



## BASKETBALL

## Two 'Classic' Tourney Titles

Rochester women claim fifth straight local crown; men win 10th title.

By Ryan Whirty

The senior class of the 2008–09 Rochester women's basketball team won an unprecedented four straight JP Morgan Chase Tournaments, the showcase of the Rochester area's Division III hoops programs.

But that core of leadership graduated last spring, meaning this season's Yellowjacket women brought a relatively young squad into the tourney, now called the Wendy's College Classic. As a result, second-seeded Rochester wasn't the favorite going into the event.

But by the end of the January tournament, the Yellowjackets were once again on familiar ground as they dismissed Roberts

Wesleyan, 68–51, in the women's final to clinch a record fifth consecutive title.

"That group of seniors won it four times in a row, so that's a wonderful legacy for them," says Rochester women's coach Jim Scheible. "However, with what seems like a very new team this year, it was quite satisfying for (this year's squad) to earn the title."

The women were joined in the winner's circle at the Palestra by their male counterparts, who topped St. John Fisher, 60–41, in their title game to give the men a record 10 tourney crowns.

"I believed that we were one of a handful of teams capable of winning the tournament, but I wondered if we had the maturity and poise to pull it off," says men's coach Mike Neer.


The Yellowjacket men were paced by a pair of surprisingly mature freshmen: forward Milan Moncrief, who became the first freshman on the men's side to be named

tourney MVP by averaging 11 points and four rebounds; and guard John DiBartolomeo, whose effort in the semis—30 points, nine rebounds and five steals—vaulted his squad into the title game.

For the women, junior guard Melissa Alwardt picked up MVP honors for her tourney average of 13.7 points and 6.7 boards.

Alwardt says she and the rest of the Yellowjackets used some observers' lowered expectations of them as inspiration.

"People did not think we were the best team in the area this year, so everyone on the team was motivated to prove them wrong, and that gave us a little extra boost when playing," she says.

Adds senior guard Jessica Mastronardi, who tallied 12 points in the finals win over Roberts Wesleyan: "I think people in the area felt that most of our success graduated with [last year's seniors], but we had to prove we could still win." 

▲ **WENDY'S COLLEGE CLASSIC:** John DiBartolomeo '13 (left) was named to the men's all-tournament team and Melissa Alwardt '11 (right) was the women's MVP.