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ALERT TOP STORY

W&M women extend March march with NCAA tournament win over High Point

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Mar 20, 2025

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The **first NCAA tournament basketball game** in **William & Mary** history was memorable for more than that distinction. The Tribe, who entered the tournament with a 15-18 record, earned a win to continue its unlikely March march.

The Tribe beat **High Point** 69-63 Thursday night in an NCAA play-in game involving a pair of No. 16 seeds in Austin, Texas.

William & Mary, which made 16 of 18 from the free-throw line, moves on to meet Texas (31-3), **one of the tournament's top seeds**, Saturday night at 9:45.

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William & Mary was led by senior guard Bella Nascimento (5), the most outstanding player of the CAA tournament that the Tribe won in Washington.

W&M ATHLETICS

Senior guard Bella Nascimento led the Tribe (16-18) with 24 points, extending her March run. The Massachusetts resident scored 33 with 11 rebounds in W&M's CAA championship win over Campbell, and was named the tournament's most outstanding player. Nascimento has scored 20 or more in three consecutive games.

"She does what she does," said Tribe third-year coach Erin Dickerson Davis. "She's our leading scorer and has been all season ... We're going to try to get the ball in her hands."


High Point (21-12) arrived as the Big South Conference regular-season and tournament champion, and made its second NCAA tournament appearance. The Panthers entered the NAAs with a nine-game winning

streak.

"Emotions are through the roof," said Nascimento. "We're still making history. This is an amazing group of girls that we have competing. We just want to win. Everything we see in front of us is to dominate, and we just want to win."

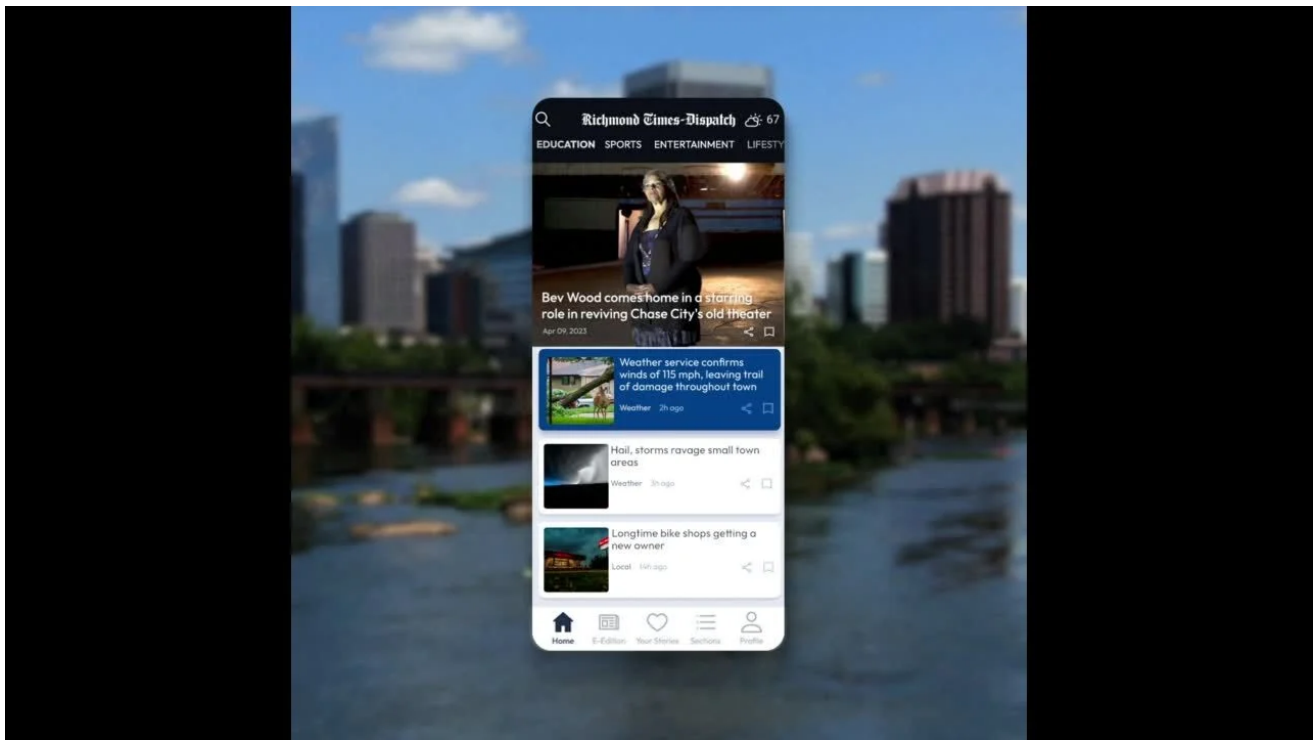
W&M was in command consistently by a six-to-eight-point spread until the Panthers went on an 11-4 run in the third quarter. During that stretch, William & Mary missed six of seven shots. High Point took a 43-42 lead with 1:55 left in the third quarter, its first advantage since very early in the game.

William & Mary headed into the fourth quarter with a 47-46 lead, and then used work on the offensive glass to pull away. The Tribe finished with 15 offensive rebounds. Freshman forward Natalie Fox, who's 6-foot-4, scored 12 with 12 rebounds and four blocks. Sophomore guard Monet Dance scored 13, including three 3-pointers, and Kayla Rolph had 10 rebounds.

 **'Crazy things happen in March.' Anatomy of a shocking William & Mary Tribe uprising to NCAAs.**

The Tribe dropped seven of their last eight regular-season games, and then executed a four-game sweep as the ninth seed in the Coastal Athletic Association tournament to capture the league championship and the conference's automatic bid.

The Tribe, who shot 40%, and the Panthers, who shot 38.7%, were both looking for their first NCAA tournament wins.



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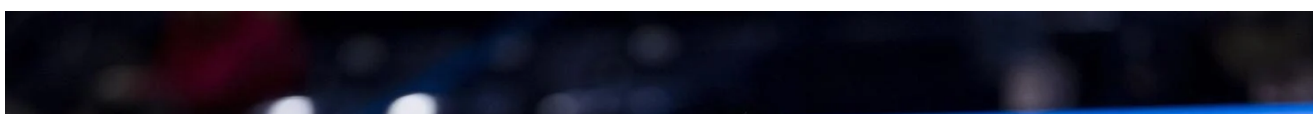
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William & Mary started slowly, but that was no big deal for a team that trailed Campbell 14-0 in the CAA title game before rallying to win. The Tribe came back against High Point in the same way: get the ball to Nascimento and allow her to score or create for teammates.

"The more we share the ball, the more it opens up everything, so we just look for each other on the court," said Nascimento. "My teammates found me. I found my teammates. Sharing the ball is what we do and that's how we get each other open and that's how we get our energy boosted up.

"Because once we see that ball go through the net, it's lit from there."





William & Mary third-year coach Erin Dickerson Davis led the Tribe to the first NCAA tournament appearance, men or women, in school history.

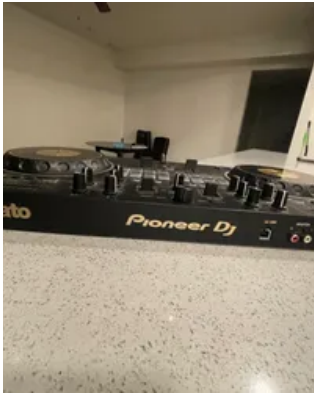
MIKE KROPF, TIMES-DISPATCH

Nascimento scored 11 points and Dance added nine as W&M took a 34-28 halftime lead, hitting six of nine 3-point attempts.

"We have done things that we are so proud of," said Dickerson Davis. "I want to give a special shout-out to everybody's bracket that we busted today."

PHOTOS: Richmond at William & Mary men's basketball game





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