

SUNDAY, FEB. 17, 2008



2008 Humboldt-Del Norte Dick Niclai Basketball Tournament

Fortuna

69

| Team | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|-----------|
| Fortuna | 14 | 21 | 15 | 19 | 69 |
| McKinleyville | 17 | 11 | 11 | 16 | 55 |

DEPTH CHARGE

Huskies win 1st Niclai title with team effort

Erik Fraser

THE TIMES-STANDARD

EUREKA — For the second straight night at the Dick Niclai Tournament, the squad that played a better team game won the title by beating the team with the best player.

Using their trademark 10-deep rotation to perfection, the Fortuna Lady Huskies knocked McKinleyville off its perch atop the Humboldt-Del Norte Conference mountain, claiming their first Niclai championship with a 69-55 win at College of the Redwoods on Saturday night.

"Amazing," was the first word out of the mouths of both Jain Tuey and Kelsey Jacobs in describing how it felt after the Huskies finally beat Mack in their fourth try this season.

"I've wanted to beat them all season," said Tuey, whose Huskies (24-4) had lost to Mack (19-6) in the Panther Classic championship game in December, then twice in Big 5 play — their only league losses. "We all knew we had no pressure on us tonight, we just had to come out, play our game like we've been doing all year."

When Fortuna head coach Mike Benbow said, "It wasn't one girl, it was our entire team," it wasn't just generic coachspeak. The Huskies literally do it with their entire team. When they sub, five girls come in and five go out, and there is no dropoff in talent or intensity when the second five come on.

"That's what our whole season's been based on," said Benbow, "and that's why I'm so proud of these girls right now, because we did it with 10."

The Huskies' depth allowed them to run a full-court press on Mack all night long — forcing 24 turnovers — without getting tired, as all 10 players got ample time to rest along the way.

And yet, they were able to maintain their intensity for the full 32 minutes, a tough thing to do when

