

SPORTS

Midnight Madness unveils hoop teams

By GRANT LONG

Why is that everything that is exciting happens during the night? It's true, your favorite television show comes on at night, you have most of your fun during the nighttime hours, nighttime is when everything usually happens.

So why does it not surprise us

that the college basketball season begins at night, or during Midnight Madness as most people like to call it. In the early morning hours of Oct. 26, North Carolina Wesleyan College, tipped off its basketball season.

But before the players ever took the court, the crowd was first entertained by Wesleyan's cheer-

leaders. Wesleyan cheerleaders Keysha Lancaster, Courtney Rubes, Stephanie Pelham, Aquia Grayton, Kim Johnson, Tashonda McDonalds, Candice Rowe, Molly McCluskey, Talisha Tillis, and mascot Jason White got up and energized the crowd in the nearly full gymnasium by putting on a show of school spirit that

ended in a gold and blue pyramid and a frenzied crowd of basketball fans waiting to see this year's Battling Bishop basketball team.

As the lights dimmed and cheers got louder and louder, the crowd got anxious and the gym was at a fever pitch as the player introductions began. This year's hopefuls for the Lady Bishops were Sara Szejda, Laura Boggs, Caroline May, Angelina Collie, Artina Trader, Anika Taylor, Shawnie Henderson, with team manager Rae McClary bringing up the rear.

The hopefuls for the guy's team included As-Simi Brown, Jamar Jones, Rick Hargis, Jeff Commo, Cortez Smith, Marcus Ray, Anthony Ervin, Bryan Earl, Thomas Snelling, Marquis McDougald, Chris Moody, Jeff Keys, Elias Zarkadoulas, Cornell Davis, and E.J. Parior. After player introductions the Wesleyan crowd got prepared to see its basketball teams' workout.

The ladies' game was basically a battle of alumni versus this year's team, with Terri Cash, Darcina Cherry, Chris Webb, and Emily Sisson, suiting up for the gold and blue one last time. The ladies' game was a pretty even game throughout with no team taking more than a five-point lead, and it is not ironic that the ladies game came down to the waning moments.

The alumni held a slim lead,

17-16 with seconds remaining, but it was Anika Taylor who hit the game-winning lay-up and clinched victory for the basketball team.

Before the guy's games started there was a three-point shutout and slam-dunk contest to be won. Jeff Commo blew away the field in the three-point contest, connecting on ten of his shots. Anthony Ervin just edged out Thomas Snelling in the slam-dunk contest with a last-minute power jam that amazed the crowd.

The men's game also turned out to be as exciting as the slam-dunk contest, as both teams scored early and often. In a total display of run and gun basketball, both teams went on a scoring frenzy and the game ended in a 62-62 tie. It was an impressive offensive output by both teams.

Both the men's and women's team looked impressive in their Midnight Madness performances, and it makes one look ahead at the current basketball with growing optimism. Even though the women lost six players from last year's team look for them to be competitive in their conference.

As for the men, as athletic and physical as they are I look for them to put numbers on the board and have one of the best offensive seasons in school history.

My prediction for both teams is that this will be a very interesting year.

ACC starting to gain growing recognition as football power

By JAMES BELL

The Atlantic Coast Conference has long been known as a basketball powerhouse. With Duke, North Carolina, Wake Forest, North Carolina State, Maryland, and Virginia all competing for the NCAA National Championship at some point or another the ACC is earning some respect for its football teams as well.

Every year Florida State wins the conference title and competes for the national title, even winning it just a few years ago. It is the other teams that are surprising and exciting ACC football fans around the country.

Currently the ACC has three teams ranked in the top 25 of the nation: Florida State, North Carolina, and Virginia. And a fourth team, Georgia Tech, was recently

ranked but has now dropped out of the top 25.

Florida State is ranked second in the country and can take the number one slot with an upset over number one Florida. The Seminoles have a record of 5-0 and they do not appear to have any weaknesses that an opponent could take advantage of. At this pace Florida State will win the ACC for sure and may win another national title in the process.

North Carolina is another team in the ACC that is finally getting respect. They are currently ranked ninth in the country and have already played the teams that were supposed to hand the "Heels" losses. Poised to win the ACC if the "Noles" slip, the Tar Heels are heading for a major bowl game.

Virginia is the third team

ranked in the top 25 in the ACC. The Cavaliers are ranked 14th and had a big game last week against the ACC leaders, Florida State.

The ACC has other teams that are not in the top 25, but have also gained a national respect. These teams have tough schedules, (they have to play in the ACC) and they play very well even though their loss column may have more digits than the national debt. Georgia Tech is one of those teams. They suffer defeats at the hands of better conference teams but they always show up to play.

The ACC is still better known for basketball than they are for football. But if the football teams keep winning and keep going to the post season, then soon ACC may be synonymous with big time football.

Houston, Seattle should prevail

(Continued from Previous Page)

one headache, but could have picked up a migraine. Rider, Wallace, and Anderson have lots of potential, but they are also three headcases. It will be an exciting season in rip city, but P.J. better keep a case of Excedrin around just in case things start to go wrong.

4. Sacramento — The Kings have the second longest streak of consecutive sellout games at home and this could be the year they pay their fans back for all their loyalty.

5. Phoenix — Even though they lost Barkley the Suns can still make a run for the playoffs. They are a good rebounding team

and could have possibly the best back court in the NBA with Kevin Johnson (if healthy), Sam Cassel, and rookie sharpshooter Steve Nash.

6. Golden State — The only thing Golden about their season will be that it will be over in April.

7. L.A. Clippers — I wanted to pick Golden State in the cellar of the division, but the Clippers are so good at bringing up the rear that I might as well leave them there. The only reason people go to Clippers games is because their tickets are cheaper than Lakers' tickets. The Clippers are like the New York Jets of basketball and if there was any justice in the world the NBA

would let the Clippers trade themselves to the CBA.

Even though the Eastern Conference is improving and the Knicks have built themselves into contenders, nobody has a snowball's chance in hell of beating the Chicago Bulls. The West looks like it will come down to the Rockets and the Sonics and that series will definitely go the distance, but once again the Sonics will be in the NBA finals.

This year, even though the Bulls are back, don't look for Gary Payton to go sleepless in Seattle. The Sonics will win the whole thing is six. Look to Tinsel town (Lakers) to go all the way in 1998!

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