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MEN'S BASKETBALL

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Men's Basketball Season Ends With 78-53 Loss To Kansas In NCAA Opening Round

Cedrick Banks scores 15 points for the Flames, who finish the season at 24-8.

March 20, 2004

[Box Score](#)

By **DOUG TUCKER**
AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) - When Wayne Simien went crashing to the floor, Kansas teammate J.R. Giddens thought, "Oh, let him get up, please."

The reaction was different for the players on Illinois-Chicago.

"It was definitely an uplift," [Armond Williams](#) said. "We thought we had a shot."

They were wrong. The Jayhawks got 17 points from Giddens and a 21-2 run in the second half Friday night to rout Illinois-Chicago 78-53 in the first round of the St. Louis Regional.

Simien, the 6-foot-9 power forward who leads the Jayhawks in both scoring and rebounding, had four turnovers and four points before being helped to the locker room following his fall with 6:32 left in the first half.

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AP
Guard Justin Bowen drives past Kansas guard J.R. Giddens during the first

He received a huge roar from the partisan Kansas crowd when he returned to start the second half. He finished 13 points and nine rebounds before going to the bench with most of the other starters with about five minutes left.

"We tried and didn't succeed," Williams said. "This is a really horrible way to lose."

Fourth-seeded Kansas will meet 12th-seeded Pacific, a 66-58 winner over Providence, in the second round.

Simien, who has been hampered most of the year with a groin injury, said he slipped on a wet spot on the floor.

"I dove for a loose ball there earlier and that area was still a little wet," he said. "I was able to fight through it. It's tournament time and time to fight."

Playing about 40 miles from their campus and spurred on by a boisterous crowd, the Jayhawks (22-8) won for the 21st time in their last 24 games in Kemper Arena.

Bigger and quicker than Illinois-Chicago (24-8), the Jayhawks were ahead 48-37 when two free throws by Keith Langford ignited a 21-2 run with 13:27 to go.

Giddens, a flamboyant 6-5 freshman, hit an open 3, then made a steal a few minutes later that led to a dunk. With 8:20 left, Giddens soared in for another dunk that made it 65-39.

Aaron Miles ended the run with a driving layup that put the Jayhawks on top 69-39 as Illinois-Chicago - which had won 12 in a row - went six minutes without a field goal.

"I didn't realize it was 21-2, but we were able to get out and run," Kansas coach Bill Self said. "We just made shots, and then we did a lot of good things."

But their star was still hurting.

"He said he was fine," Self said of Simien. "The doctor said that if he didn't start the second half he would be tight. So we thought we should use him."

The Jayhawks, who reached the Final Four each of the past two years, hit seven of their first eight shots while raising their NCAA tournament record since 2002 to 10-2.

"Their transition game killed us," Flames coach [Jimmy Collins](#) said. "We contained their high-low and halfcourt offense. But once they got to running, we couldn't do anything about it. They ran on us, over us and through us."

In the early going, Kansas took a 25-10 lead after a 3-pointer by Giddens. The lead got as high as 20 after Langford's slashing layup in the lane before Illinois-Chicago started hitting from the outside and taking advantage of some careless Kansas turnovers.

half.

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The Flames, whose winning streak was the third-longest in the nation, quickly sliced a 38-23 halftime deficit to 41-32, thanks to two 3-pointers by [Cedrick Banks](#).

The taller Jayhawks outrebounded the Flames 41-26, making up for a whopping 25 turnovers. Kansas also had eight blocks while the Flames had none. Langford had 13 points.

Banks led Illinois-Chicago with 15 points, while [Martell Bailey](#) added 10.

Simien said he would definitely play on Sunday.

"No doubt," he said. "It's tournament time."

[University of Illinois Chicago Men's Basketball](#)

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