

Jayhawks advance to Sweet 16

DAYTON, Ohio (AP) — Minutes before Kansas took the court, Roy Williams pulled a red stuffed monkey out of a paper bag in the locker room and invited his players to abuse the plush animal.

Then the Jayhawks went out and pulled the monkey off their coach's back, ending a string of three second-round defeats by routing Syracuse 87-58 Sunday.

"I told the guys I was tired of answering daggum questions about second-round losses," Williams said. "So me and the monkey and some great, great young men had a great time today."

The fourth-seeded Jayhawks didn't take long to dismantle fifth-seeded Syracuse, grabbing 15 of the first 17 rebounds to build a double-figure lead. Kansas had averaged 27 wins in each of the past three seasons — but never reached the second week of the tournament.

Even though Williams turned down the job last July at his alma mater, North Carolina, there still was grumbling in Kansas about the Jayhawks' uneven play in March.

"Just to finally get past the second round to the Sweet 16 is something," said Kansas senior Kenny Gregory, who had 15 points. "It seems like every year in college I've gotten a spring break. This is the first year I won't."

With Kansas limited to seven scholarship players because of injury, just about every Jayhawks player stood out.

Drew Gooden orchestrated the vic-

tory with the help of Kansas' guards, finishing with 17 points and a career-best 15 rebounds. Jeff Boschee had 16 points, backup center Eric Chenoweth had 12 points on 8-of-8 foul shooting and Kirk Hinrich had 10 points and six assists. Nick Collison matched his season best with 13 rebounds to go with nine points.

There was no secret to Kansas' domination. Kansas manhandled the Orangemen on the boards 56-23 — the fewest rebounds this season for Syracuse, which came in averaging 36.1 a game.

It also was the fifth-biggest rebounding difference ever in an NCAA tournament game.

"We've struggled with size all year. There's no denying that," Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said. "But you can't get outrebounded by 30."

The Orangemen's Damone Brown said, "We knew rebounding would be an issue. We had to compete in other ways, but we didn't knock down shots."

Syracuse (25-9) had beaten Hawaii 79-69 for Boeheim's 600th career win in the opening round. The Orangemen hadn't lost by more than 14 points this season.

The Jayhawks (26-6) never trailed. They controlled the lane and solved Syracuse's 2-3 zone, building leads of 6-0, 19-7 and 30-13. Syracuse hit only five of its first 23 shots.

"They weren't falling," point guard Allen Griffin said. "What can you say after that?"

Meanwhile, everything was going Kansas' way. At one point, Gooden flipped in a reverse shot over his shoulder while hitting the floor, the ball floating over the outstretched arm of Syracuse's 7-foot Billy Celuck and through the net.

Despite being outrebounded 30-9, Syracuse somehow trailed just 39-34 at the half, closing with a 21-9 run. That surge was just a blip on the screen to Kansas.

Gooden had more rebounds by himself (11-10) than the Syracuse team until 13 1/2 minutes remained.

"The game plan was to attack their zone inside and beat them on the backboards," Gooden said. "Which we did."

To make matters worse for the Orangemen, their first- and second-string centers, Jeremy McNeil and Celuck, each had four fouls with 16 minutes left.

Kansas reverted to its power game to start the half and forced the ball inside to Gooden and Collison — both played for Boeheim on a U.S. national team last summer.

Even though DeShaun Williams hit six straight shots during one stretch to keep Syracuse in contention, Kansas went on a 16-4 tear with most of the points coming from its big men.

Ahead 61-42, the Jayhawks' lead never fell below 16 points again.

Syracuse ended up shooting 30 percent to Kansas' 56 percent.

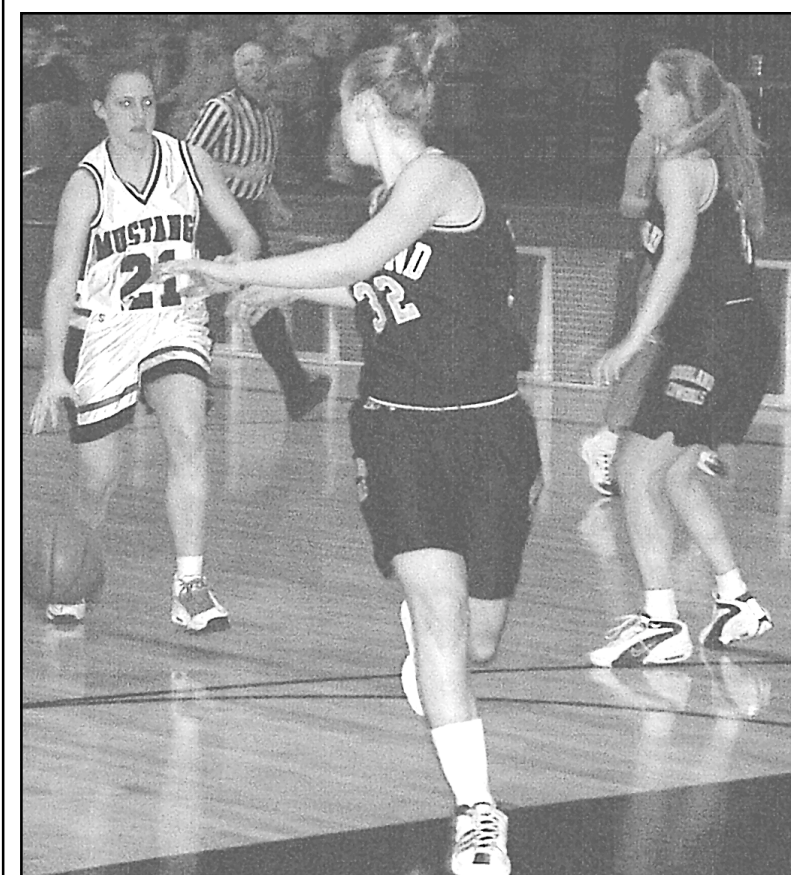
"Everybody knows that Syracuse can shoot better than they did today," Roy Williams said. "We caught them when they didn't shoot as well and didn't play as well."

Preston Shumpert and DeShaun Williams each scored 20 for the Orangemen. But Shumpert, who hit only 6-of-18 shots from the field, and Brown, averaging 16.8 points a game, never got untracked. Brown finished with five points on 2-of-9 shooting.

Williams said he had shown his team tapes of his 1991 and '93 teams playing their way into the Final Four. When he ran out of tapes, he had his wife buy the monkey.

"I wanted to have some fun," he said. Then, he added, "And don't say that it looks like me, either."

All-Star Classic play



Cowgirls Ashley Hallagin (foreground) and Jara McKee (right) defended against a driving ball handler during Sunday's 8th Annual Northwest Kansas All-Star basketball game at Colby on Sunday. In the girls game, the dark shirts, coached by Tom Stephens, lost by 7 points. In the Boys All-Star game, the dark shirts won 96-92.

Photo by Patty Decker / The Goodland Daily News

Player helps Nuggets to outpace Nets, 98-84

DENVER (AP) — It was put-up or shut-up time for Robert Pack. Angered by his recent lack of playing time, Pack saw a generous 32 minutes Sunday night and made the most of it.

The Denver Nuggets backup point guard dished out 10 assists in the second period, igniting a 23-0 run that helped carry the Nuggets to a 98-84 win over the New Jersey Nets.

Pack finished with 15 points and 11 assists for a triple-double.

Raef LaFrentz, who wasn't expected to play because of a sprained left ankle, had 22 points and 11 rebounds. Antonio McDyess added 19 points and nine rebounds, and Kevin Willis came off

the bench to score 13 points and grab 11 rebounds.

Pack, Willis and Ryan Bowen did most of the damage during Denver's third-quarter flurry. For the game, the trio of bench players combined for 39 points on 18-of-23 shooting, 19 rebounds and 11 assists.

"Their second unit came in and really upped the pace in the second quarter," Nets coach Byron Scott said. "They just jumped on us. They got the ball to Pack, and he just pushed it. Their guys just sprinted up and down the floor, and we couldn't buy a basket. It was disheartening to sit and have to watch it."

Colorado Avalanche win seventh division title, 4-3

DENVER (AP) — Forgive the Colorado Avalanche for ignoring the champagne celebration. It's hard to get excited about a division championship that has been a foregone conclusion for the last two months.

"We expected to do that," Joe Sakic said Sunday after the Avalanche beat the Minnesota Wild 4-3 to clinch their seventh straight division title. "Our main goal is to finish strong and try and finish first in the league."

Sakic scored the game-winning

goal with 1:47 remaining and reached the 100-point mark for the fifth time in his career. Milan Hejduk added two goals and an assist to help Colorado push its NHL-leading point total to 105.

The Avalanche, 20 points ahead of Edmonton in the Northwest Division, lead the Detroit Red Wings by six points in the race for home-ice throughout the Stanley Cup playoffs.

The Avs twice erased two-goal deficits against Minnesota.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, March 20 - SB @ Syracuse 3:00 p.m.

League Academic Bowl (H) 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 21 - Screening Comm. Mtg. 3:45 p.m.

Thursday, March 22 - Parent/Teacher Conference, HS Gym 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.
North Awards 2:00 p.m.

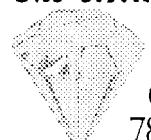
Friday, March 23 - Parent/Teacher Conference, HS Classrooms a.m. only
JV V SB-Colby 3:00 p.m.

Monday, March 26 - Spring Break

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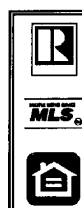
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