.), 77-72, in the quarterfinal round, then the College of Southern Idaho, 77-69, to advance to the final round.

PJC 79, Moberly 61
PJC 29 41 -- 79
Moberly 27 34 -- 61

PJC (28-9) — Lamar Searight 18, Rod Earls 10, Alexander Starr 10, Brian Burrell 7, Donnell Franklin 6, Ricky Quarles 6, Mike Battle 5, Bobby Joshua 4, Tyler Best 2, Charles Stoker 2. Free Throws 16-18. Field Goals 25-55. Threes 4-11 (Earls 2-3, Battle 1-1, Burrell 1-5, Searight 0-1, Stoker 0-1). Rebounds 29 (five tied with four - Earls, Franklin, Searight, Starr, Stoker). Turnovers 15. Fouls 18. Fouled out - none.
Moberly (30-7) — Marty Wise 16, Kevan Gantz 13, Keith Hardway 11, Eddie Smith 11, Maurice Gibbs 10. Free Throws 10-17. Field Goals 24-53. Threes 3-12 (Hardway 1-1, Wise 1-2, Gibbs 1-5, Smith 0-2, White 0-2). Rebounds 36 (Gantz 9). Turnovers 21. Fouls 20. Fouled out - Smith.

Foy named NABC JC Coach of the Year

The National Association of Basketball Coaches has named Paris Junior College Coach Bill Foy Junior College Coach of the Year.

Foy, who led the Dragons to the NJCAA Division I national championship this season, received the award at NABC's All College Basketball Awards ceremony on April 3 in St. Louis. The event was held during the NCAA finals in that city.

The All College Basketball Awards night recognized Foy, along with the NCAA Coach of the Year, College Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the year, Offensive Player of the year and other national awards, according to NABC.

Foy, a native of Fort Wayne, Indiana, has compiled a 203-118 record during his ten-year tenure at Paris Junior College. The last seven years at PJC have been exceptional. His teams have advanced to the finals of the NJCAA Region XIV state tournament finals five years while compiling a 162-69 record. He and assistant coach

Brad Enright watched this 2004-2005 team run up a 28-9 record, the most wins ever in a season by a PJC team.

The unranked Dragons swept through a four game schedule in Hutchinson (KS) that included sixth ranked College of Southern Idaho and sixteenth ranked Moberly Area Community College (MO), which they defeated 70-61 in the tournament finals to win the NJCAA title.

PJC is the first unranked team to win the national championship since 1996 when Sullivan College of Louisville, Kentucky won the title.

Foy received his bachelor's degree from Indiana University and his Masters in Education from Prairie View A&M (Texas).

He began his coaching career in public schools, where he spent four years. He then spent one year at Southern Methodist University, two years at Blinn College (TX), one year at Union College (KY), and five years at Lee College (TX) before coming to Paris. Foy has two daughters, 7-year-old Sidney and 5-year-old Bailey.

Leading by 2 points, 29-27, at halftime, the Dragons went on a 6-0 run to begin the second half, but Moberly came back to take a 44-41 lead with 9:33 left in the game. But Earls and Milett led a 9-2 Dragon run and helped stretch a Paris lead to 55 with just over a minute left in the game. Searight hit six of eight free throws down the stretch to ice victory for the Dragons. Earls, from Little Rock, Ark., was named MVP of the tournament, while Starr received the Charles Fesher Sportsmanship Award. Foy was named Coach of the Tournament. Earls, Starr and Battle were named to the



Paris Junior College Dragons returning to the NJCAA national basketball tournament in Hutchinson, Kan. The Dragons (24-9) defeated the nation's No. 2 team, San Jacinto College, in the finals of the NJCAA Region XIV tournament to earn their first trip to national finals since 1959. Paris Junior College will face Pittsburg Community College (KS 9-15) in the opening round at 8:45 p.m. Wednesday, March

A victory over Pratt would send them into the championship bracket and an 8:30 p.m. game on Thursday, March 24. Should they lose, they would

Bench gives Paris big boost in championship win

By JONATHAN SANTIAPPO

The Hutchinson News

jsantippo@hutchnews.com

Shreveport; Charles Stoker Jr., 6-4, Soph, Desoto; Michael Battle, 6-4, Soph, Waldorf, MD; Brian Burrell, 6-3, FR, Nacogdoches; Tyler Best, 6-9, Soph, Lafayette, La; Rodrick Earls

Paris, Texas, sophomore Lamar Searight started Saturday night's NJCAA championship game on the bench, knowing that he and his comrades on the Dragons' sideline could be called upon to go in and contribute at any time.

"Coach is always telling me to be prepared," Searight said. "When the opportunity comes I have to be ready to take advantage of it."

Searight took advantage of his opportunity by shooting 10 for 12 from the free-throw line in the second half and finishing with a game-high 18 points in

Paris' 70-61 victory over No.15-ranked Moberly Mo. at the Sports Arena.

"That's always one of my goals - to come in and make plays," said Searight, who took off his undershirt and threw it into the stands after the game. "I don't want to sound arrogant, but I made plays down the stretch."

He certainly did. And so did the Dragons' other four bench players who received playing time. That group also included Ricky Quarles with six points and Michael Battle with five.

While Paris (28-9) was shuffling players on and off the court, Moberly (30-7) used only three reserves, who contributed almost nothing. Just take a look at these statistics. The

Dragons' bench outscored Moberly's backups 33-0, outrebounded them 13-0 and held a 7-0 edge in assists.

The Paris bench shot 9 for 22 from the floor (40.9 percent) and 14 for 16 from the foul line (87.5 percent), while the Greyhounds' bench missed its only two field-goal attempts and never attempted a free throw.

"We're a balanced team defensively and offensively," said Rodrick Earls, a Paris starter who was named the tournament's MVP. "We have eight or nine guys who can come in and step up."

Having good bench play has been a major key to Paris' success throughout the tournament. The Dragons used 10 players in each of their four tournament

games, and their bench averaged 32.8 points in those contests.

"The depth helped in a tournament like this," said Paris coach Bill Foy, whose team entered the week with nine players averaging five or more points per game. "When you have to play four games in four days it helps."

"Every game we were pretty balanced. We played some guys more minutes than the others, but everybody played. I think that helped keep us a little bit fresher."

At the end of Saturday's game, Searight and his teammates had plenty of energy left over to celebrate the Dragons' first national championship.

"It feels good," Searight said with a grin. "It's the best feeling in the world."

They got the job done against some very strong competition." Players like Alexander Starr

Kimball, Bob- (6) of Everman Stoker Jr. (6-4) of

Starr, 6-4, Soph., Searight, 6-1, Gary, 6-6, Soph., Franklin, 6-6, Soph., IN; Rickey Quarles, 6-2, Soph,

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N.D. State Coll. of Science.....	88	Iowa Western.....	103	Southern Idaho.....	84	Paris, Texas.....	70
Shelton State, Ala.....	83	Highland, Ill.....	96, 20T	Chipola, Fla.....	70	Moberly, Mo.....	61

Paris celebrates first title

It has been 46 years since their last appearance, but the Paris Junior College Dragons said, "This team had the confidence, and was on a mission."

It has been 46 years since their last appearance, but the Paris Junior College Dragons are returning to the NJCAA national basketball tournament in Hutchinson, Kan.

The Dragons (24-9) defeated the nation's No. 2 team, San Jacinto College, in the finals of the NJCAA Region XIV tournament to earn their first trip to the national final.

Paris Junior College won the NJCAA Region XIV title at Pratt Community College (19-15) in the final game at 1:45 p.m. Wednesday, March 23.

A victory over San Jacinto sent them into the championship bracket and a game on Thursday. Should they win, they will move into the semifinals of the bracket and play on Thursday. Semifinals will be played on Friday and Saturday in both brackets.

"We finally got to the championship," Coach Bill Foy said after winning the game. "We've knocked them out many times - but this time it finally ended it."

It has been several years for Paris on teams. They got their way into the game of the Region and East Texas five of the last 10 years. It didn't last week, though, to tip the bridesmaid.

During the tournament, Foy's teams had a 155-71 record. The sophomores have gone on to play basketball.

This year's team is third in the conference. The regular season at San Jacinto and San Jacinto College, respectively, helped them find a way to rise to the top of the tournament play.

"I knew we were going to win, but I just didn't know when," Foy said. "This tournament was a confidence, and we

They got the job done. Some very strong coaches. Players like Alexander (6-4) of Dallas Kluge by Joshua (6-6) and Charles Stoker. Desoto brought talk to the season tournament to the Dragons.

Joshua and Stoker were their high school state champions. Basketball Coaches has named



Charles Stoker Jr., Desoto; Michael Joseph, Waldorf, MD; Bill, 6-3, FR, Nacogdoches; Best, 6-9, Soph, N; Roderick Earls, Little Rock, AR and La, 6-6, Soph, Ever-

Moberly. Leading by 2 points, 29-27, at halftime, the Dragons went on a 6-0 run to begin the second half, but Moberly came back to take a 44-41 lead with 9:33 left in the game. But Earls and Miles Battle led a 9-2 Dragon run and helped stretch a Paris lead to 64-55 with just over a minute left in the game.

Clutch shots earn Earls MVP award

All-tourney team

BY TOMMY GALLAGHER

The Hutchinson News
tgallagher@hutchnews.com

- Michael Battle, Paris, Texas
- Mario Boggan, Chipola, Fla.
- Jamaal Brown, Southern Idaho
- Roderick Earls, Paris, Texas
- Quentin Gonzales, Iowa Western
- Mohammed Kone, Southern Idaho
- Mark Kruse, North Dakota SCOS
- Tristan Martin, Midland, Texas
- Kyle Prochaska, Iowa Western
- Eddie Smith, Moberly, Mo.
- Temi Soyibo, Highland, Ill.
- Marty Wise, Moberly, Mo.
- Sesher Sportsmanship Award - Alexander Starr, Paris
- Bud Obee Most Outstanding Small Player - Tarrance Crump, Shelton State
- French Most Valuable Player - Roderick Earls, Paris
- Coach of the Tournament - Bill Foy, Paris

Paris, Texas, hasn't exactly collected individual honors this season.

Only Lamar Searight made the Region 14 all-tournament team, and even then, he was on the second team.

That included Roderick Earls, who scored 10 points and led the Dragons to their first NJCAA Tournament crown with a 70-61 victory against Moberly, Mo., on Saturday at the Sports Arena.

For that, Earls earned French Most Valuable Player honors.

"He's unbelievable. He's very deserving of the MVP," said Dragons coach Bill Foy, the Coach of the Tournament. "He's just a winner. He makes clutch shot after clutch shot. In the second half, he hit that big shot and we fed off that."

He did it again Saturday night, when Paris (28-9) went back and forth with the Greyhounds (30-7).

Earls sank a shot that put the Dragons up late. They traded

● See EARLS / D3

Earls

● Continued from Page D1

leads twice more before it got some breathing room when Earls hit "that big shot" - a 3 to make it 58-53 with 3 minutes, 30 seconds to go. Paris added to the lead after that.

"We've used to being overlooked," Earls said. "When we came here, we didn't get any attention. It's just been like that all year long. They didn't know who we were are."

Earls didn't lead the tournament in scoring this week. But he did score enough to lead Paris to the NJCAA title in only the team's second appearance. The other came in 1969.

Earls averaged 13.5 points in four tournament games, though he had a rocky start. He had only eight in the Dragons' first-round victory against Pratt, his worst game of the week.

But he bounced back with 18 points against both Highland, Ill., and Southern Idaho and led the Dragons into the title game. The 6-foot-2 sophomore from Little Rock, Ark., came a long ways in two years.

"I had some options (coming out of high school)," Earls said. "But I didn't like them. Then Coach Foy told me that he would give me a chance. I made the most of it."

Paris forward Michael Battle joined Earls on the all-tournament team. The 6-4 forward averaged 8.8 points per game.

"No one expected this," Battle said. "But like coach (Foy) said, we like being underdogs. It couldn't have been better."

Like Paris, Moberly also placed two on the all-tournament team. Guard Eddie Smith averaged 15 points, including the game-winning shot in the first round and 28 points in the semifinals. Center Marty Wise averaged 16 points per game.

Two other teams - Southern Idaho and Iowa Western - also placed two players on the all-tournament team.

Southern Idaho was led by center Mohammed Kone, who scored a game-high 17 points in the third-place game as the Golden Eagles beat Chipola, Fla. Guard Jamaal Brown, who also made the team, added 15 points and 10 assists.

Iowa Western's Kyle Prochaska and Quentin Gonzales made the cut. Prochaska had 19 points and grabbed 20 boards to help the Reivers place fifth in their first NJCAA Tournament. Gonzales added 10 points and six rebounds in the victory.

Six-foot Tarrance Crump from Shelton State, Ala., earned Bud Obee Most Outstanding Small Player honors.

But all of the other major tournament awards - including the Sesher Sportsmanship Award, which went to Dragons forward Alexander Starr - belonged to Paris.

"Rod's made big shots all year," Foy said of his team's MVP, who's still undecided as to where to play next season. "He's going to make someone very happy."

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le Rock, Ark., of the tournament received the sportsmanship named Coach Earls, Starr named to the team.

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Pratt would be champion- an 8:30 p.m. y, March 24, they would

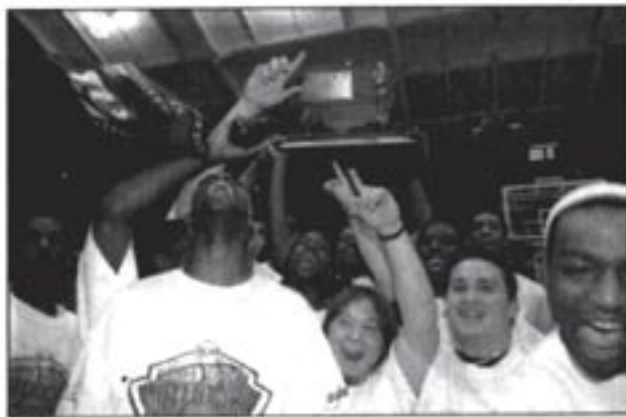
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Sam Craft / The Paris News

Members of Paris Junior College's basketball team celebrate with the NJCAA National Tournament Champion trophy Saturday after a 70-61 win in the championship game of the NJCAA tournament.

EDITORIAL

Dragons success simply incredible

National Champions. We like the sound of that, and we like what it will mean for this community.

We join Paris Junior College and the city of Paris in congratulating the college's men's basketball team on winning the NJCAA Division I National Championship.

We are pleased that the 12 young men and their coaches who make up the team are being honored at 1:30 p.m. today in Hunt Center for their accomplishments. It is appropriate that their success should be recognized by the college as well as the whole community.

The Dragons have brought home only the second national championship in the college's history (the 1959 baseball team won the other). This team did what many deemed impossible after participating in one of the toughest regions in the country.

The championship squad epitomized the word "team" and eclipsed last year's school-record victory total with 28 wins, including two over nationally ranked teams in their final two games of the tournament. The Dragons won nine in a row to end the season with a regional championship and the national championship. Incredible — simply incredible.

Head coach Bill Foy and assistant Brad Enright should be commended for their hard work and preparation. Their hours spent recruiting, developing plays, training, overseeing practices and coaching should not be overlooked.

Tournament Most Valuable Player Rod Earls, Coach of the Tournament Foy, Sportsmanship Award winner Alexander Starr and All-Tournament Team member Mike Battle received personal recognition, but they are among the first to say everyone on this team contributed to getting this dream accomplished.

While the celebration of the national championship will soon end, the impact this historic feat will have on PJC and the greater Paris community will last much longer. Foy should have no problems recruiting some of the finest student-athletes across the country who also have the team-first concept in mind. Student recruitment will be easier, too.

The national championship stretched beyond the bounds of the school's athletic program. Dr. Pam Anglin, PJC president, noted that the championship should greatly enhance the school's name recognition. Director of Student Life Kenneth Webb and instructor Bill Neely, who spent many hours with these players, said it was a once-in-a-lifetime memory that the players as well as those associated with them will never forget. The community will remember too.

The Dragons captured not only the hearts of their fans but of those in Hutchinson, Kan., many of whom cheered for the Dragons in the final game. It wasn't necessarily the type of basketball they played but how they went about playing it that mattered. They showed dignity and class.

Nine of the 12 Dragon players won't be in Paris this time next year. Most, if not all, will be playing at four-year colleges. But the legacy of their determination and victory will be felt throughout this area for quite some time.

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Searight hit six of eight free throws down the stretch to ice the victory for the Dragons.

Earls, from Little Rock, Ark.,

Fans welcome home champion Dragons

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Cheers from more than 600 fans rocked the Hunt Center Monday afternoon as they welcomed the newly crowned NJCAA National Champion Paris Junior College Dragons back home.

The Dragons capped a Cinderella season Saturday night by winning the national title, the first in men's basketball for Paris Junior College and only the second in the college's history. The PJC baseball team brought home the

other NJCAA title in 1959.

"These young men showed 8,000 basketball fans in Hutchinson, Kan., what teamwork is all about," PJC President Dr. Pamela Anglin told the crowd. "This is the greatest team and greatest coach in the United States."

Dragon coach Bill Foy, who was named "Coach of the Tournament" in Hutchinson, led his team to a 28-9 season. He said it was the determination and the maturity of the team that turned the season into a run for the championship.

"These guys had a goal, had confidence and played well as a team," Foy said. "They are a great group of guys who became the best they could be at the end of the season and through the tournament run."

Even on Monday, two days after the Dragons won the title, players Alexander Starr and Charles Stoker were still trying to believe that the team won the national championship.

PJC, Page 8

PJC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"It's just so big, it is taking a while to sink in," Starr said.

"I'm just now beginning to realize that we won the national tournament," Stoker said.

Foy introduced the members of the Dragon team, and pointed out that Rod Earls was named Most Valuable Player of the tournament, while Starr received the

sportsmanship award. Earls, Starr and Michael Battle were named to the All-Tournament team.

The remainder of the team includes Lamar Searight, Donnell Franklyn, Rickey Quarles, Brian Burrell, Tyler Best, and Bobby Joshua.

"All these guys played their hearts out in Hutchinson," Foy said. "They never gave up, and

they took on some great teams — beginning in our state tournament — and beat them all."

As soon as Foy finished his introduction of the players, fans rushed to the gym floor to look at the NJCAA national championship trophy, to talk to the players and get their autographs.

"Isn't this great. This is just a wonderful thing for the college," said Ann Wyche, a member of the PJC Board of Regents.

Ross Hodges, a former player and now an assistant coach at Texas A&M University-Commerce, was on hand to celebrate with the Dragons.

(19-15) at 1:45 p.m. on March 23.

A victory over Pratt would send them into the championship bracket and an 8:30 p.m. game on Thursday, March 24. Should they lose, they would move to the consolation bracket.

Thursday's game will be played in both halves. "We're coaching the team," Foy said. "We've won many titles before, but this is the first time since 1959."

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Alexander Starr, 6-4, Soph., Dallas; Lamar Searight, 6-1, Soph., Pontiac, MI; Donnell Franklyn, 6-6, Soph., Gary, IN; Rickey Quarles, 6-2, Soph.,

to win the NJCAA title. Lamar Searight scored 18 points, while Rod Earls and Alexander Starr each added 10 points in the victory over

A victory over Pratt would send them into the championship bracket and an 8:30 p.m. game on Thursday, March 24. Should they lose, they would

2005 NJCAA CHAMPION DRAGONS



BACK ROW (L-R): Assistant Coach Brad Enright, Albert Reese, Alexander Starr, Donnell Franklyn, Tyler Best, Bobby Joshua, Charles Stoker Jr., Brian Burrell, Joel Green, Head Coach Bill Foy
FRONT ROW (L-R): Student Assistant Tyler Easthouse, Michael Battle, Roderick Earls, Rickey Quarles, Lamar Searight, Student Assistant Patrick Thompson