

Tourney final loss ends DCCC season

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HUDSON | There were few times this season when offense was a problem for the Davidson County Community College men's basketball team. Ranked as the nation's top scoring team this season, the Storm made high numbers seem ordinary and decent defenses absent.

That's why their offensive drought late in Saturday's NJCAA Region X Tournament Final at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute in Hudson seemed so odd. The Storm went nearly four minutes without a point and the game's final 5:03 without a field goal, losing 76-68 to Catawba Valley Community College. CVCC will now advance to the NJCAA's Sweet 16 for the second straight year.

DCCC's successful first season ended with 22 wins and seven losses. "I'm extremely proud of my team," DCCC coach Matt Ridge said. "A first-year program winning 22 games is amazing. They've set the bar high."

Saturday's game was a nip-and-tuck affair until the end, with DCCC leading by four as the game entered the final six minutes. CVCC pulled even at 61-all, then took a 63-61 lead at the 5:30 mark on a long jumper by Michaux Christian. When Storm guard W.J. Parks responded with a 3-pointer on the ensuing possession, it appeared DCCC was primed for a fight. But Parks' shot proved to be DCCC's final field goal of the year, while CVCC scored 10 unanswered points to pull away.

"We got in a little bit of a shooting slump at the end," DCCC point guard Landon Bowers said.

DCCC had its chances, but a flurry of shots rattled in and out of the cylinder.

CVCC, however, had multiple shot opportunities on multiple possessions after getting key offensive rebounds and resetting the offense.

"I've always said 'if you can't rebound, you can't win,' " Ridge said. "In that stretch, (CVCC) made the plays."

The win was a sweet one for the Buccaneers, who entered the four-team event with the lowest number of victories (13). But the Bucs left Hudson with a 15-11 record, some hardware and most importantly, a berth in the Sweet 16. The Bucs will play March 3 in Maryland against an opponent that has yet to be named.

"We're excited because no one really expected us to show up in this thing," said CVCC coach Jeff Moore, noting that his team lost most of its firepower from last year. "To beat two outstanding teams in Caldwell (Friday) and Davidson, is pretty darn impressive."

DCCC sophomore post man Justin Reissman was named the tourney's MVP. He scored 31 Saturday, a night after scoring 29 against CCC&TI. Justin Strickland finished with 22 for DCCC.

CVCC had five scorers in double figures, including Ramar Cuthbertson and Mikie Corpening who finished with 14 apiece.