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**Triton College**

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## **Triton Women's Basketball Win Region 4 Championship, Advance to District**



*The Triton College women's basketball team captured the NJCAA Region 4 Division I championship following a 68-57 victory over Olive-Harvey on Saturday. The Trojans will continue their quest for a Division I title March 14 when they host Williston State of North Dakota in a district play-in game for a berth in the national tournament.*

**RIVER GROVE, III.** — Behind a standout performance from star guard [Jayla Rankin](#), the Triton College women's basketball team captured the NJCAA Region 4 Division I Championship with a 68-57 victory over the Olive-Harvey Panthers on Saturday at the Jorndt Athletic Complex Gymnasium.

It marked the first time Triton women's basketball clinched a regional title on its home floor.

With the win, Triton (24-9) moves one step closer to the NJCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship in Lake Charles, Louisiana. The Trojans will host Williston State Tetons women's basketball, the Region 13 champions from North Dakota, at 5 p.m. Saturday, March 14, for the North Central District Championship. The winner will advance the national tournament.

The victory also avenged last season's 70-62 loss to the Panthers in the Region 4 title game.

After building a strong first-half lead, the Trojans had to fend off a second-half rally from the Panthers, as Olive-Harvey (24-10) cut the lead to 55-54 with just five minutes remaining.

"We expected that (surge)," said Triton coach [Drew Winston](#) who was named Region 4 Division I Coach of the Year.

Rankin responded with a clutch 3-pointer to push the lead to four. Later, after missing two free throws, she grabbed her own rebound and scored to extend Triton's advantage. She then sealed the win with two free throws in the final moments of the thrilling contest.

"I knew the clock was running down," said Rankin, who led Triton with 23 points and was named Region 4 Player of the Year. "I had to hustle. I just followed up my shot."

Injuries limited Triton to six players, but each contributed significant minutes. Rankin, [Jazzmine Smith](#) and [Alivia Brown](#) each played more than 39 minutes.

"I'm so proud of this team," Winston said. "They played hard and left it all out there."

Smith added 21 points, including three 3-pointers, and led the Trojans with seven assists. Alivia Brown recorded seven points, seven rebounds and three steals.

[Charity Anderson](#) grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds, while [Kyra Paul](#) added nine points and nine rebounds. [Jada Branch](#), playing through injury, provided key minutes to help keep the offense running.

Triton's challenging early-season schedule helped prepare the team for the postseason. After opening the year 3-8 against several strong opponents, the Trojans surged down the stretch to claim their second Region 4 championship after appearing in six consecutive title games.

The Trojans' championship victory also capped a dominant regular season, during which the team made school history after winning 16 consecutive games, breaking the streak previously set by the 1982-83 women's program.

"We're not satisfied at all," Rankin said. "We want to go as far as we can and win the district and make it to nationals."

For more information about Triton women's basketball, including the schedule and roster, visit [tritonathletics.com](http://tritonathletics.com).

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#### **Media Contacts:**

Melissa Ramirez Cooper | [melissacooper@triton.edu](mailto:melissacooper@triton.edu) | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3496

Hunter Oberst | [hunteroberst@triton.edu](mailto:hunteroberst@triton.edu) | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3820

#### **ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE:**

Triton College is a public institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Recently recognized by the Aspen Institute as one of the Top 200 community colleges in the nation, Triton offers more than 130 degree and certificate programs that prepare students to pursue

meaningful careers, transfer to four-year universities, and thrive in a global economy. Guided by our mission—*Valuing the individual, educating and serving the community*—Triton serves nearly 17,000 students annually on its 110-acre campus in River Grove, Illinois. Our dedicated faculty and staff provide high-quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities that empower students and strengthens the communities we serve. Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and a member of The Illinois Community College Board. Illinois is home to 45 colleges in 39 community college districts. Learn more at [triton.edu](https://triton.edu).