

Pepperdine Wins 2021 CBI

DAYTONA BEACH, Florida – Colbey Ross concluded one of the top careers in college basketball history by bringing home a trophy on Wednesday night, as the Pepperdine men's basketball team throttled Coastal Carolina, 84-61, in the championship game of the College Basketball Invitational.

After a game-changing 28-2 second-half run in Tuesday's semifinals, the Waves (15-12) nearly matched that tonight, using a 23-2 first-half run to blow the game open against the Chanticleers (18-8).

With 15 points and seven assists in his final performance, Ross ended his illustrious career with career totals of 2,236 points and 854 assists, two of his many school records. The three-time All-West Coast Conference selection will end up ranking fifth and second, respectively, on the conference's all-time lists. He became the first player in Division I men's basketball history to accumulate totals of at least 2,200 points, 800 assists and 400 rebounds.

Kessler Edwards was named the CBI's Most Valuable Player after averaging 19.7 points, 6.0 rebounds and 3.0 blocks over the three games. Darryl Polk Jr. (19 points) and Victor Ohia Obioha (16 points) both had career-best games in the final.

BIG WAVES

- Junior guard Darryl Polk Jr. (Long Beach, Calif./Long Beach Poly HS) made seven of 12 shots and hit three three-pointers en route to his 19 points. His previous career high was 15 against Pacific set in 2019. Polk Jr. also had a career-high-tying five steals plus three assists.
- Junior center Victor Ohia Obioha (Owerri, Nigeria/Hillcrest HS) made his first seven shots of the night and finished 7-for-9 toward his 16 points. His previous best was 13 points set two nights ago against Longwood. Ohia Obioha also had six rebounds and two blocks.
- Senior guard *Colbey Ross* (Aurora, Colo./Eaglecrest HS) played 39 minutes in his final contest. In addition to the 15 points and seven rebounds he sank three three-pointers and had four rebounds and a steal.
- Junior guard Jade' Smith (Oakland, Calif./St. Joseph Notre Dame HS) had 11 points, four assists, four rebounds and three steals.
- Junior forward Kessler Edwards (Rancho Cucamonga, Calif./Etiwanda HS) posted nine points, six rebounds and four blocks.

KEY STATS

- Pepperdine shot an even 50.0% for the game against a Chanticleer defense that was third in the nation in field goal percentage defense (38.4%). The Waves held Coastal Carolina to 38.0% shooting, including 21.4% (6-for-28) in the first half.
- Coastal Carolina was leading the nation in rebounding margin (+10.8) but the Waves had a 35-33 edge.
- The Waves forced 19 turnovers and only committed 10, leading to a 26-10 edge in points off turnovers.
- Coastal Carolina was led by Deanthony Tipler's 16 points.

PLAY BY PLAY

The Waves and Chanticleers traded the lead a few times over the first 10 minutes. Coastal Carolina took its biggest lead at 16-13 on a basket with 10:48 left in the half. But that would be the Chanticleers' final field goal of the half, as they missed their next 11 attempts, and Pepperdine took full advantage. CCU's final lead of the game came at 18-17 with 8 1/2 minutes left, but the Waves went on an 18-0 run over six minutes. Edwards had six of the points as five different Waves scored during the spurt.

CCU hit a couple of free throws to end the run with 1:56 left, but the Waves came back with the next five points and a lay-up by grad transfer forward ***Kene Chukwuka*** (Stockholm, Sweden/Pitt) made it a 20-point game at 40-20, bringing the overall run to 23-2. The score ended up 40-22 at the half.

Coastal Carolina got the deficit down to 12 early in the second half, but Ohia Obioha had two baskets and Ross hit a three-pointer in a 9-0 run that pushed the lead up to 21 at 51-30 with 14 1/2 minutes left. Another 9-0 run, capped off by an Ohia Obioha dunk, gave Pepperdine its largest lead of 28 points at 64-36 with 10 1/2 minutes to go. The Chanticleers had one run in them, scoring 11 straight to get it down to 16 at 71-55 with 5 1/2 minutes left, but Polk Jr. and Ross hit three-pointers to restore the 20-point margin.

NOTABLES

- Pepperdine ended the season with a winning record for the first time since 2016.
- Pepperdine won its first postseason trophy since the 1994 West Coast Conference Tournament. Besides the three WCC titles (1991, 1992, 1994), the only other eight-team, three-game tournament that Pepperdine had previously won in its history was the 1946 Houston All-College Tournament.
- The Waves' all-time record at the CBI is now 3-2 (they lost in the first round in 2015 and 2016). The Waves defeated Longwood (80-66) on Monday and Bellarmine (84-61) on Tuesday.
- This was the first-ever meeting between Pepperdine and Coastal Carolina.