

The Firm's reign comes to an end

◆ Guest writer Greg Paylor gives an inside look at this year's intramural basketball season

BY GREG PAYLOR
Guest Writer

Ah, the race for number one!

At the beginning of the intramural season, the Firm, as always, was the front-runner in a long line of contenders. Chocolate City, in its first year of existence, last year had reached the championship game, only to be defeated by the Firm. The City, though, had made the significant additions of Tim Wooten and Nick Glenn.

The Pines, also, were significant competitors. The Pines had won three consecutive tournaments going into this year, but there were many questions of the Pines' ability to play a full court game. These questions would be answered quickly. From there it was a battle not to be the worst in the league: the very physical Vipers were followed by the over-achieving Finberg, the inexperienced Young Guns, and the lovable loser Tigers.

The regular season followed many of the preseason assessments. The Firm demolished the competition, winning by an average margin of 25 points per game. Chocolate City did not quite live up to expectations. They earned a 4-1 record heading into the season finale with the Firm. Arguments over playing time and shot attempts were tearing down Chocolate City from within.

The Pines, meanwhile, gave Chocolate City its only loss and was poised to take the second spot in the regular season standings. Unfortunately, schedule conflicts cost the Pines some key players in key games. An 11-point loss to Finberg removed the Pines from top place contention and salvaged Finberg's season

at 3-3. The biggest surprise of the regular season was the ability of the Vipers to be competitive. A team full of football offensive linemen and a few linebackers went 3-3 in the regular season and finished forth overall.

The regular season title came down to the Firm versus Chocolate City. The Firm had been destroying its opposition, while Chocolate City had just been sneaking by, so many expected a blowout. The Firm took an early lead 6-5, but a three-point shot by Greg Paylor sparked a big Chocolate City run, and the Firm never recovered. Chocolate City took the regular season title in only their second season, and the Firm lost for the first time in four years.

With the release of the tournament bracket, viewers were expecting the Firm versus Chocolate City II and possibly III, starring Keanu Reeves as Chocolate City player Greg Paylor. Both Chocolate City and the Firm were looking forward to this rematch and forgot about their first round opponents, who both beat them. The Firm was man-handled by the Pines, thanks to the great efforts of the Caruso twins and Paul Ferrell. Meanwhile, Chocolate City lost to a focused Finberg team by one point in overtime at the hands of a ten foot jumper by Sean Tapley. Jamaal Murphy also added his first career triple double, scoring 12 points, grabbing 10 rebounds, and getting 11 assists.

This led to a heated do-or-die match between Chocolate City and the Firm. Chocolate City got off to a great start

and led by as many as 16 in the first half. Due to the intense physical defense by Barrett Wiley and Junior Lord, the Firm took a two-point lead, only to be removed by a 15 foot jump shot by Tim Wooten eight seconds later. From there, Chocolate City went on to win by four points. The win moved Chocolate City's franchise

mark against the Firm to 3-1. This also set up a rematch to avenge their opening round loss to Finberg.

The championship, then, was to be decided by two games. Due to the Pines' withdrawal from the tournament, Finberg had not played since its opening round victory. This game was intensified by remarks made by point-guard Jamaal Murphy, who had left Chocolate City for Finberg the year before. When asked why he left, Murphy responded, "I want to play for a real contender. Someone who can win the big game." He should have stayed

with his old team.

In game one, Chocolate City seized the momentum and never let go. Collie Bryant and Tim Wooten put on a 3-point shooting clinic to put Finberg far behind. Wesley Elam tried to keep his team in the game with low post dominance but it did not work. Chocolate City won the first game, 50-34.

Game two was very similar. The early advantage was taken by Chocolate City, but costly turnovers and errors let Finberg back in the game. With 1:48 remaining, the game was tied. In the end, clutch free throw shooting, which had been the Achilles heel of the team, lifted Chocolate City to a 24-20 victory and its first Championship.

Jamaal Murphy was held to five points total in both games thanks to the dynamic duo of Jimmy LaMour and Dwayne Cherry.

This was a great year for intramural basketball. It proved that anyone can get a team and win with that team. It also put an end to the three-year dominance by the Firm.

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Cubs not the same without Caray

BY ADAM LUCAS
Editor-in-Chief

OK, so he occasionally mispronounced a name.

Didn't he make up for it the time you heard him attempt to spell "Andres Galarraga" backwards?

It seems that everyone has a story about former Cubs, White Sox, and Cardinals announcer Harry Caray, who died in late February.

There was the time he called a Ryne Sandberg at-bat in this fashion: "Sandberg hits a towering drive, it's going to be out of here, it could be, it might be, ahhhh, it's caught by the shortstop."

I've never known Chicago Cubs baseball without Harry. In fact, he's solely responsible for converting me to the

Cubs. During those lazy summers without school while I tuned in to WGN I may not have known any of the players, but I certainly recognized the gravelly-voiced play-by-play announcer.

During a time when baseball needs all the help it can get, the loss of Caray is a major blow. The venerable announcer made it a habit of signing autographs for free while players held out for \$50 per signature.

By the way, it's "Agarralag Serdna," and writing it just doesn't do justice to his pronunciation.

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