

## SIAC WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT

## Fort Valley's defense, board work keys victory



A&M's Carmelia Bloodsaw (shooting) and Valley's Debbie Ray (34 in white) showed why they are considered the marquee players in SIAC women's roundball.

Photo by Isaac Corker

The SIAC women's finals held true to form with both of the tournament's top seeds facing off for the championship trophy. But when it was all over, Fort Valley State engineered a surprising 84-81 win over Alabama A&M and earned the league's automatic berth to the NCAA Division II playoffs.

Coach Lonnie Bartley's Lady Wildcats fashioned their triumph with defense and rebounding. For the game, Valley had 16 steals and forced 29 A&M turnovers. On the boards, the two teams battled on even terms, with Valley holding a slim 52-51 edge. The difference, though, came on the offensive glass, where the Lady Wildcats grabbed 28 rebounds to the Lady Bulldogs' 21.

Valley was fortunate that they were able to get more shot attempts than A&M (94-55), because they didn't shoot many free throws. For the game, the Lady Wildcats went to the line just six times, hitting three of those. A&M, on the other hand, didn't take advantage when they got to the foul line. By game's end, A&M had shot 31 free throws, but connected only 56.3 percent of those, going 16 for 31.

Tournament MVP Debbie Ray was the guiding force for Valley State's offense. Ray fired away for 30 points (on 57.7 percent shooting), while snatching a dozen rebounds. Alicia McElroy, however, was equally as impressive, coming through with a solid overall performance — eight points, seven rebounds, 11 assists and four steals. Seleria Newton contributed 16 points, six assists and five boards, while Dionka Davis and Cynthia Bridges (eight rebounds) chipped in with nine points apiece. Lisa Draper finished with eight points and four steals.

Coach Press Parham's Lady Bulldogs, who finished the year with a 23-8 record, were never able to get over the hump in the finals. Valley took a seven point lead at the half, 49-42, then held A&M off for the rest of the way.

Carmelia Bloodsaw, the league's leading scorer, put on an offensive clinic, tallying 27 points for A&M. Pamela Tucker was also very productive with 19 points, 12 rebounds and five steals. Kimberly Hall added 12 points and nine boards and Kimberly Seward chipped in with nine points and seven rebounds. Aquanetta Washington was the team's assist leader with six.

— Kelly Harper

## Results

### First round

Alabama A&M 89    Paine College 63  
 Albany State 83    Miles College 65  
 Savannah State 68    Tuskegee University 57  
 Fort Valley State had a first round bye

### Semi-finals

Alabama A&M 84    Albany State 82  
 Fort Valley State 75    Savannah State 74

### Championship finals

Fort Valley State 84    Alabama A&M 81

## All-tournament team

### PLAYER/SCHOOL

Debbie Ray/Fort Valley State	Seleria Newton/Fort Valley State
Mabel Sanders/Savannah State	Pamela Tucker/Alabama A&M
Carmelia Bloodsaw/Alabama A&M	Alicia McElroy/Fort Valley State
Latrice Harris/Albany State	Jonetta Reed/Albany State
Dee Dee Davis/Fort Valley State	Stephanie Johnson/Savannah State

### Most Valuable Player

Debbie Ray/Fort Valley State

### Hustle Award

Kim Seward/Alabama A&M

### Sportsmanship Award

Kim Hall/Alabama A&M

### Outstanding Coach

Lonnie Bartley/Fort Valley State