

# 2018 State Farm MVC Tournament – Championship Game Notes

Game 9 ... 1:00 p.m., Sunday, March 4 ... St. Louis, Mo. (Scottrade Center) ... #1 Loyola (65), #3 Illinois State (49)

=====

**The Loyola Ramblers**, winning their 10th straight game and 17<sup>th</sup> of their last 18 outings, improve to 28-5 while winning their first ever MVC Tournament since they joined the league in 2013-14. Loyola will be making its **sixth trip to the NCAA Tournament but first since advancing to the Sweet 16 in 1985**. The Ramblers own a 9-4 record in the NCAA Tournament, winning the NCAA title in 1963 while making other trips in 1964, 1966, 1968 and 1985. This marked the 16th time in MVC Tournament history that the No. 1 seed has won the championship but first time since Wichita State in 2014. Loyola improved its MVC Tournament record to 6-4 including a 1-0 mark against Illinois State. LUC completed a 3-0 sweep of ISU this season, following two 68-61 wins in the regular season. Coach Porter Moser becomes the second person in MVC history to win this tournament as a player and as a coach (Chris Lowery of SIU was the first). Today tied for the seventh largest margin of victory in the title game.

The 49 points LUC allowed today was their best defensive effort of the season. Donte Ingram with 18 points and 8 rebounds and Cameron Krutwig with 11 points and 9 boards led the Loyola attack as the Ramblers enjoyed a 43-38 rebound margin.

**The Illinois State Redbirds**, who had a two-game winning streak snapped, closed out the campaign with an 18-15 record. This marked the ninth time Illinois State has finished runner-up in the tournament including second straight year and the sixth time in succession since ISU last won the title in the 1998 tournament. The Redbirds' MVC Tournament record slips to 44-33 including a 4-9 mark in championship games, a 9-8 record as a No. 3 seed and a 4-6 record against No. 1 seeds. The last time a No. 3 seed finished runner-up in the MVC Tournament was in 2009 when Illinois State fell to UNI 60-57 in overtime.

Phil Fayne had the first double-double in the title game since 2007 with his 12 points and 12 rebounds. Milik Yarbrough had 12 points for the Redbirds and William Tinsley had 8 points and 10 rebounds. ISU had its season single game low shooting percentage at .318 (21 of 66). It was the fifth lowest team shooting Pct. In the title game. ISU also had the fewest free throws made (2) and attempted (4) in the title game. ISU's 49 points was the Redbirds' season low.

**First Half:** The Ramblers shot ahead 9-2 at the outset. LUC stretched its lead to 14-6 but Redbird threes from Keyshawn Evans and Isaac Gassman cut the gap to 16-12 midway through the first period. Loyola was cranking at a .444 pace from the field at that point while ISU was just 5 of 20 (.250). ISU got within a basket at 18-16 but LUC stretched its margin back to eight at 26-18 with six minutes left. Clayton Custer's free throw pushed the lead to 27-18 but Phil Fayne scored twice to cut the gap to 27-22 for ISU at the four-minute mark. Loyola then cashed in on three treys in the closing minutes (Marques Townes, Donte Ingram, Lucas Williamson) of the half to stretch its intermission advantage to 36-27. Loyola's six treys in the half were the second most threes in the first half in championship game history. Loyola is 19-0 when leading at the half and Illinois State is 3-12 when trailing at halftime. LUC was .500 (6/12) from three-point range and .464 (13/28) overall shooting in the half while ISU was at 32.4 (11/34) and hit just 3 of 12 treys.

**Second Half:** A putback by Cameron Krutwig gave LUC its first 10-point lead at 40-30 and Ben Richardson following with a trey completed a 7-0 Rambler run to make it 43-30 just over two minutes into the half. The lead went to 15 and stayed in the 13-15 range until LUC pushed ahead by 19 at 55-36 midway in the half. Donte Ingram buried a long trey with four minutes left to give LUC its first 20-point margin at 62-42. ISU got back to within 15 at 62-47 with three minutes remaining.

**Tournament Records and Notes:** This has been the first time in the history of the MVC tournament all four semifinal teams are from the state of Illinois. After three days of competition with no games decided by more than 10 points, today's championship game 16-point margin was the exception in the meet, with the average margin of victory for all nine games still only 7.2 points a game. Friday's four quarterfinal round games were decided by a total of just 17 points, tying it for the closest quarterfinal round in tourney history (also occurring in 1999). Only one previous MVC tourney out of 41 meets --- the 1999 tourney --- had all games decided by 10 or fewer points and the average margin of victory that year was 4.56. The average margin of victory in 2016 was 7.67 points with 8 of 9 games decided by fewer than 10 points. This was the first time since 2012 the top three seeds have all advanced to the semifinals and the 30<sup>th</sup> time in tournament history it has happened. **Today's championship game attendance was 8,056. Five session total attendance through the semifinals is 34,810.**