



SPORTING NEWS

By Jeff McLeod

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association will celebrate its Diamond Anniversary in football beginning this weekend.

All of the teams in the CIAA Southern Division begin their seasons today. Savannah State of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) visits the Broncos of Fayetteville State. Defending Southern Division champion Winston Salem State visits last year's cellar dweller Bowie State. Livingstone will try to stop the aerial assault of Earl "Air" Harvey as they visit North Carolina Central. Johnson C. Smith travels across the state to meet Elizabeth City State.

Although the CIAA is a talent-laden conference, the spotlight will focus on NCCU's Earl Harvey. The junior from Fayetteville's Douglas Byrd High School has passed for well over 5,000 yards in his career but his heroics haven't been enough to stop Winston-Salem from walking away with the gold.

The division kingpin, WSSU once again gets the nod to win the Southern Division title. Four years running, the Rams have won the Southern Division but they have never defeated the Northern Division's representative to win the CIAA championship outright. If Winston-Salem has another banner season this year, it won't be helped by a schedule that includes N.C. A&T, defending CIAA champ Virginia Union, Norfolk State, N.C. Central and former national champion Central State (Ohio).

Earl Harvey is the big man on the NCCU campus but the big question this year is whether the Eagles will get a ground game to support the man with the golden arm. The answer to that question could mean the difference in a championship. In losses to A&T, Grambling and Winston-Salem, the vaunted "Air" Harvey never took off.

This season Harvey will lead his offense against the best of the MEAC in N.C. A&T and Howard for openers. A ticket on "Air" Harvey is an uncertain trip though; he only connected on 45 percent of his passes last season.

Who gets excited over a 4-6 record? Johnson C. Smith did and most of that talent returns this season. Sprits are high this year at the Charlotte campus because the Golden Bulls returned to respectability last year with only narrow defeats to Winston-Salem and N.C. Central keeping them away from CIAA gold.

Fayetteville State has had two disappointing seasons under Robert Pulliam but the Broncos hope to see the light at the end of the tunnel with 13 returning starters and a fine class of recruits. If the Broncos can avoid the injury bug, which haunted them all last season, they are poised to break .500 for the first time in years.

Bowie State is on one of the longest downhill rides in NCAA history as their losing streak is well into the thirties. But with 20 returning starters, the Bulldogs hope to end that skid in '87.

With the hiring of a new coach, renewed hopes and dreams come to Salisbury in the person of William Spencer. The new Livingstone coach, a former Bronco assistant, has his job ahead of him since an immediate overhaul is needed for the Bears to climb out of the division cellar.



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