

Sports

Bishops Beaten by Christopher Newport, Win 3

By Jarad Brown

Decree Senior Editor

Bulletin: The Bishops kept their hopes alive for an NCAA playoff berth by drubbing Shenandoah, 38-0, on the road Saturday.

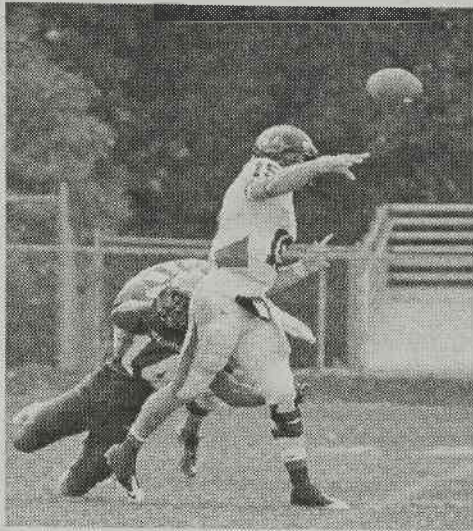
North Carolina Wesleyan's football team entered its October 16th matchup against USA-South rival Christopher Newport University with a 2-0 record in conference play.

After this crucial meeting, the Bishops' record should have read 3-1 in the USA-South.

No, NCWC and the Captains didn't play a double-header on that Saturday, but the Bishops did turn the ball over on five separate occasions to effectively defeat themselves in the 23-15 home loss.

"You never expect to turn the thing over," Bishops coach Mark Henninger said. "People are going to look at it and say, well, you're young. With the exception of Terron (Bush's fumble) down here on the hit, all the turnovers were by freshmen. It's inexcusable to not take care of the football. We didn't deserve to win the game. They outplayed us, and that's disappointing."

The hit Henninger referenced came late in the second quarter when NCWC had driven to the Captains 2-yard line before Bush coughed up the



Linebacker Antonio Harris was named to D3football.com's team of the week after the Maryville game.

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football. The senior took a handoff up the middle and looked for room off the right side, but was met by a Christopher Newport linebacker who applied a perfect form tackle and forced the ball to spill out of Bush's control.

The other four turnovers came compliments of a pair of fumbles and an interception by freshman quarterback Jordan Vann along with a fumble by freshman tight end Will Beasley.

Despite the poor performance the Bishops controlled possession with just 34 seconds remaining in the contest and trailed by a mere eight points (23-15). Hopes of a miracle comeback and forced overtime were put to rest, though, when Vann watched his final pass of the day tipped and then fall innocently to the turf.

"Our league, I think it's down from what it has been, but at the same time, it's top-to-bottom competitive," Henninger said. "I told these guys that hope is not lost. You'd like to think that if we win out, we have a pretty good chance of winning (the league), but our path to attain that goal just got a heck of a lot harder."

Prior to the Bishops encounter with the Captains, NCWC had won 11 consecutive USA-South Conference games dating back to a loss to Christopher Newport in the 2008 season.

Since the October 16th meeting, the Bishops have pieced together a new conference winning streak. Though not nearly as impressive, the back-to-back victories against Maryville College and

Methodist University are a start.

Playing on the road, the Bishops overcame a seven-point first-quarter deficit to earn the first victory at Maryville in school history.

Several upperclassmen on the team were quoted as saying "It was nice to finally, finally get that win. We owed them that one."

NCWC scored 17 second-quarter points to own a 20-13 lead at the break and then outscored the Scots by 11 points in the second half to claim the 34-16 victory.

The Bishops quickly followed their milestone victory with one that is seemingly an every season affair.

NCWC welcomed Methodist to Death Valley stadium on the campus of Northern Nash High School and for the third time in four years defeated the Pride by at least 40 points.

Wesleyan seized a 35-0 lead in the first quarter and coasted to a 56-6 rout of the Monarchs, which included five forced turnovers (two interceptions, three fumbles).

Due to the Bishops newly established winning streak, and losses by Averett University and Ferrum College, NCWC sits atop the USA-South in a tie with Christopher Newport. The Bishops could earn a share of the conference crown by winning out the remainder of their schedule, but need the Captains to lose one of their two remaining games to capture the conference's automatic playoff birth.

Volleyball Team Enters Tourney on Strong Note

By Bristy Parker

Decree Staff Writer

Bulletin: The Bishops were shut out by CNU, 3-0, in the USA South title game on Saturday.

The team finished with an overall record of 24-11.

With a roaring home crowd, the Bishops volleyball team avenged an earlier loss to Greensboro College on Saturday, October 23 with a 3-1 (25-17, 23-25, 25-19 and 25-16) win over the Pride as it finished regular season action in a second-place tie in the USA South Conference.

The Everett Gymnasium was filled with spirited students and proud parents on hand to honor the senior members of the team—Alyssa Balzano, Barbara DeRatt, and Kelly George—for Senior Day.

Against the Pride, Anna Hart tallied a team-high 14 kills and four blocks, while sophomore Meredith Smith added 13 kills and DeRatt nine. Mackenzie Tingle dished out 28 assists, and George added 24 more digs to her record-setting career total.

The Greensboro win raised the Bishops' overall record to 22-10 and conference mark to 14-4. Two conference losses were to Christopher Newport, a third was to Methodist, and the fourth was to Greensboro on September 18.

Prior to the last Greensboro match, the Bishops took a straight-set win over Mary Baldwin College (25-11, 25-13 and 25-22).

DeRatt led the way with 11 kills and Balzano had five. Along with George, Hart displayed strong defense throughout the game. The team closed out the rallies and hustled for every ball. DeRatt made a kill on the 24th point and Kristi Lucas followed with a block to win the last point in the last game against Mary Baldwin.

The team has not fared as well against perennial nemesis, Christopher Newport. The Bishops have lost both times it has faced the Captains, losing the most recent match 3-0. Team members don't feel as if CNU is better than them, but "their game is just faster—the speed of the passing and their setting," said Smith.

George feels that CNU has an advantage because their team is intact from last year. "They didn't lose a single player from their team, so their chemistry is really good," she said. She also gave props to CNU's coach, Lindsay Birch, saying, "She

really knows her stuff."

Lucas doesn't believe it's because CNU's team is more athletic or possesses a physical advantage. And she doesn't think the Bishops have a mental block. "We can win," she said. "We just have to make fewer mistakes."

Smith agreed. "They keep the ball away from Kelly (George), which hurts us defensively," she said. "If we eliminate the mistakes, we'd be right there with them."

Team members have expressed high hopes for a possible rematch in the conference tournament. "We have one more chance to prove ourselves," Leann Breeden said, "and I know we can do it."

Smith has a simple plan, "Don't let CNU get runs on us, or beat us because of our own mistakes."

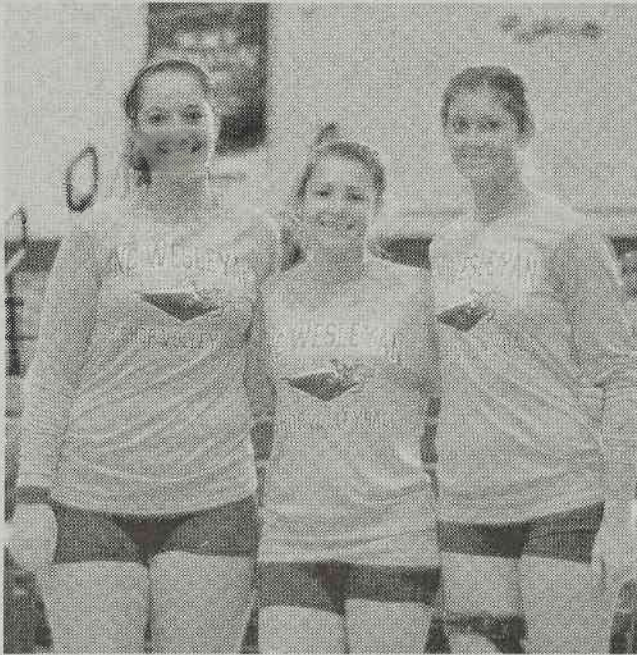
Besides finishing a strong second in the conference, the Bishops achieved a milestone last month by taking the Worthington Classic tournament at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.

In their first-ever tournament appearance, the team proved itself worthy as they took on Emory and Henry, Catholic University, Penn St. Behrend and Gallaudet.

On Friday, October 8th, the Bishops got off to a good start, taking all three games against Catholic (25-23, 25-19, 25-23).

Going into the second game that night, NCWC carried Penn St. Behrend to five games, but fell short 3-2 (20-25, 17-25, 25-23, 10-25, 15-12).

"Penn St. was a scrappy team, better than I thought," said Coach Robin Pietryk. "In the first and second games, we couldn't find the holes on the floor, and Penn St. didn't miss a beat. But we just kept looking for the gaps and did the same thing they did: picked the ball up and threw it right back at them. We fought hard. We just couldn't seem to finish it."



Three seniors—Alyssa Balzano, Kelly George and Barbara DeRatt—were recognized in the final home contest.

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Saturday morning, the Bishops rebounded to beat Emory and Henry 3-1 (25-7, 17-25, 25-19), putting them in position for championship play.

It was now down to NC Wesleyan and Gallaudet University. Pietryk knew that "The girls had just a good as shot as anyone else. We went in there to play and have fun, and not put pressure on ourselves."

That they did, and the outcome was a 3-1 championship win over Gallaudet (25-14, 25-18, 26-28, 25-11).

"What worked best for us that weekend is that we played big," Pietryk said. "Outside hitters

stepped up and played well. The progress we've made in our offense was also a part of our success."

Tingle noted that the Bishops faced several teams it had not played in the past. "That was a challenge—not knowing their style of play," she said. "On top of that, they were all competitive teams, so I think we all learned by this victory that our team is capable of great things, no matter who the team is."

DeRatt agreed with Tingle. "For this tournament, we didn't know much about the teams we were playing in our pool," she said. "So, we just practiced our hardest and expected a challenge. We knew we were good enough to play in the championship game, so we just took every game win in stride to reach our goal. When we got to that point, we knew how Gallaudet played and took advantage of that. We wanted that win, so we came together as a team in every aspect to make that a reality."

As the Bishops proved themselves that weekend, it was clear that they had what the other teams didn't: a strong defense.

"All year I think the key to our team has been a strong defense," Pietryk said. "We pick up balls that other teams don't get to. We have great front row play."

NCWC libero George was selected the tournament's MVP. Along the way, she became Wesleyan's all-time leader in digs, when she tallied the 2,002 of her four-year career. Middle hitter Smith was named all-tournament.

"It was hard to pull out individuals, because it was a team effort," said Pietryk, citing the outstanding play of Shana Ayers, Rebecca Sabo and DeRatt.

"Sabo and DeRatt played great outside," said Pietryk. "And Shana Ayers had huge serves against Emory and Henry."

The team was proud of its first-ever tournament win. "It's a big accomplishment," said Smith. "Playing different teams allowed us to be versatile and keep fighting."

George was pleased with the number of come-from-behind victories, even after deficits of five or more points. "That weekend showed us that when our team is faced with a challenge we can come together and do what needs to be done," she said.

Even with this big win, Breeden knows there is still room for improvement. "We need to get more runs—keep the lead and not lose the momentum," she said.

Added Pietryk, "We can improve as individuals. Hitters can work on timing, we can communicate more in the game, we can improve our consistency, and we can always get better offensively."

Sports Pundits Consider Miami 'Threet,' Upcoming NBA Season

By Joshua Meeks & Kevin Quicker

Decree Sports Writers

JM: The NBA season is upon on us and I don't think there is any bigger news than the renewed championship hopes in Cleveland—or maybe not.

KQ: Really, coming off the best record in the NBA last season, that's gotta mean something, right?

JM: Wait. Wasn't there some hour-and-a-half special on ESPN this summer about some guy leaving Cleveland?

KQ: Oh, right. LeBron James is taking his talents to South Beach. How do you think that move is going to shake up the East this year?

JM: Oh, yeah. He and Chris Bosh are teaming up with D Wade down in Miami to make the Miami Threet. Most people think they're the sure-fire favorites to win it all let alone the East. I'm not ready to buy it yet, though. I'm not even sure if they will win their own division.

KQ: Yeah, the Orlando Magic will always be a tough test with the defensive player of the year (Dwight Howard) who has seemed to win it ever since he was drafted out of high school. But I think

this makes the Heat the team to beat in the East. When you have three All-stars on the same team, plus three great friends who've had the experience of playing with each other on the U.S. Olympic team, I think that equals the number one team in the East. But I don't want to get ahead of myself. Look at what best friend Chad Ochocinco and Terrell Owens are doing with the Bengals.

JM: Don't want to get ahead of yourself? Don't you think that this team of three superstars and nine bums are gonna win the whole thing?

KQ: I actually do. They do have some players to go along with them. They have veterans such as Zydrunas Ilgauskas, Jerry Stackhouse, Udonis Haslem, and a great outside shooter in Mike Miller who can spread the floor for the Heat. At the point, they also have Mario Chalmers, who looks to rebound after a less than impressive sophomore year in the NBA. I think LeBron, Bosh and Wade will make all these players around them better.

JM: I think you're insane if you think that those guys will be able to step up. You have two championships combined on the entire team and that's with Haslem and Wade when they won together in 2006. Chris Bosh has never won

ANYTHING. There are so many questions with this team and the biggest one is how are they going to work together? With basketball, you have to have an alpha dog to take the last shot. That's why Kobe and Shaq were finished after they lost to the Pistons. Both were alpha dogs and Kobe wasn't the sidekick anymore. Now you have two of the top three players in the league on the same team. How many times is Wade or LeBron going to take the last shot before the other wants the spotlight? And where are the stops going to come from? Sure, Wade and LeBron are great individual defenders but collectively they have no team defense.

KQ: I think they'll be able to score at will this year. So however many points their opponent puts up, the Heat will put up more. And when ESPN interviewed Coach K, the Olympic team's coach, about whether these guys can work together this year, he said they will have no problem doing so. LeBron and D-Wade are very unselfish people, LeBron with 7.6 assists and Wade with 6.5 assists last year. And then you have Bosh who averaged a double-double last year with points and rebounds. I don't see these guys having a hard time working together. They have a high enough basketball IQ to work things out. So I have this feeling you don't think the Heat will win the East. Who is your front runner to represent the East in the NBA finals?

JM: I think there's a possibility they may even finish third if Boston can stay healthy and fight the

cobwebs from setting in and if Dwight Howard can turn into the offensive force he has the potential to become. Dwight went to Hakeem Olajuwon's Big Man Basketball Camp, the same camp that Kobe attended last summer to transform himself into a low-post beast. If Dwight has even close to the success Kobe did, even the Lakers may have a real problem with the Magic.

KQ: Yeah, I'll agree with you there. Hopefully, Hakeem taught Dwight how not to be so strong and not get so many offensive fouls by running people over. And I hear Garnett is feeling better than ever so the "Big Three Plus One" of the Celtics are looking to get back to the finals. Shaq can also help them out on the offensive side of the ball, something Kendrick Perkins cannot do. But another team I like in the East is the Chicago Bulls. I think they'll make the biggest jump this year. They have one of the most athletic and explosive point guards in the NBA in Derrick Rose, who is only going to get better. Then they went out and got a great player in Carlos Boozer who will work well with one of the hardest-working centers in the league, Joakim Noah. Add Luol Deng who averaged almost 18 points a game last year, and I see them doing big things if they can stay healthy all year.

JM: So if being the fourth seed in the East is

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