

NJCAA DII MEN'S NATIONAL BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

#19 MORAINÉ VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

(Palos Hills, IL)

VS

JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

(Overland Park, KS)

For immediate release:

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Danville, IL- The opening game of the NJCAA DII Men's Basketball National Tournament featured NJCAA District 5 Champion Moraine Valley Community College (26-7) vs. NJCAA District 2 Champion Johnson County Community College (15-18). Moraine Valley comes into this game ranked #19 in the NJCAA National Poll and as the #7 seed in the tournament.

The game was back and forth early on. Johnson County struggled on the offensive end against Moraine Valley's zone defense. Justin Leathers was the saving grace and scored 12 points in the first 10 minutes of the game for Johnson County to keep the lead in his teams' favor. A short run put Johnson County up 18-10 at the 10 minute mark, forcing Moraine Valley Head Coach Dedrick Shannon to call a timeout. Moraine Valley responded out of the timeout and scored consecutive baskets to keep it close over the next several minutes. With around 4 minutes remaining the half, Johnson County built up a 10 point lead with some great defensive plays and 3-point shooting. Moraine Valley took a charge and hit a 3-pointer to end the half to shorten the gap. **HALFTIME SCORE: Johnson County 33, Moraine Valley 26.**

1ST HALF LEADERS FOR MORAINÉ VALLEY

Richaun Holmes, 6'8" FR, 8pts

1ST HALF LEADERS FOR JOHNSON COUNTY

Justin Leathers, 6'5" SO, 12pts

Moraine Valley was slow to start the 2nd half but got things rolling thanks to their full-court pressure. They cut Johnson County's lead to 5 points early on. Johnson County eventually started to handle the pressure better and scored some transition baskets to get their lead back up to 10 points with around 12 minutes to play. Quasim Jones and Christian Hildebrandt hit some big shots for Johnson County to make it difficult for Moraine Valley to crawl back within striking distance for several minutes. Moraine Valley showed some resiliency and held Johnson County scoreless on several consecutive possessions to cut the lead to 57-51 with less than 5 minutes remaining in the contest. The scoring drought didn't last long as Johnson County built the lead back up to 11 over the next couple of minutes. Moraine Valley didn't go away quietly.

They picked up the tempo in a last chance effort to come away with a win and cut the lead to 3 points with less than 1 minute to play. However, Johnson County made enough free throws at the end to come out with a victory. **FINAL SCORE: Johnson County 70, Moraine Valley 63.**

Johnson County Community College will now advance in the winner's bracket to play the winner of South Suburban College vs. Rend Lake College on Wednesday at 6:00pm. Moraine Valley Community College will continue to play in the consolation bracket to play the loser of the aforementioned game on Wednesday at the 3:00pm.

GAME LEADERS FOR MORAINE VALLEY:

Richaun Holmes, 6'8" FR, 18 pts, 5 rbs

Lane Barlow, 5'10" SO, 15 pts

Modestas Masiulionis, 6'3" SO, 11 pts

GAME LEADERS FOR JOHNSON COUNTY:

Justin Leathers, 6'5" SO, 20 pts

Quasim Jones, 6'1" SO, 21 pts

Christian Hildebrandt, 6'3" FR, 11 pts, 8 rbs