



Almaden Girls Win National NJB All-Net Tournament in Overtime

The seventh grade girls' Almaden All-Net team won the NJB (National Junior Basketball) National All-Net Tournament held March 26-28 in southern California with three impressive victories, including an overtime win in the championship game. Almaden earned the right to compete in the National tournament after compiling an 8-4 regular season record and then winning a playoff game over a team from West San Jose 44-27 to represent the Silicon Valley section in the national tournament.

Almaden beat two teams from southern California on its way to the championship game. Almaden used its trapping defense and rebounding keyed by Brooke Lisowski in a blowout 44-13 victory over Tustin. The offense was paced by Melissa Fletcher, Jessica Earnshaw, AJ Leasau, Eilidh Hajost and Monica Scharrenberg with 11,9,8,4 and 4 points, respectively. Almaden also beat Brea 32-24 in a hard fought contest. Leading 20-17 at the end of the third quarter, Kristin Baer scored six crucial 4th quarter points to help secure the win.

The championship game against Redwood City was a nail-biter that went into overtime. Sharpshooters Kelly Scharrenberg and Hannah Hajost each knocked down three pointers to give the girls from Almaden a slim three point lead at half time. Ashley Parsons led the way on the defensive end, applying constant pressure throughout the game and drawing a key offensive charge against Redwood's best player in the 4th quarter. The game was deadlocked at 28 at the end of regulation. Tenacious defense and free throw shooting, two principles stressed all year, proved to be the difference in overtime. Almaden's defense did not allow a field goal during the overtime period, and they went 5 for 9 from the free throw line in overtime to secure a 35-32 victory. "The girls were asked to shoot between 50-100 free throws every week on their own outside of practice" commented assistant coach Frank Lisowski. Head coach Brian Baer added, "We told them their hard work on the defensive end and extra effort on free throws would pay off, and they certainly were the difference in overtime in the championship game." Kelly Scharrenberg and Melissa Fletcher scored 10 and 9 points, respectively, with each making several crucial free throws in overtime.