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Taylor, Lady Owls Punch Postseason Ticket

MARCH 06TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

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COLUMBIA - Appearing in its fourth AMC Postseason Tournament championship game in as many years, the William Woods women's basketball team guaranteed a fourth straight trip to the NAIA National Tournament with a dramatic 72-67 win over Columbia College. Sharron Andrews (Oakland/Hayward, Calif.) posted a double-double with 20 points and 10 rebounds, capped by a game-sealing layup with less than 10 seconds on the clock.

Despite losing the opening tip, the Owls opened the scoring, with Megan Aubuchon (Old Monroe, Mo.) blocking a 3-pt effort from Airielle Eldridge and converting a jumper on the other end. Blake French (St. Charles, Mo.) added to the Owls lead with a 3-pt make of her own, but Columbia tried to claw back with a trey from Kristi Wilkerson with 17:57 on the clock.

The Lady Cougars were able to pull back to a 7-7 tie with 15:23 on the clock before a 8-0 William Woods run put the Owls in front with just over 12 minutes left in the half.

Columbia would answer with a 19-8 run over the next six minutes, taking a 23-26 lead with 6:29 left in the half. But the Lady Cougars couldn't hold onto the lead, with the teams going into the intermission deadlocked at 31-31.

William Woods posted another five point snap out of the locker room, with a Katie Scherder (Bowling Green, Mo.) trey following the Aubuchon bucket, but the Owls couldn't push the margin further.

The hosts put together a small push, with a Tierney Seifert 3-pointer giving Columbia a 49-53 advantage with 10:40 left in the contest, but WWU put together a 10-3 run to take the lead back for the final time in the contest.

Down the stretch, William Woods pulled away as far as seven, but Columbia found itself within striking distance with 1:05 left in the game. The Lady Cougars forced a turnover, but couldn't connect on the ensuing possession, and they tried to play for the last possession. A 3-pt attempt from Ashley Fisher went astray with 17 seconds left, and WWU came up with the rebound.

With 15.1 seconds on the clock, WWU inbounded the ball but it was tipped out and the Owls were forced to call a timeout deep in the corner in front of the Columbia bench.

The Lady Cougars put a hard press on the Owls out of the time out, but Andrews slipped through and Aubuchon found her with a long bomb of a pass, with Andrews converting the easy layup, drawing a foul. The senior missed the free throw and the desperation heave by Fisher was off the mark as William Woods collected the win.

The Owls finished the game with a solid .430 shooting percentage, with Columbia mustering just a .318 mark for the contest. Andrews led all scorers with 20 as the Owls saw four players finish with double figures in the contest - Andrews, French (16), Aubuchon (14) and Olivia Storjohann (Eldridge, Iowa) (12).

Dexter native Ashlee Taylor had a cold shooting night (2-15 from the floor), but was able to come up with five points, four rebounds, three assists, and one steal.

Julie Teeple finished with 18 points and 16 rebounds for the Lady Cougars, with Fisher adding 16 and Wilkerson chipping in 10.

William Woods moves to 23-9 on the year, and will learn its first round foe for the NAIA National Tournament on Wednesday. Columbia falls to 24-9 on the year and will await the announcement of the tournament field and hope for an at large bid.

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