

## **West Regional Championship: No. 3 Alaska Anchorage vs. No. 4 Azusa Pacific**

**LA JOLLA, Calif.** – The Azusa Pacific Cougars were victorious over the Alaska Anchorage Seawolves in the West Regional Championships at UC San Diego’s RIMAC Arena on Monday night, claiming a 65-63 win with a buzzer-beater by Lydia Nieto. Azusa Pacific improves to 27-5 on the season, while Alaska Anchorage concludes its season at 30-3.

After opening the contest with seven unanswered points, the Seawolves held the lead for the entirety of the first quarter. The Cougars chipped away, however. Alaska Anchorage held an eight-point advantage with a little over three minutes to play in the quarter, and Azusa Pacific cut the deficit to three (24-21) by the end. Laura Pranger and Nieto each contributed six points to the efforts, with Nieto’s coming on a pair of three-pointers.

The Seawolves opened up the second quarter hot again. With a three-pointer, a pair of jumpers, and two free throws, the Seawolves grabbed their largest lead by that point, holding a 33-21 advantage. Again, the Cougars answered though. In the final six minutes of the half, the Cougars outscored the Seawolves, 15-2. Azusa Pacific held a narrow 38-37 lead at the half.

It remained a back-and-forth game in the third quarter. A pair of free throws by Yazmeen Goo eliminated Azusa Pacific’s lead, making it an even 43-43 game with a little over seven minutes in the period. However, the Cougars came away with a 57-51 lead to end the third.

The contest stayed competitive in the fourth, and it all came down to the game’s final seconds. Down by two, Tara Thompson’s three-pointer gave her Seawolves a 63-62 lead with only four seconds remaining.

It was Nieto that would become the game’s hero though, heaving up a three-point shot as time expired to earn her Cougars the win.

As the victor, Azusa Pacific advances to the NCAA Division II Elite Eight. The competition will take place in Columbus, Ohio from March 26-29.