



**2009 NCAA
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL**



No. 2 USC AIKEN Pacers

vs.

No. 6 CATAWBA Indians

USC AIKEN 85

CATAWBA 72

Semifinals -- Game One -- 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 15, 2009

Augusta, Ga.

Christenberry Fieldhouse



2009 NCAA SOUTHEAST REGIONAL



QUOTES

Catawba Head Coach Jim Baker

"I'm disappointed that we didn't play as well in the first half. We came out and played much better in the second half, but I was very pleased with how our team played."

On Josh Dollard: *"We tried to double down, and we shut down their post, but they kicked it out and knocked some tough shots. He had an unbelievable first half and caused us problems."*

"The First half I thought we played hard, we had the ball roll around the rim a couple times, and when you play a great team like that you can't afford for that to happen."

USC Aiken Head Coach Vince Alexander

"I just thank God for the victory; I am thankful for a group of guys that continue to impress me. We are very grateful, the sweet 16 is nice, but the elite eight would be better."

"We have guys that have been battle tested, and come tournament time they are ready. We have to be real careful, we just want to play, we don't care who it is, if it is Augusta State or Barton."

"No matter what, I think this team is focused and ready to play, and we might as well play it tomorrow because they are ready."

On just one team making the Elite Eight: *"One of us is staying home, and that is unfortunate, but I feel that they (Augusta State) went last year so we should go this year."*

USC Aiken's Junior forward Josh Dollard:

On being in the Sweet Sixteen: *"You always look forward to games and opportunities like this, we are very blessed to be in this position."*

On Division II games: *"The atmosphere is different, at the Division I level you have a bigger crowd, but as far as the intensity, I think it's the same, at any level you want to win. I think on the court its about the same."*

USC Aiken's guard Javonte Clanton

On being No. 1 preseason: *"I don't really know, I just know we have to come out and be our best every night, I do think we are getting better and peaking at the right time, and I honestly think we are playing our basketball right now."*

USC Aiken's forward Cordaryl Ballard

On being in the championship game: *"We expected to be here, we thought this would happen so it's not that big a deal."*

"We have really good big guys, and they expect us to hit shots, so us being able to hit some shots is a great thing for our offense."



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March 15, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Joey Warren, Athletic Media Relations Director

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Southeast Regional -- Semifinal No. 1

USC Aiken 85, Catawba 72

USC Aiken Advances to Region Final Over Catawba 85-72

AUGUSTA, GA – The second-seeded USC Aiken Pacers shot 51% from the field and 50% from three-point range as they defeated #6 Catawba 85-72 in the second round of the NCAA Southeast Regional tournament on Sunday in Augusta. With that win, the Pacers advance to the regional final in the round of 16 for the first time in school history and will face the winner of the Barton/Augusta State semifinal on Tuesday night at 7:00 with an invitation to the Elite Eight on the line.

USC Aiken, ranked #16 in the nation, improves to 25-7 on the year while Catawba sees their season come to a close with a 22-10 record.

Cordaryl Ballard was one of five Pacers to score in double figures, leading the team with 18 points. It is only the second game this season Ballard has led the Pacers in scoring. Javonte Clanton had 17 with six rebounds while Josh Dollard added 16 points and 14 rebounds despite playing only 17 minutes due to foul trouble. Seth Leonard and Chris Commons scored 11 each.

Catawba was led by Rob Fields who came off the bench to lead all scorers with 24 points. Antonio Houston added 16 while Dominick Reid had 12 with seven assists. Donald Rutherford scored 10 with a team-high six rebounds.

USC Aiken began the game on a tear from three-point range, hitting four of their first six shots from long range and collecting seven threes in the first half alone. Catawba kept pace and trailed 12-10 with 16:23 left following a jumper from Cliff Burns when USC Aiken went on a 16-6 run over the next nine minutes, holding Catawba scoreless for five minutes.

The Indians got back on track and cut the lead back to 10 with 7:11 to go in the first following a jumper from Rutherford, but USCA answered with five straight points from Dollard, who collected a double-double in the first half alone with 13 points and 10 rebounds. USCA answered the final four Catawba scores with buckets of their own, including five straight points from Ballard, to lead 47-30 at the half.

The Pacers kept up the pressure in the second, extending the lead to 21 in the early going on a Clanton three-pointer and a Ballard jumper. Catawba responded with the guard duo of Reid and Fields, who combined to score 15 of Catawba's next 17 points as part of a 17-8 run that cut the lead to 12 with 9:54 to play.

USC Aiken maintained that lead for the next five minutes until the Indians connected on a Houston three-pointer with 3:52 left that cut the lead to single digits for the first time in the period. Catawba got as close as eight with 3:17 to go on a turnaround layup from Burns, but Catawba would score only three points in the final three minutes, going 1-for-9 from the field. The Pacers hit four of six free throws in the final 44 seconds to preserve the win.