

Guilford Tops NAIA In Tournament Surprise

by Jim Shields

All the Quaker basketball team needed was the chance. Despite finishing second in the conference, Guilford won District 26 playoffs and proceeded to stun the NAIA basketball experts by capturing the small college championships last week in Kansas City.

Against a field studded with tall front lines and spectacular records, Jack Jensen's team took five wins in six days to bring to Greensboro the first NAIA title for North Carolina. It is only the third national crown for the state.

The improbability of Guilford's feat is reflected in the fact that the Quakers are the first unseeded squad ever to prevail. Not only unseeded, Guilford was not even ranked in the top 20 schools at the time of the event.

As one of the smallest schools represented, Guilford got the title with faultless teamwork, especially with some timely defense. Though reserves Robert Fulton, Greg Speas, John Ralls and Robert Kent all played early in the event, it was the durability of the starting team plus sixth man Steve Hankins that yielded win after win.

Center Ray Massengill, forwards Carr and East, guards Jackson and Free, plus Hankins, were the only men who played in the Quakers' last three contests. At least five of these players scored in double figures in every game save one, indicating the good balance utilized.

Guilford opened on Monday playing Keene State of New Hampshire, possessor of a 19-7 record. It was no contest, the Quakers getting 21 points from Massengill as they ran up a 34 point lead in the second half, before settling for a 92-82 victory.

Valdosta State of Georgia upset defending three-time champion Kentucky State and became the next Quaker foe,

but was promptly annihilated 98-81 on the strength of 29 points by Lloyd Free, the tournaments Most Valuable Player, and a 48-35 edge in rebounding. Guilford trailed Westmont of California by three points with one minute to go in the quarter final contest, but got eight points in that minute to take a 70-67 squeaker.

Guilford was a definite underdog in the semifinals, matched up against the second seeded team, Augustana of Illinois, with a 28-1 record, a 6-11, 7-0, 6-6, front line, and a raucous contingent of some 1300 students. The Quakers won 77-69.

Coach Jensen told his players to take the ball to the basket, and they did. Running up leads of 12 and 14 points in each half, Guilford trailed but twice, each time by one point. Massengill, the 6-9 sophomore, neutralized two-time All American center John Laige, the latter shooting 0-12 in the first half. Out rebounded by eleven, a 19-29 performance at the foul line won the Quakers way into the finals for the first time.

The finale was All-East Coast, but the resemblance between Maryland - Eastern Shore and Guilford ended soon after that. The fast breaking Hawks had scored 409 points in four games as

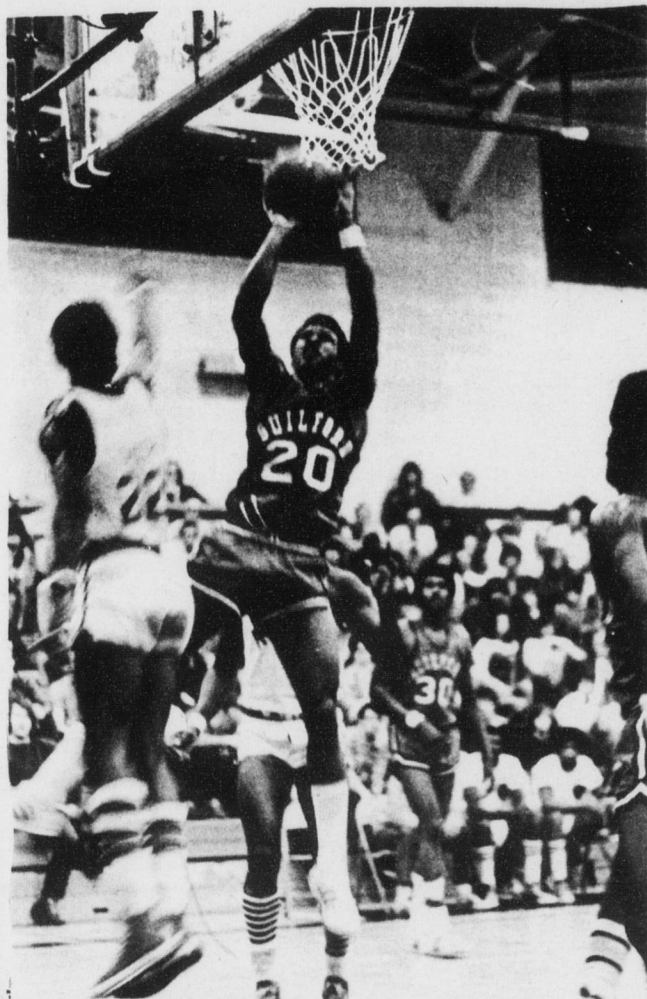
compared to Guilford's 337. The wighth seeded squad had a 26-4 record.

Maryland opened in high speed, hitting from long range for a quick 36-25 advantage. Guilford got its defense coordinated in the remainder of the half, and Free began hitting as the Quakers scored 23 tallies to the Hawk's 10. Guilford broke to a larger lead as the concluding half commenced, and held off a couple of prospective comebacks in pic-

king up a 99-96 ticket to the championship.

It was quite a third season for Coach Jack Jensen, who now has a career mark of 69-20. Guilford ended the year 29-5, giving seniors Carr and East a career mark of 101 victories, 25 defeats. Carr, who finished fourth in scoring and second in the tournament, was an all-tournament selection to the first team, as was freshman Free, who led the five games in scoring. East, at 6-2, one of the smallest forwards in college ball, ended up tith in rebounding while sparking the team's defensive efforts. Massengill finished eighth in scoring, and Greg Jackson was eleventh.

The successful trip to Kansas City was the fifth time the Quakers have made the elite elimination event in only eight years. The best previous 1970, when Carr also made the all-tournament team.



Men's, Women's Tennis Begins

As both men and women's tennis squads set about preparing for season openers after spring break, Director of Women's Athletics Kitty Steele is having an easier time of it than counterpart John Lambeth.

As the women train for their first year of intercollegiate activity, some fifteen candidates are out for the scheduled ten matches. Lambeth is searching for replacements for the half-dozen athletes who departed from last year's team.

Steele's charges will open March 26 at St. Mary's in Raleigh. Open meets are expected to be with High Point, Catawba, Duke, Stratford, and probably Salem.

The women may also organize a softball team to participate in some intercollegiate action.

Assisting Mrs. Steele with the tennis preparations and training is Jerry Crocker, with more help from John and Elwood Parker expected.

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