

Citrus, the south's No. 1 seed, advanced to the final of the California Community Colleges Men's Basketball Championship at the University of Pacific with a 97-83 victory over Los Angeles Trade Tech.

The victory puts Citrus in its first title game in 46 years. The Owls last played in the finals in 1962 when they fell to City College of San Francisco, 71-56, at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, CA.

The win also sets up a rematch for Fullerton, which fell to the Hornets 89-82 in the third-place game of the Wells Fargo Holiday Tournament back in December at Riverside City College.

The No. 1 vs. No. 2 final will be the 10th time it has happened in the men's basketball finals, the ninth time it has happened between Southern California teams. In those 10 games, the No. 2 seed has won four of the finals.

Fullerton's Allen Caveness, who moved to Fullerton after coaching at Compton, will try to become the sixth head coach in the state's history to win a championship in his first year of coaching a program. Virgil Watson was the last coach to do so in 1996 when he led Ventura to the state title, although it was later vacated due to sanctions on the Pirate program.

In the win over Trade Tech, Citrus rallied from a 45-36 halftime deficit by outscoring the Beavers 61 to 38. Citrus' A.J. Gasporra led the Owls' second-half charge as he scored 16 of his 17 points in the final period. At one point he hit four consecutive three-pointers. Teammate Buchi Awaji scored 23 points, 15 in the final period, while Darren Moore added 13 of his game-high 24 points in the second half.

Citrus scored 36 of its points from the free throw line as the Owls went to the free throw line 53 times.

Los Angeles Trade Tech had its two big guns both foul out as Marquis Dubose fouled out midway through the second half and Joseph Morgan, the state's co-MVP, fouled out late with five points and three rebounds.