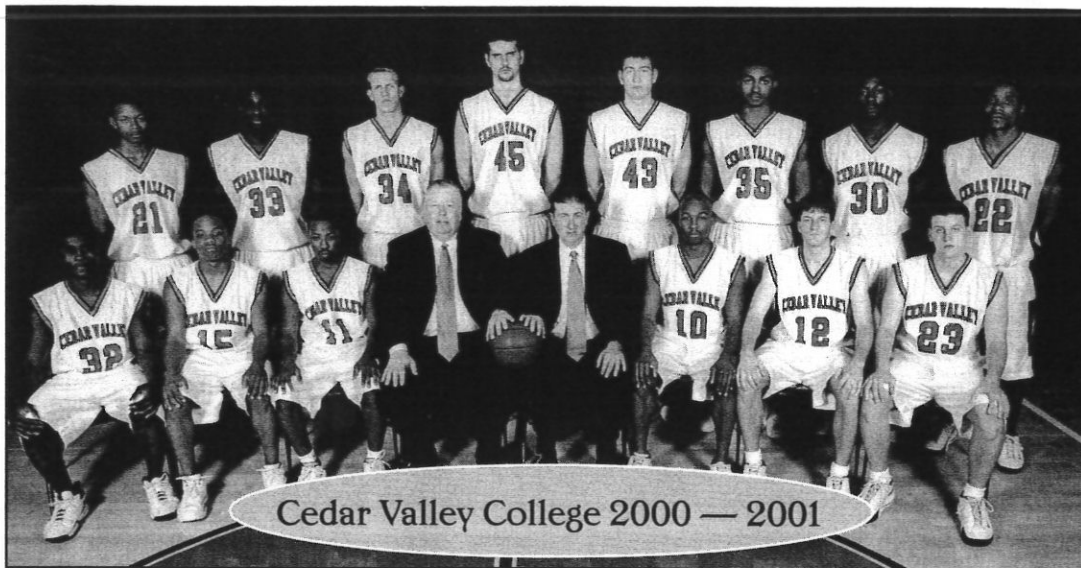


# Men's Division III Basketball

By P.J. Harmer



Tournament MVP Reggie Griffin scored a game high 28-points to lead Cedar Valley College (TX) to the NJCAA Division III National Championship with a 78-55 thrashing of Sullivan County CC in the finals.

Cedar Valley rolled out to an 8-0 lead on back-to-back three's from Ian Jones and a basket from Griffin and never looked back in cruising to the win.

In a tournament where many of the games came down to the wire, Cedar Valley made sure they wrapped up the title early. Sullivan's first basket didn't come until the 16:38 mark when Dereck Rankin drained a three for an 8-3 lead. Shiron Brown added a basket at 15:35 for an 8-5 game, but that was the closest Sullivan would come the rest of the way.

Seven-footer Nik Douyias scored the next three buckets for Cedar Valley to open up a 13-5 game with 14:43 to go. Curtis Henry broke that streak with a basket for Sullivan, but Jonathan Reed scored one and Griffin hit a three and a basket for a 20-7 lead with 11:20 to go in the half.

After Kis Ibczim made it 20-9, Sullivan got whistled for a technical foul and Ike Muonelo converted both free throws and Griffin scored on the possession they received after the shots for a 24-9 lead.

Cedar Valley ended the half on a 13-8 run to claim a commanding 37-17 lead at the break.

"I didn't think we'd be up 20 at the half," said Cedar Valley coach Rick McCormick. "We handled the lead very well tonight. We're awful happy."

Sullivan couldn't figure a way to get back in the game in the second half. Cedar Valley's work around the basket was excellent and they protected the ball. Each team only committed 11 turnovers in the game, but the Suns scored 16 points off turnovers, compared to eight for the Generals.

Tim Butler's basket at 14:04 cut the lead to 17 for Sullivan, but Reed and Griffin answered to push it to 21. Rankin converted one free throw at 12:29 to bring it back down to 18, 51-33, but that was as close as Sullivan would get the rest of the way. Jones' three-pointer at 10:53 gave Cedar Valley a 57-35 lead and that lead wouldn't drop below 20 the rest of the way.

Sullivan shot just 33.3 percent from the field on 18-of-54 shooting. McCormick said that was one of the goals for Cedar Valley coming into the game. On top of that, Sullivan was just under seven percent from three-point range, shooting 1-of-15.

"Our goal is to hold a team under 40 percent shooting," said McCormick. "We controlled the tempo of the game."

On the other side of the coin, Cedar Valley shot 53.7 percent from the field on 29-of-54 shooting, including 8-of-17 from beyond the three-point line. The Suns also held a slight edge in rebounding, 34-32.

The game was slightly marred by incidents on the court. Sullivan's Justin Dawson picked up two technical fouls in the game,

being ejected after a hard foul late in the game. Four more technical fouls were handed out, two on each team, during the game.

Sullivan, which came into the tournament ranked third in the country, showed their frustration all night. Cedar Valley was everywhere Sullivan tried to go—on the outside and the inside.

"I knew it was a contrast of styles," said McCormick. "If we continued to move the ball, it frustrated them a little. We like to control the ball."

Douyias added 13 points for Cedar Valley, which finished the year 28-6, Jones added 10 and Muonelo nine. All-tournament selection Kris Ibczim led Sullivan (29-4) with 12 points. Brown also had 12 points, while Rankin had 10.

This is the third title for a Texas team. Eastfield won in 1997, while Richland picked up the title in 1999. Sullivan had been vying for their fourth title in their sixth trip to the finals. The Generals had previously won titles in 1992, '95 and '96. They also made a trip to the finals in 1994, falling in the game to Gloucester County CC on a last second shot by Marvin Stinson.

## 2000 ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

|                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Bolor Oynchimeg | Rock Valley College, IL  |
| Tory Fisher     | Ocean County College, NJ |
| Carlton Graham  | SUNY @ Delhi, NY         |
| Joel Giles      | Vermilion CC, MN         |
| Charles Lagoa   | Roxbury CC, MA           |
| Ka'Reem Horton  | Roxbury CC, MA           |
| Kris Ibezim     | Sullivan County CC, NY   |
| Ahmad Smith     | Cedar Valley College, TX |

## TOURNAMENT MVP

Reggie Griffin Cedar Valley College, TX

## COACH OF THE TOURNAMENT

Rick McCormick Cedar Valley College, TX

**Cedar Valley College 78 • Sullivan County CC 55**

**CEDAR VALLEY (78)** Reed 4-6 0-0 9; Tunstall 0-1 1-1 1; Wadsworth 0-0 0-0 0; Moore 0-0 0-0 0; Gardner 0-0 1-2 1; Reeves 0-0 0-0 0; Bielski 0-0 1-1 1; Veal 2-4 1-1 5; Muonelo 1-4 6-6 9; Smith 1-2 0-0 2; Jones 3-8 1-2 10; Griffin 12-21 0-0 28; Reichl 0-0 0-0 0; Douyias 6-8 1-1 13; Team Totals: 29-54 12-14 78.

### Sullivan County (55)

Opong 1-5 0-0 2; Butler 2-3 4-7 8; Ibezim 5-9 2-3 12; Goulbourne 0-2 0-0 0; Dawson 1-8 2-4 4; Brown 4-11 4-6 12; Keys 0-1 0-0 0; Brunson 1-1 0-0 2; Rankin 3-12 3-3 10; Henry 1-2 3-4 5; Team Totals: 18-54 18-27 55.

Three point field goals: Cedar Valley 8-17 (Reed 0-1, Tunstall 0-1, Muonelo 1-3, Jones 3-6, Griffin 4-6); Sullivan County 1-15 (Opong 0-1, Goulbourne 0-2, Dawson 0-3, Brown 0-2, Keys 0-1, Rankin 1-6); Rebounds: Cedar Valley 34 (Douyias 7); Sullivan County 32 (Henry 7). Assists: Cedar Valley 13 (Reed 6); Sullivan County 4 (Opong 1, Brunson 1, Rankin 1, Henry 1). Halftime score: Cedar Valley, 37-17.