

WEST REGIONAL

Subs sink Navy

Tigers bench contributes big in victory

By CHIP SCOGGINS
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OGDEN, Utah — After several off-the-court incidents this week, the M.U. bench was left short-staffed with two reserves serving suspensions.

Still, the bench sparked the Tigers to a 76-53 victory Thursday night against the U.S. Naval Academy in the first round of the NCAA Tournament at the Dee Events Center.

M.U. will play Wisconsin on Saturday.

■ Navy misses markPage 2B

Friday Wisconsin beat Cincinnati 80-72 Thursday night.

M.U.'s Paul O'Liney was sitting out his one-game suspension after being arrested for a misdemeanor assault charge. Derrick Johnson is not with the team after missing the team bus and flight.

But those developments paled in comparison to the move M.U. coach Norm Stewart pulled in the first half. With the starters struggling, Stewart made a wholesale substitution with his team trailing 20-17. Seldom-used subs Chip Walther, Jed Frost, Chris Heller, Marlo Finner and Reggie Smith inspired the crowd, and M.U. (26-3) led 29-26 at halftime.

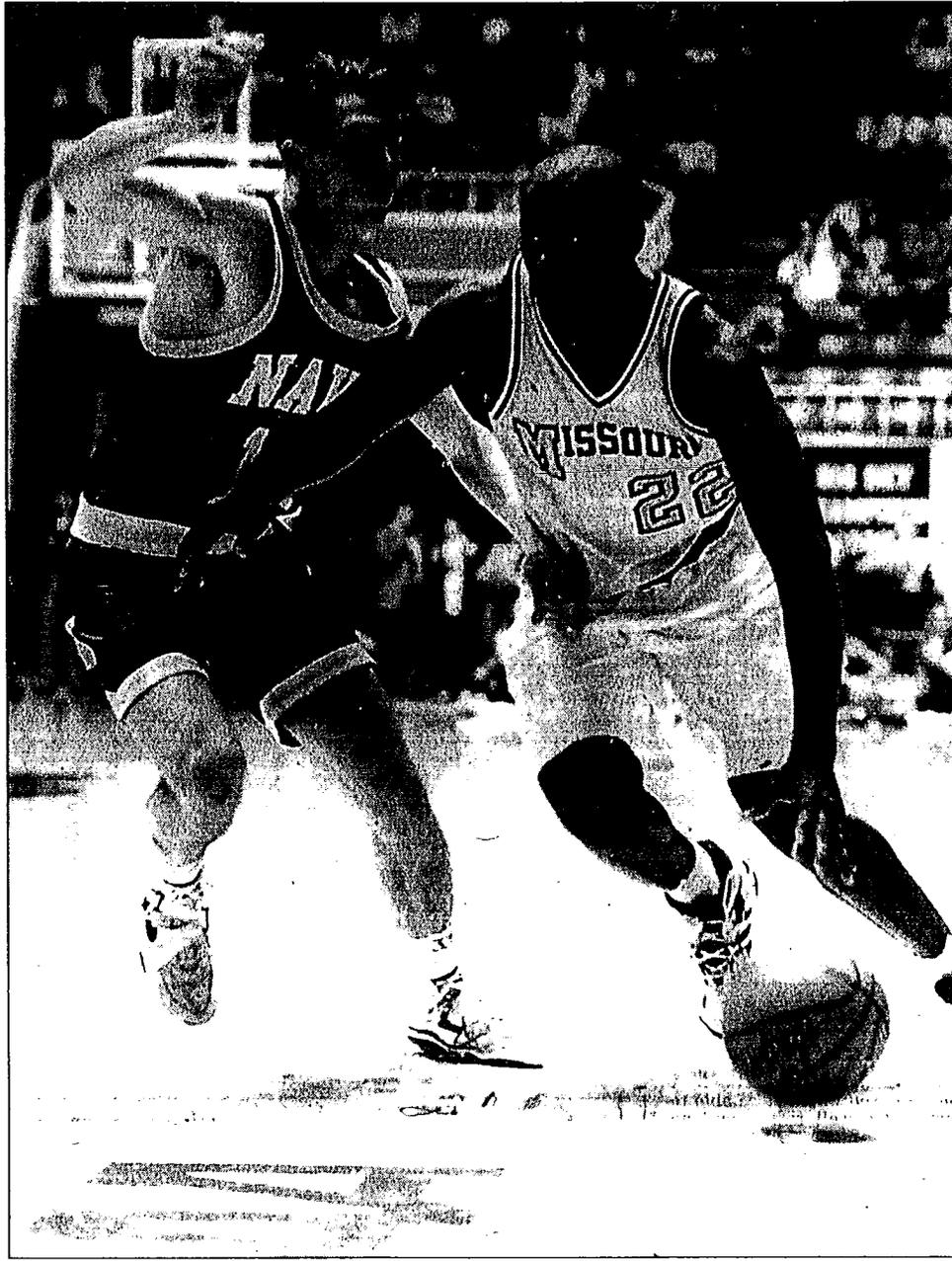
"I thought the group that came in the first half really is the difference in the ballgame," Stewart said. "They came in and gave us a lift. We just felt that we've got to get the starters out of there. Let them get back and just kind of get a grasp on things, if they can."

The move brought a gasp of disbelief from the crowd. In the meantime, Stewart gave his regulars a tongue-lashing. Stewart had three of his starters on the sideline ready to re-enter the game, but when Finner was fouled at 4:43, they were sent back to the end of the bench.

Finner's second 3-pointer gave the Tigers a 28-24 lead. Although he didn't score and looked awkward in two shot attempts, Heller made two key blocks.

Stewart had said a couple of days ago that the guys that came into the game showed that they deserve to play. Senior Lamont Frazier said, "It wasn't anything against us. If you deserve to play, why shouldn't you be given the chance?" It was kind of like role reversal. We were doing what they were usually doing.

Both teams struggled offensively in the first half. The Tigers shot 36



CHRISTOPHER CHUNG/Missourian

M.U.'s Lamont Frazier drives past Navy's T.J. Hall in the Tigers' 76-53 victory in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in Ogden, Utah.

percent and the Midshipmen 34.5 percent. T.J. Hall scored the first nine points for Navy (17-13), which led by five points in the half.

When the game first started there were a lot of tense feelings

going on because we had never been in a situation like that before," Navy's Wes Cooper said. "I think after the first couple of minutes we realized we could play with these guys. We started to

loosen up and started to play like we have been playing."

Unfortunately for Navy, so did M.U.'s starters. Cruddy, Melvin Booker and Kelly Thames too

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The Cornhuskers closed to 50-4 five minutes into the second half, but Maloney made a 3-point shot and Allen made two straight from long range to rebuild the lead to 10. After Jaron Boone made a short bank shot, Penn answered with three baskets from a close and a free throw from Allen to make it 66-51.

Nebraska never put together more than two unanswered baskets after that and never got the deficit below 10.

Florida 64, James Madison 52: Dan Cross drove through the line for a running one-hander with 7.2 seconds left to bring Florida to victory against upset-minded James Madison.

Reserve guard Greg Williams, averaging two points in his freshman season, made a 3-pointer with 48 seconds left, giving Florida a 62-60 lead. But Clayton Ritter made two free throws 15 seconds later. Ritter scored 20 of his 27 points in the second half for James Madison (20-10).

After Cross, who led Florida with 16 points, gave the Gators the lead, Craig Brown, who scored 13 of his 15 points in the second half for Florida (26-7), stole the ball and was fouled with 15 seconds remaining. He missed both free throws, but it was too late for James Madison.

UConn advances. Page 2B

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ers cruise

... a 13-6 spurt during the first five minutes of the second half as Purdue ran its offense more smoothly in opening a 51-31 lead.

Purdue, making 21 of 41 shots, turned the ball over once in the second half. Its largest lead was 6-59 after Todd Roster's 3-pointer with 1:50 left.

Cassano, Martin, scored 20 points, including 13 in the first half, and Matt Waddell added 12 for Purdue.

Victor Saxton led Central Florida with 16 points.

Alabama 76, Providence 70: Freshman Antonio McDyess had seven points in a 10-0 second-half run and Alabama dominated the backboards against Providence.

The Crimson Tide (20-9) advanced with a strong inside-outside combination, going 8 of 17 from 3-point range, and beat the Friars 44-30 off the boards. The biggest rebounds came down the stretch when Rama twice blanketed rebounds of missed free throws.

Jamal Faulkner and Marvin