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Duquesne headed to Montana in College Basketball Invitational

By Dave Mackall
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Duquesne's basketball season will continue after all.

With a possible NCAA Tournament bid out of sight and having been passed over by the NIT, the Dukes accepted a bid Sunday to the College Basketball Invitational, where they'll play at Montana at 9:05 p.m. Wednesday.

"We're excited and honored to have an opportunity to play in the postseason," Duquesne coach Ron Everhart said. "It'll give our guys an opportunity to make amends for some of the disappointing losses I think we had. This group of kids will compete. We'll be ready."

Montana (21-10) lost to Northern Colorado in the Big Sky championship game.

It marks the second consecutive appearance for the Dukes in the 16-team CBI, which receives a significant financial guarantee from every host team. Duquesne lost a first-round game in the tournament last season at Princeton.

After Duquesne's name was not among the NIT selections, it left only the chance of playing in one of two remaining obscure events: the CBI or Collegeinsider.com Tournament.

Loser of seven of nine games, including a 93-90 overtime decision to Saint Joseph's in the Atlantic 10 tournament quarterfinals, Duquesne (18-12) settled for the CBI, a tournament in its fifth year.

While it is Duquesne's third postseason appearance in Everhart's five years, it's somewhat of a disappointment in a season that started with so much promise.

Duquesne won 11 consecutive games from late-December to early-February and led the A-10 standings with a school-record 8-0 start that seemingly made it a sure bet for at least an NIT bid.

But with the NIT now awarding automatic bids to regular-season champions who don't win their conference tournaments, the number of at-large spots have dwindled.

And it was even more so this year.

"The thing that really impacted us was we had 13 automatic qualifiers," NIT

selection chair C.M. Newton said. "We had a record number, the most we've ever had before was eight."

Defending champion Dayton is the only A-10 team appearing in the NIT field. The Flyers lost to Richmond yesterday in the A-10 tournament championship game.

Duquesne is a combined 21-25 in postseason tournament appearances. A look at the record:

Tournament -- Record -- Last appearance (Year)

NCAA --17-19 -- VMI 73, Duquesne 66 (1977)

NIT --4-5 -- Virginia Tech 116, Duquesne 108, 2OT (2009)

CBI -- 0-1 -- Princeton 65, Duquesne 51 (2010)

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