

# SPORTS

## Football Team Finishes Third in Conference at 5-2

By Jarad Brown  
Decree Sports Editor

### NC Wesleyan 35, Greensboro 3

The field was muddy and conditions sloppy on Northern Nash High School's football field for NC Wesleyan's final game of the season, and the play on the field was even sloppier.

Despite fumbling the ball six times (losing two) and throwing an interception, the Bishops finished their season above .500 (6-4) by defeating Greensboro College 35-3. Their USA South Conference record was 5-2, good for third place.

"To finish the season with a winning record is huge, especially considering

the start we had," NC Wesleyan coach Mark Henninger said. "I think it says a lot about this group of seniors. I told them after the Maryville game that we could either finish 6-4, 7-3 or 2-7, and they responded."

Wesleyan came into the game having never lost to the Pride, but the sloppy first half gave life to the thought that that might change.

After taking the lead with an opening possession touchdown, Bishop players saw the offense turn the ball over twice, punt, and have a field goal blocked on its next four possessions.

The NCWC defense picked up the

slack, forcing one turnover and holding the Pride to just a field goal, to lead 14-3 at the break.

"I don't think we came out incredibly ready to play," Henninger said. "We weren't very focused and needed to do a better job taking care of the football."

A pair of third quarter rushing touchdowns from Bishops' running back Stedman Mathis widened the lead, and the defense continued to smother the Pride, forcing two turnovers, and just one first down.

Bishops' running back Tyreck McFadden carried the ball off the right side for a five-yard score early in the fourth quarter to put the game out of reach.

The season might be over for NCWC, but players aren't hanging their heads with the season's outcome.

"Finishing 6-4 is great motivation for (Henninger) as a coach," senior defensive end Quinderra Spellman said. "I think it will give him and the team great confidence heading into next season."

Other players are already looking forward to the fruits next season might bring.

"We lost two games by a combined two points," junior defensive tackle LeeRon Boykin said. "I think our play this season answered a lot of questions about (Henninger) as a head coach, and showed we definitely have the talent to compete for a conference championship next season."

Not just players are excited about what this season's performance means for next year.

"If we do just a few more of the little things three weeks ago (against Christopher Newport) we are in the playoffs again," Henninger said. "I think it's good for our young guys to come so close to (a championship) but not get it. I'm excited about what I have coming back in the spring and how hungry our guys will be."

### NC Wesleyan 41 at Ferrum College 14

The Bishops went into to the half tied at 14 with the Cougars, but on the back of Bo Jordan's record-setting 311 yard passing performance Wesleyan stepped on the throttle and never looked back in the second half.

### Christopher Newport 27 at NC Wesleyan 27

Despite leading 16-14 at the half, the Bishops saw their hopes for a second straight conference championship slip away, as the Captains kicked a game-winning field goal with just 1:27 remaining.

"We just needed to keep our composure," Spellman said. "We got a lead and became laid back as a team, and then couldn't make plays in the second half when we needed to."

CNU went on to finish its season undefeated in the conference, winners of the USA-South and representatives in the Division III playoffs.

"It really leaves a bitter taste in our mouths," Boykin said. "We had them beat. I mean the halftime score should have been 35-7, but that's what happens when you don't execute."

### NCWC All-Conference Selections

#### First Team

QB Bo Jordan  
WR Orlando Webb  
TE Alonzo Washington  
OL Asmun Washington  
OL Anthony Moore  
DE Quinderra Spellman  
DL LeeRon Boykin  
DB Quentin Pope

#### Second Team

DB Reshard Patterson  
LB Cliff Edmunson

#### Honorable Mention

RB Stedman Mathis  
RB Antonio Harris  
LB Carlos Railey

#### Offensive Rookie of the Year

RB Stedman Mathis

#### All Sportmanship Team

OL Travis Kivett



Alonzo Washington



Asmun Washington



Anthony Moore

## Earn Your Worth in the National Football League

By Richie Fender  
Decree Sports Writer

How many people go through life hearing that they have to work their way up in the world to make more money? A lot of us have heard this all our lives and feel that when we get that good job, stay there for a while, and show our loyalty that we will be rewarded with more monetary compensation. This isn't so in the sports world. In fact for the most part, it's the opposite. I'll show you how this works in the National Football League.

The NFL allots each team a certain amount of money from its "salary cap" to sign its drafted rookies for their first season. In sports, a cap is the limit on the amount of money a team can spend on player salaries. This amount is based on an undisclosed formula that assigns a certain value to each pick in the draft. Having more picks or earlier picks will increase this allotment.

The players drafted are paid their salaries according to the order in which they were drafted. High first-round picks get paid the most, and low-round picks get paid the least. After the draft, non-drafted rookies may sign a contract with any team in the league. These rookies are considered free agents and usually do not get paid as well as drafted players. Most of these players sign for the predetermined rookie minimum and a small signing bonus.

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell commented on NFL rookie salaries in a recent interview. "It's ridiculous to reward untested rookies with lucrative contracts," he said. He wants the issue addressed in contract negotiation. He went on by saying, "There's something wrong about the system, and the money should go to people who perform."

Goodell was referring to former Michigan tackle Jake Long's five-year, \$57.75 million contract, with \$30 million guaranteed. Long was the first overall draft pick by the Miami Dolphins in this year's NFL Draft. "He doesn't have to play a down in the NFL and he already has his money. Now, with the economics where they are, if you don't evaluate that player, you can lose a significant amount of money. And that money is not going to players that are performing. It's going to a player that never makes it in the NFL. And I think that's ridiculous."

The commissioner went on to say: "As our costs increase outside of player costs, that other 40 percent squeezes the margins and just makes it financially unworkable. There has to be some more recognition of the costs." Goodell said the key is to have the NFL Players' Association understand the financial challenges that owners face with rising stadium construction costs and a suffering economy affecting ticket sales. These issues were not anticipated in the previous collective bargaining agreement so hopefully they will be addressed in the next scheduled meeting.

Goodell states that he favors lowering salaries offered to rookies while allowing a provision for those players to renegotiate their deals after proving themselves on the field. He plans to open negotiations with the players' union on a revamped labor deal this

fall while listening to concerns from all 32 owners. League owners voted unanimously to opt out of the collective bargaining agreement that was signed in spring 2006. This decision to opt out maintains labor peace through 2011. If there is no deal met by then, teams will enter the following season without a salary cap. This would allow the NFL's richer teams to use their vast resources to buy up star players while the teams without the excess resources will suffer and not be as competitive. This could affect TV ratings and ticket sales for the less competitive teams. How would this affect the team's financial longevity?

Fox Sports reported that the top ten picks in last year's draft earned a combined \$230 million of guaranteed money. During the years 2000-2005, 217 (57%) of the first- and second-round draft picks are no longer with their original team. This means the money they spent to pay these prima donna players they use up vital resources. The money spent is now outside the organization and not benefiting the original teams that forked out the cash initially.

After all that's been said, here's what I think. NFL teams pay their rookies millions to just sign without proving their worth on the field. They are instant millionaires while proven veterans get paid fractions. With team salary caps in place, this means the more money the unproven rookies make, the less money the proven veterans make.

If I were commissioner, I would devise a plan to limit rookies to a four-year contract with a stiffer salary cap for those years, paying them less. After this four-year probation period is up, every player is a free agent unless he chooses to sign a contract extension with that team. This would allow the best players to get paid and would prevent the "busts" from being paid like the best. This would also provide the opportunity of free agency for every player after four years in the league. Sports teams are businesses and should be treated as such. How many times do you see at your job that the new guy gets paid more than you? It's time for the NFL teams to protect their real investment, the team.

## Basketball Team Starts 8-1, Loses in Taylor Final

In a battle of unbeaten, the Bearcats of St. Vincent College captured the 2008 Roger Taylor Invitational Championship on Saturday, December 6, downing host North Carolina Wesleyan by a 96-87 score in Everett Gymnasium. SVC got 28 points from tourney Most Valuable Player Joey Butler to move to 6-0 on the season, while the 24th-ranked Battling Bishops are now 8-1 overall.

In the consolation game, York College (NY) turned in a 67-53 victory over Lancaster Bible College.

SVC opened up the contest with a 15-3 run over the first five minutes of play. A Lamont Stokes three-pointer cut the lead to nine at the 14:37 mark,

but the Bearcats proceeded to score the game's next eight points for a 23-6 advantage with 11:22 remaining in the period.

The two teams played on even terms for the remainder of the half with the Bearcats holding a 41-28 advantage at the break.

In the second half, two quick threes by Jarmel Arrington sandwiched an SVC bucket to cut the lead to nine at 43-34. But the Bearcats were able to pull off another crucial run, this time out-scoring the Bishops 17-5 over a five-minute span to go up 22.

Sparked by the bench play of Domarius Thomas and Buddy Williams, Wesleyan made a game of it down

the stretch. A Williams free throw made the score 64-53, capping a 15-4 NCWC run. The Bearcats maintained their double-digit lead over the next five minutes, but a Thomas lay-up followed by an Arrington three-pointer decreased the lead to seven at 78-71 with 2:43 remaining.

The two teams battled back and forth over the next two minutes until another Arrington three with 24 seconds remaining pulled the Bishops to within six at 93-87. SVC missed two free throws on its ensuing possession, but a key offensive rebound off the second miss proved to be critical as the Bearcats went on to knock down 3-of-4 free throws the rest of the way.

Now let's head West, starting with the Western Conference Champion Los Angeles Lakers and their play so far this season.

With their first four regular season games against Portland, LA Clippers, Denver and the Clippers again, I didn't think it would be difficult for the Lakers to jump out to a quick start. It wasn't, as the team won its first seven games. Adding Sue Ying, the second biggest phenom to emerge from China, to their roster will only help to boost the Lakers this year. Pau Gasol gained some great experience over the summer playing for the Spanish National Team in the Olympics. Then there's the leadership that teammate Kobe Bryant showed on the U.S. Team.

As for my second favorite team in the league, the Dallas Mavericks, I'm still reeling from the first-round loss to the Golden State Warriors a few seasons back. And it seemed that last season the Mavs were still reeling as well. The addition of All-Star Veteran Jason Kidd did boost the excitement for the team's fans, but with the play last season it doesn't seem like they're ready for the success they are capable of accomplishing. With Jerry Stackhouse and Kidd in their 13th and 14th seasons and Dirk Nowitzki not getting any younger, it seems like the time is now for the Mavs to become champions of the NBA.

On to Number One...in my mind at least, The New Orleans Hornets.

I like to refer to them as Chris Paul and the New Orleans Hornets, kinda like David Ruffin and the Temptations.

I'm sure the presence of David West and Tyson Chandler will be felt just as much this season as it was last year. Paul, the newly crowned Olympic gold medalist and runner-up for last year's MVP, will again show why he is the best point guard in the league and why he should be the 08-09 MVP. Hopefully, this play will take the Hornets to the finals.

Side note: With the bench play of James Posey, the Miami Heat and the Boston Celtics won championships; he is now signed with the New Orleans Hornets....hint hint.

## Editor Reflects on NBA

By Jade Johnson  
Decree Sports Editor

With most fans still riding the wave of excitement from last season, especially in Boston, it's hard to believe that its time for a new season.

The 2008-2009 NBA season has gotten started and I think that for most teams the play has been well worth the summer wait.

There are so many teams and players to watch out for this season.

The new season also means saying goodbye to the Seattle Supersonics and hello to the Oklahoma City Thunder. The citizens of Oklahoma City came out in record numbers when the N.O. Hornets were in town for two seasons, so they made and won their bid when the Sonics were put up for sale.

Now as far as my picks for top teams, we'll start with the defending champion Boston Celtics, who will be paced again by their big three: Ray Allen, Kevin Garnett and Paul Pierce. With their first regular season game against the Cleveland Cavaliers, I expected LeBron and company to attempt to seek revenge from last year's Eastern Conference Semifinals.

But the Cavs fell short, again, losing 90-85.

One of my hopes for this season is that #2 draft pick Michael Beasley will light a fire under the Miami Heat and they will again show some of the domination in the East that they had when Shaq was in town. With the energy that Beasley brings to the court and the motivation that Dwyane Wade received after winning gold in Beijing, Miami is well equipped to fare better than 15-67 this season. Maybe even a playoff berth?

The Chicago Bulls have a new coach, Vinny Del Negro, and the #1 draft pick from the University of Memphis, Derrick Rose. The Bulls should be a force, even if just a small one, in the East this season. Failure to reach a long-term contract agreement only guarantees that Ben Gordon will be in a Chicago uniform for the next year. I suspect that either the Bulls will perform better than 33-49 or Gordon will be out the door for the 09-10 campaign.

For the Bishops, Arrington and Trey Drake each netted 21 points. Thomas finished with 15 points and eight rebounds to pick up his first All-Tournament award, and Williams joined him after recording 10 points and five rebounds.

The previous day, St. Vincent advanced with a 82-66 win over York, while Wesleyan took a 96-87 victory over LBC.

(Article courtesy of Sports Information)