

SPORTS

Top Seeded Cardinals Win Title

Monster game caps emotional quest

(AP)—The last of the Louisville players to get the scissors, Kevin Ware stood in front of the basket as it was lowered to him. Grinning from ear to ear, he cut what remained of the net.

"It's not about me, I've never been that type of guy," Ware said. "These are my brothers. They got the job done."

They always do.

A team that found inspiration in Ware's horrible broken leg wasn't about to let a little thing like an off night by its biggest star, Russ Smith, keep it from cutting down the nets. Luke Hancock made four straight 3-pointers in the first half, and Peyton Siva and Chane Behanan had monster second halves to lead the top-seeded Cardinals to their third national title and first since 1986 on Monday night with an 82-76 victory over Michigan.

"I'm so happy for our team," said Hancock, named the tournament's most outstanding player. "I'm so happy that multiple guys got to contribute on this great run."



Louisville head coach Rick Pitino and Louisville guard Peyton Siva (3) reacts after Louisville defeated Michigan in the NCAA Final Four tournament college basketball championship game Monday in Atlanta. Louisville won 82-76. (AP photo)

And every one of them was in on the celebration.

Siva leaped off the floor to hug his family when the final buzzer sounded. Behanan picked up two cheerleaders and, with one in each

arm, carried them to the mosh pit that quickly formed at center court.

In the most touching moment of all, Ware hobbled onto the court for the final seconds of the game. He had urged his teammates to "just go

win" after his tibia snapped during the Midwest Regional final, and he made good on his promise to join them when they cut down the nets.

"Kevin Ware would do anything to be out there. We were just all locked in for him, and also for ourselves and our coaching staff," said Behanan, Ware's best friend on the team. "Kevin was a big part of this team, and to see him go down was devastating. It was a big motivator for us."

Hancock finished with 22 points, including a perfect 5 for 5 from 3-point range. Siva had 14 of his 18 points in the second half, and Behanan had 11 of his 12 rebounds in the second half. Behanan also chipped in 15 points for Louisville (35-5), which finished the season on a 16-game winning streak.

"We beat a great basketball team probably because I have the 13 toughest guys I have ever coached," said Rick Pitino, who became the first coach to win titles with two different schools hours after he was elected to the Naismith Hall of Fame.

Pitino, who sets the fashion trend among college coaches with his designer suits, now has to get a tattoo after promising his team early in the year he'd get inked if they won the title.

The Legend

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a pitcher who'd dinged him earlier in the year, it's a dramatic moment, but it also actually happened.

It's always a tricky thing because it's a movie, and even in this movie we're trying to tell two years in two hours," he said. "You're obviously not seeing every moment, but the discipline I applied to the script was trying to make sure every moment was documented."

Helgeland began working on the film two years ago, with the blessing of Robinson's widow, Rachel, because he felt Robinson "deserves a great, big movie." Robinson himself starred in the 1950 biography "The Jackie Robinson Story," which also details how Brooklyn Dodgers president and general manager Branch Rickey (played here by a feisty Harrison Ford) had the courage to sign the fleet-footed Negro League player, despite receiving discouragement from around the league and death threats from fans.

"People would say to me, 'You're making another Jackie Robinson movie?' and I'd say, 'What was the other one you saw?'" Helgeland said. "(Racism is) always going to be a relevant thing. It's not a thing

that's ever going to be eradicated. Society has to stay on guard about it and not get complacent about it."

Boseman, who bears a remarkable resemblance to Robinson, grew up playing basketball but said he learned of Robinson's importance around the same time he first learned of Martin Luther King Jr.'s crucial role in fighting for civil rights. Robinson's uniform number has been retired throughout the league - only New York Yankees closer Mariano Rivera still wears it, and he's retiring after this season - but every year on April 15, everyone in baseball wears No. 42.

"The story is relevant because we still stand on his shoulders. He started something - I would even say maybe he didn't even start it, it started before him. But he carried the torch. And he carried it alone for a period of time before other people could help him," Boseman said.

Still, it's a challenge to depict the life of someone who was so inspirational without deifying him.

In "42," which opens Friday, April 12, Robinson shows grace in the face of nearly incessant bigotry. That's why Rickey chooses him of all the talented black baseball players at the time: He had the skills, but he also had the strength not to fight back.

Abusive Coach Fired

(AP) -- Once the video went viral, his coaching days at Rutgers were over.

Mike Rice Jr., the son of Blazer broadcaster Mike Rice, was fired last week, one day after a video surfaced of him hitting, shoving and berating his players with anti-gay slurs. The taunts were especially troubling behavior at Rutgers, where freshman student Tyler Clementi killed himself in 2010 after his roommate used a webcam to spy on him kissing another man in his dorm.

Rice, in his third season with the Scarlet Knights, apologized outside his home in Little Silver, N.J.

"I've let so many people down: my players, my administration, Rutgers University, the fans, my family," he said.

The video shows numerous clips of Rice at practice during his three years at the school firing basketballs at players, hitting them in the back, legs, feet and shoulders. It also shows him grabbing players by their jerseys and yanking them around the court. Rice can also be heard yelling obscenities and using gay slurs.

Several college coaches said they had never seen anything like the Rutgers video and it broke a cardinal rule: Never put your hands on a player.

"Don't tell me that's the old way. That's the wrong way," said John Thompson Jr., the Hall of Famer who led Georgetown to the 1984 national title.

Rutgers University fired basketball coach Mike Rice Jr. after a video was made public of him kicking and shoving players and spewing gay slurs during practices.



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