Arkansas Wins on Thurman’s 3 in Final :50

By Don Markus
The Razorbacks beat Duke Monday night at its own game — the NCAA final — to win this year’s national championship.

After overcoming a 10-point deficit early in the second half, and nearly losing a five-point lead with just over a minute to go, the Razorbacks broke a tie in the three-pointer by Scotty Thurman with 57 seconds left and went on to beat the Blue Devils, 76-72.

An uncontested layup by shot by (28-4) and a missed three-pointer by sophomore guard Chris Collins on his team’s next possession opened the door for Arkansas (31-3) as the Razorbacks didn’t close it completely until Clint McDaniel hit the second of two free throws with nine seconds left to give Arkansas its championship.

Sophomore forward Corliss Williamson, named the Most Outstanding Player in the tournament, scored 21 points in leading Arkansas to the first national championship by a Southeastern Conference team since Texas won it under Nolan Richardson his first NCAA championship by a Southeastern Conference team in 1978. Thurman added 15.

The victory gave Arkansas coach Nolan Richardson the only major collegiate basketball title left for him in his generation.

No. 2 Arkansas had shot out Duke (25-8) and a missed three-pointer by sophomore guard Chris Collins on his team’s next possession opened the door for Arkansas (31-3) as the Razorbacks didn’t close it completely until Clint McDaniel hit the second of two free throws with nine seconds left to give Arkansas its championship.

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