

Broncos struggle below .500

By Quinton Graham
Sports Editor

Fayetteville State University men's basketball team has been on shaky ground in their past two games against the Panthers of Virginia Union whom they played last Thursday and Saturday's game against the Winston-Salem State University Rams.

More than half way through the season the Broncos find themselves with a 7-8 record, 3-4 in conference play. But if you compare last year's first 15 games with this year, the record is a big improvement, with the addition to the Broncos having a very young team.

The night started out slow for the Broncos last Thursday with an early turnover and four quick baskets by Virginia Union the Broncos found themselves down 11-0, with only four minutes played in the first half.

The Broncos first points came on a three-pointer from Andre Best with 15:17 left to play in the first half. Lenton Donnell gave the Broncos their second basket with 13:20 remaining in the first half.

Due to early foul trouble the Broncos found themselves in the penalty, which left the Panthers to shoot fouls shots for the remainder of half. Towards the end of the first half the Broncos began to pick it up, with stellar defense and three-point shooting from senior Ariel Robinson the Broncos fought their way back into the game.

Going into the locker at the half the Broncos found themselves down by 5, 29-34. Ariel Robinson led the Broncos with 8 at the half.

Sloppy play is what came out of the locker room with turnovers by the Broncos and precise shooting from the Panthers. The Broncos were down by ten early in the second half.

Due to a horrific night from the foul line and shooting from the field the Broncos found themselves down by as many as 23 in the second half. Also, thanks to some outstanding play from Virginia Union's Braxton Byerson who scored 36 points and grabbed a game high 16 rebounds, the Broncos was never able to regain consciousness and ultimately lost to the Panthers 78-66.

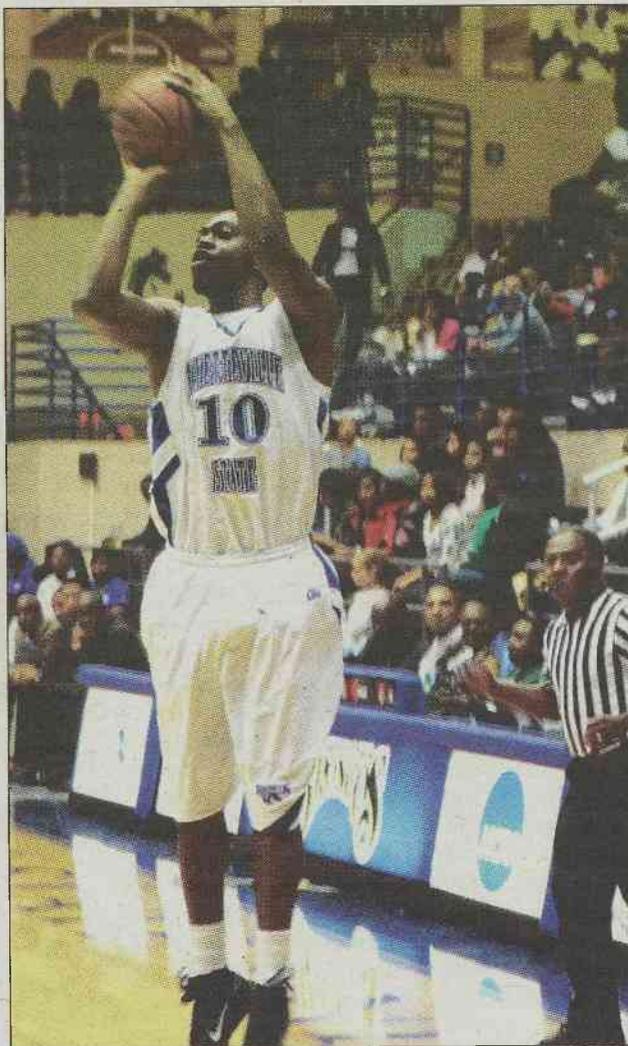


photo by Dea Spicer

Ariel Robinson hits a 3 pointer en route to a Bronco win (74-59) against the Lincoln (PA) Lions recently.

The Broncos were led in scoring against Virginia Union last Thursday by Devin Thompson who had 16. Mr. Robinson added 8, all of which he scored in the first half, after leaving with what looked to be an ankle injury.

Last Thursday the Lady Broncos won 76-63 against Virginia Union. LaQuasha Jordan led the Broncos with 21 points.

The Broncos also took the floor again Saturday against rivals, the Winston-Salem State Rams.

The game started out well for the Broncos with excellent defense and shooting the Broncos found themselves with a 10-point advantage, leading 14-4 early in the first half. But a 17-8 run by the Rams brought them within a point with 12:47 left to play in the first half.

The Broncos came out with something to prove last Saturday, everything seemed to be going well in the first half, with contributions from all the Broncos they looked like a fine tuned machine. And the score at the half was 34-31.

The second half proved to be very different for the Broncos. The Broncos came out sluggish and over the next 10 minutes, WSSU used tenacious defense and precision to gain control of a game in which they had fell behind by as many as 10 points early.

The Rams scored 22 over the next 10 minutes to take an 11-point lead, 64-53, with just over six minutes left.

The Broncos made some valiant efforts to get back in the game and at one point brought the game within 6 points in the second half, but with fatigue setting in the Rams made another push and the lead grew to 14 making the game ending score 76-62.

Tim Plummer led the Broncos in scoring with a season high 22 points.

Midway through the season the Broncos find themselves at 7-8 with 11 games left to play.

The leading scorer for the Broncos is Ariel Robinson with a 12.1 pt avg. per game. The leading rebounder is Sidney Evans averaging 7.5 a game. Leading assist man is Andre Best with 4.5 a game. Leader in steals is Tim Plummer with 1.7 a game.

The next game is tonight at home against Virginia State. Tipoff is at 7:30 p.m.

5 things to keep you in the sports loop

1. Auburn #1

Destroying their opponents all season long, the Auburn Tigers took home the Tostitos BCS National Championship trophy. They played the number two ranked, Oregon Ducks and won 22-19. Not only did they go undefeated, but their quarterback, Cam Newton took home the coveted Heisman Award after much controversy this season. The overall game for a lot of viewers was an offensive let down, with neither teams scoring over 30 points. It was more about great defensive plays and trying to slow down the opponent. Well, as they say, "Offense sells tickets, defense wins games."

2. They're already calling it a classic Super Bowl

The Green Bay Packers and Pittsburgh Steelers have both clinched spots in Super Bowl XLV to be held in Dallas on Feb. 6. For the Steelers, this is their third AFC Championship in six seasons. For Green Bay (without Favre), this will be their fifth Super Bowl. Will this game live up to the instant hype, or will it be a dud? Stay tuned for more. And don't forget the commercials.

3. NBA Standings

If you couldn't have guessed it, the Boston Celtics are leading the Eastern Division 33-10, with

the Miami Heats in second place. Though many see the Heats as Duane Wade's team, LeBron James is leading the team in points, assists and steals. In the West, the San Antonio Spurs are leading 37-7. Yet, the most interesting story of this NBA season (besides the Heats Christmas win against the Lakers), is the leagues free agents. Nuggets small forward, Carmelo Anthony, is going back in forth with different teams to see where he will play next season. As long as it's not the Sacramento Kings, who are on the list for lowest player salaries.

4. Tiger Woods drops his lowest in Ranking

Tiger Woods dropped to number three in the Official World Golf Rankings on Jan. 23.

The Abu Dhabi Golf Championship winner was Martin Kaymer, who now holds the number two spot. Golf fans are amazed that this is the first time in a long time (Pre-Tiger Era) since there were two Europeans holding the top two spots. Lee Westwood of the United Kingdom is currently ranked number one.

5. Shaq Overseas?

The question fans would like to know is will NBA's proclaimed "Superman" going overseas next season. As the leagues oldest active

player, Shaquille O'Neal has had a great career, winning such titles as Rookie of the Year and MVP. Not to mention, that he has been a part of many successful teams and won several NBA Championships. His stint on the Boston Celtics has many critics wondering whether he can still play with the young guys, especially since he missed ten games this season due to injuries. Despite rumors, O'Neal says that he is sure he will find a NBA team to go to for next year. If not, he could possibly be joining former NBA star, Allen Iverson, who has signed a two year deal to play in Istanbul, Turkey.

~ Charnell Harris