

Sandhills Flyers Reach the Nationals

Monday, 12 March 2012 00:00

The Sandhills Community College Flyers Men's Basketball team is traveling to the Catskills region of New York to play in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division III Championship tournament.

The Flyers earned a berth in the National Tournament by winning the Region X and District 7 championships.

The final eight teams will battle for the championship at Sullivan Community College in Loch Sheldrake, N.Y. Each team will play three games over three days to determine the National Champion.

The Flyers (27-6) will face Brookdall Community College (27-2) of Lincroft, New Jersey in the first-round of the play-offs on Thursday. The game will be at 5 p.m. and can be viewed on the Sandhills web site by going to the Athletics section of the site and following the link.

In his first year as Flyers coach, Mike Apple is very pleased with the success of the team. "Each player on this team is dedicated and hard working, not only on the court, but in the classroom," Said Apple. "I am extremely proud of each young man."

This week, Markell Lotharp was named the Division III Player of the Week. He scored 16 points and snagged five rebounds in a 94-85 win over Caldwell CCTI. The sophomore then led the Flyers to a 104-82 upset of No. 3 Davidson CCC, behind 22 points, 10 rebounds and four assists in the Region 10 championship.

The Athletic Program at the college is fairly new. It came to be in the fall of 2008 after a 20-year hiatus; under the leadership of Athletic Director Aaron Denton.

In addition to men's basketball, Sandhills has women's volleyball and men's and women's golf. All three teams have now advanced to NJCAA National Tournaments. In 2010 the women's volleyball team qualified and played in Rochester, M.N. In 2010 and 2011 the men's golf team

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played in Chautauqua, N.Y.

The state of North Carolina does not fund community college athletics. One of the primary sources for the Flyers is through fund-raising.