

State Farm

2008 State Farm Missouri Valley Conference Women's Basketball Championship Tournament

Final Game 9

#1 Illinois State 70, #3 Drake 62

Illinois State 26-6, 13-5; Drake 22-10, 13-5
*March 16, 2008 * Family Arena, St. Charles, Mo.*



TOURNAMENT TYPE -- The Redbirds win their fourth Missouri Valley Conference Tournament championship, adding to their 1983, 1989 and 2005 crowns, and did so in their seventh appearance in the final ... Only Missouri State (nine) and Drake (five) have more titles than Illinois State, which improves to 18-14 in MVC Tournament play ... The Bulldogs are runners-up for the fourth time (2001, 2002, 2004) in nine championship game outings ... Drake falls to 28-15 in MVC Tournament action, seeing an end to their six-game winning streak (equal to their own second-longest in MVC Tournament history, 1997-98 title runs) and suffering defeat in tournament action for just the seventh time in their last 23 games and ninth in their last 34 ... Only Missouri State has played in more title contests, 12, than Drake or Illinois State (Southern Illinois has appeared in seven) ... The Redbirds have won two of its three MVC Tournament contests against the Bulldogs, the Redbirds winning 58-54 in a 1988 semifinal at Normal and the Bulldogs earning an 82-63 victory in a 1995 quarterfinal at Springfield.

2007-08 REGULAR-SEASON MEETINGS -- The teams split their Conference games, Illinois State claiming an 88-84 overtime victory January 31 in Normal and Drake scoring a 72-66 win March 2 in Des Moines ... The Bulldogs lead the all-time series 31-25 though the Redbirds have now won seven of the last 10 games.

REDBIRD REPORT -- The Redbirds finish the regular season with four consecutive wins and eight in their last 11 games ... Illinois State improves to 5-3 when trailing at halftime and 25-2 when leading with five minutes left in regulation ... The Redbirds committed a season-low seven turnovers (nine, four times) ... ISU won the tournament despite recording three of its four worst lowest single-game field-goal percentages of the season ... the Redbirds shot a season-low 39-1 (25-of-64) in the final and a 41.1 rate (76-185) for the weekend ... nonetheless, they scored 215 points in the three contests (71.7) ... Two-time MVC Player of the Year Kristi Cirone, the most Valuable Player of the 2008 State Farm Missouri Valley Conference Women's Basketball Tournament, had 20 points in the final and 56 over the three games ... Cirone, who scored 11 first-half points in her first two games this weekend, had 13 the opening 20 minutes of the title game ... She now has 1460 career points and moves into seventh (past Melanie Ward, 1453, 1991-96) on the school career list ... Cirone, with a pair of free throws 2:55 before halftime, tied and broke the ISU career record of Katie Donovan (362, 2001-05) ... she finished with five on the day and now has 366 ... Ashleen Bracey, who equaled the school MVC Tournament record of 16 rebounds she had set in the semifinal, established an all-time tournament mark with 37 boards over the three games, bettering the 35 boards collected by Evansville's Shyla McKibbin in 1999 ... Bracey, with 14 points, had her seventh double-double this season ... Maggie Krick, with 14 points, had her 20th two-figure scoring output of the season.

BULLDOG BANTER -- Drake saw its six-game win streak come to an end ... The Bulldogs lost for the third time in 21 games when leading at halftime (2/14 vs. Evansville and 2/24 at Northern Iowa) ... Lindsey Whorton, already the Valley career leader in three-point field goals attempted with 782, hit three treys and moved into fourth place on the Valley career list, her tally of 260 surpassing Indiana State's Kourtney Mennen (1999-2003) and Missouri State's Melody Howard (1991-94), who each had 258 ... Jill Martin, with 16 points, has 30 double-digit scoring efforts in 32 contests this season and 106 in 126 career games ... Martin, with 16 points, moved into seventh place on the Valley career scoring list with 1903 (1884, Jenni Lingor, Missouri State, 2002-05) ... Martin, with her 123rd career start, claimed sole possession of second place, breaking her tie with Jan Krieger (1978-82) and trailing only Stephanie Schmitz (124, 1998-2002).

FIRST HALF RECAP -- Kristi Cirone opened the scoring for ISU with a 12-foot jumper in the lane after 75 seconds ... Drake, which needed more than 29 minutes to score its first three-point field goal Saturday, got a 20-foot jumper from the right post by Lindsey Whorton after just 96 seconds of the title game ... Three-point plays by Lauren Dybing, either side of the 11:32 media timeout, and Monique Jones, scored falling down with 9:48 left in the half, capped an 11-2 Bulldogs' run for a 21-12 lead ... Drake, though having already committed five turnovers, had made seven field goals in its first 11 shots ... Cirone hit a shot in the paint bring ISU within six, 25-19, at the 7:24 mark ... The Redbirds, after making five of their first eight attempts from the field, sank only four of their next 16 (including eight straight misses) ... Cirone drilled a triple from the left wing at three 4:43 mark to make it 27-24, and scored again on the next trip to get it to one ... She made four of her last six shots of the half, including three of four during that 9-2 run ... Whorton responded with a trey of her own, off a steal from Ashleigh Brady (Drake's only theft of the first half), at the 3:10 mark ... Lashawn Johnson baseline runner with 21 seconds to go pulled the Redbirds to within one for the fourth time in the final 4:04.

SECOND HALF RECAP -- Ashleen Bracey's score from the left side, 36 seconds after the break, gave the Redbirds their first lead since 2-0 ... Jordann Plummer ended Drake's three-minute, halftime wrapping scoring drought to put the Bulldogs back in front at 17:53 but Cirone got the lead back for ISU on its next trip ... neither team scored for a 2:24 stretch before the Redbirds' Kenyatta Shelton made the latter of two foul shots at 15:07 ... she would record the next field goal, with 13:50 to play, before Whorton and Martin scored either side of a Hudson free throw to bring Drake to within one, 42-41, at 13:04 ... Illinois State made three of 10 shots, and Drake three of eight, over the first seven minutes of the second half ... the Redbirds then took command of the game with a 12-2 run over the next 4:51, behind six from Bracey, four by Cirone and two for Hudson, while the Bulldogs one basket out of nine possessions, including turnovers on the first five ... ISU led 54-43 with 8:13 to play in the game and would lead by as many as 13, 61-48, at the 4:29 mark.