

St. John's, Duquesne, Villanova Accept N.C.A.A. Tourney Bids

By GORDON S. WHITE Jr.

St. John's University was the first of 10 independent teams to accept a bid to the National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball championship yesterday and then drew the Ivy League champion as its opponent in the opening round on March 8.

Princeton, which leads the Ivy League by two games, is favored to nail down that title this weekend, though Columbia and Pennsylvania have outside chances to win in a playoff for the crown.

Shortly after St. John's entered the N.C.A.A. tournament for the second straight year, Duquesne and Villanova accepted berths as the other Eastern Regional independent entries. The St. John's won-lost record was 21-3 through games of last night while Duquesne was 17-3 and Villanova 20-4.

Within a few hours the N.C.A.A. tournament committee completed the 25-man field, as seven other at-large teams accepted bids. Fifteen conference champions receive automatic bids to go along with the 10 independents invited.

The other independent teams entered are Notre Dame (18-5), Marquette (19-4), Trinity of San Antonio, Tex. (18-4), Dayton (17-6), Colorado State (15-4), New Mexico State (21-3), and Seattle (18-7).

Eagles Accept Bid

Following the completion of the N.C.A.A. field, Boston College, the other leading independent team in the Northeast, accepted the first of 16 bids to the National Invitation Tournament scheduled for Madison Square Garden next month. The N.I.T. selection committee was content to name only one entry yesterday because it can sit back and pick from a large group of teams, including eventual also-rans in any or all of 11 major college conferences.

The N.I.T. will mark the final college coaching appearance for Bob Cousy, the former Boston Celtics star, who has coached the Eagles since the 1963-64 season. Cousy will retire from coaching at the end of the season.

Led by Terry Driscoll, a tall, strong pivot man averaging 23 points a game, the Eagles had won 14 straight games and had posted an 19-3 mark through games of last night. The N.I.T. will be held March 13 through 18 and March 20 and 22.

Trinity of Texas is the only one of the 10 N.C.A.A. entries named that has not appeared in a previous N.C.A.A. major-college basketball championship. This is the first season the San Antonio university has ranked as a major college team.

First Round at Raleigh

The members of the St. John's team elected to accept an N.C.A.A. bid in preference to an N.I.T. bid. Now they will probably have to face a much taller team—Princeton—in that first round at Raleigh, N. C. Villanova will meet the Southern Conference champion (probably Davidson) in the other first-round game scheduled for Raleigh on March 8.

Duquesne, which turned down an N.C.A.A. bid a year ago in order to enter the N.I.T., will meet the Middle Atlantic Conference champion at the University of Rhode Island gymnasium on March 8.

The other pairings and sites for the March 8 opening round are: Marquette vs. Ohio Valley champion and Notre Dame vs. the Mid-American champion at Carbondale, Ill.; Trinity vs. Texas A. and M., the Southwest champion, and Dayton vs. Colorado State at Fort Worth, Tex.; New Mexico State vs. the Western Athletic Conference champion and Seattle vs. the Big Sky Conference champion at Las Cruces, N. M.

Other conference champions receive byes in the opening round and will get into action in the second round. These are winners from the Atlantic Coast Conference, Southeastern Conference, Big Ten, Missouri Valley, Big Eight, West Coast Conference and the Athletic Association of Western Universities.

The University of California, Los Angeles, of the A.A.W.U., will doubtless be seeking its third straight title in the N.C.A.A. tourney.