

# Rams lose two, win one

From Page B1

In Virginia Union, Gaines said, the Rams faced one of the finer teams in Division II and needed to be at the top of their game.

"You just can't afford to give the ball to the other team," said Gaines. "Most scoring in basketball comes off mistakes. Virginia Union is one of the top teams in the country and we certainly can't give the ball away."

Now that the Rams have faced some of the tougher teams on their schedule, Gaines said he thinks his team will have time to regroup for the second half of the season when it will face teams within the CIAA Southern Division.

"We've played four teams out of the Northern Division and split with the two toughest teams," said Hayes. "Now we've got to get our guns together for Norfolk State (Friday night in the C.E. Gaines Complex).

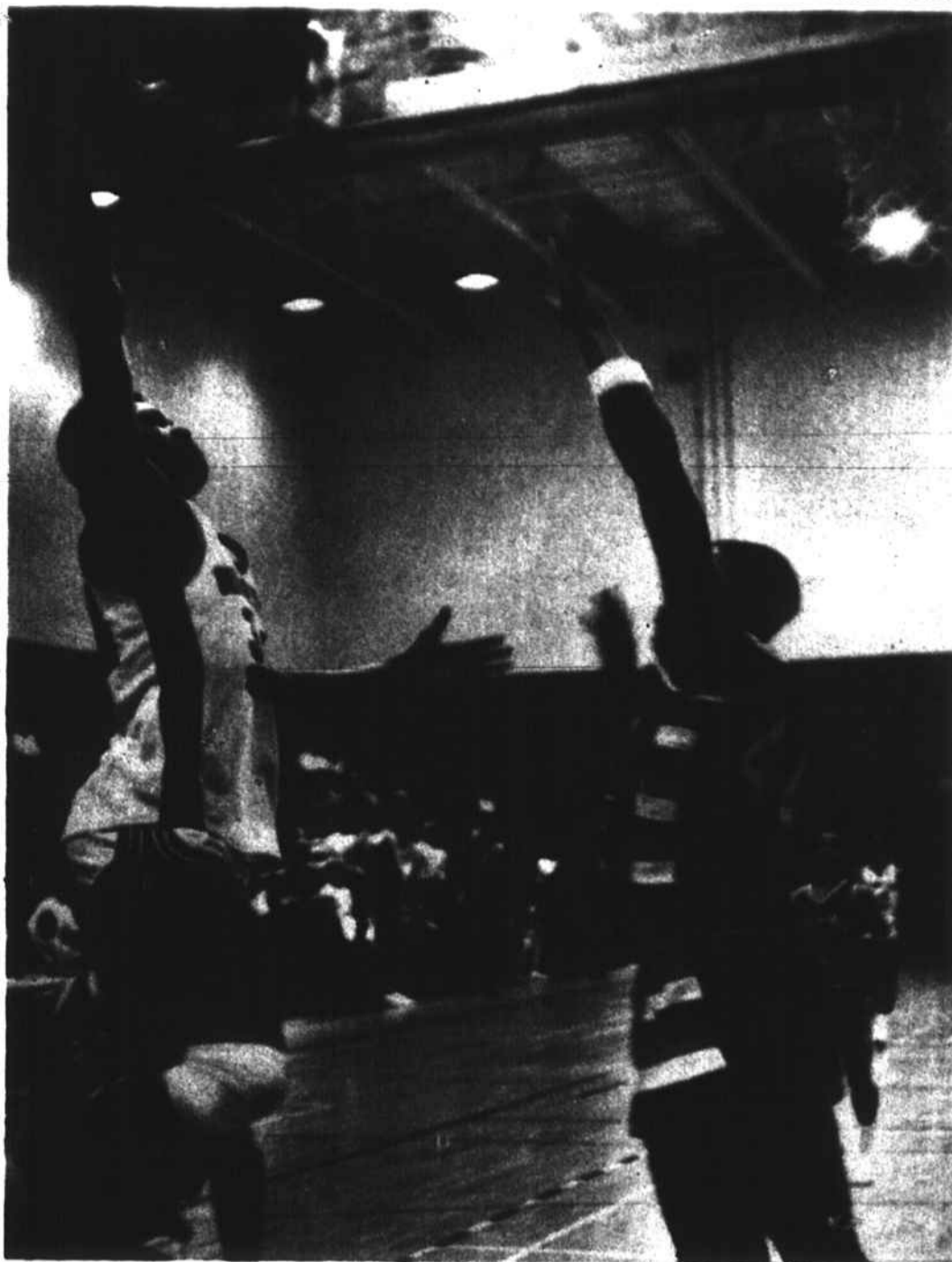
"Last year this time, we had only lost one game," said Gaines, "so we're running behind schedule. But we're looking forward to the second half of the season when we come back from Christmas break."

Gaines is still experimenting with the Ram starting lineup and said he'll make more changes in the confrontation with Norfolk.

"We'll show a new look again this week," he said. "We'll use two guards and get more big people inside. So far it doesn't look like our kids want to go to the boards, so we'll try to get another big man in the game."

Though last week was disappointing to Gaines, he said he did see some encouraging signs.

"(Eugene) Pennick shot the ball well against Virginia Union," said Gaines of Pennick's 16-point outburst on 8-11 shooting from the field.



Kevin "Cadillac" Vaughn of Winston-Salem State goes strong to the hoop against Virginia State. Vaughn had 19 points in the Rams' 80-78 loss (photo by James Parker).

"We need his shooting to get us going."

Freshman center Gary Cromartie didn't have much of an impact in the Rams' loss to Virginia Union, but Gaines said Cromartie is coming along well.

"Cromartie is in better shape than I thought he'd be after his long layoff with an injury," said Gaines. "We really need his size

inside."

The Rams have all week to prepare for Norfolk and Gaines said he'll drill his players on fundamentals so they can be sharp Friday night.

"It's the last game before the break and we need to play well so we'll go into the second half of the season on a good note," he said.

## Inside Stuff

# Duke proves its mettle early

By DICK DeVENZIO  
Syndicated Columnist

Duke's first ACC test has come and gone, and some experts have said the Blue Devils don't deserve to be ranked No. 4. I don't agree.

The impressive thing about Duke is its sticky man-to-man defense. It's not easy for any team to mount a consistent attack when it has great difficulty just passing the ball from one player to another.

Virginia, for example, threw more than 50 perimeter passes that just barely arrived, passes that were nearly touched by Duke defenders. On the other hand, Duke had very few of those same kinds of passes. Sometimes a statistic like this is misleading -- if one team is playing a packed-in zone while the other is pressuring in a man-to-man. But, in the Duke-Virginia game, for much of the time, both were playing the same man defense. The difference was simply that Duke can apply a lot more pressure in that defense than Virginia.

The lack of a center, still cited as Duke's big drawback, is not one. Beef equals inches. Beef means bulk, size, width, strength -- whatever you want to call it. A team with a thin, 6-11 center will be no match for Duke.

This was obvious in the St. Louis game, Duke's opener. St. Louis had a tall, talented center who showed in warmups that he could leap and touch a spot on the backboard well above the painted box. He slam-dunked the first basket of the game, but after that, he was pretty silent. The bulky, muscular Bilas beat him up inside and neutralized his height.

Did you notice Bilas' slam dunks against Virginia? Almost anyone can slam dunk on fast breaks, but it takes a special athlete to get one in traffic, with a lot of people around. Bilas got a couple of them -- on plays where last year he would have stopped, pump-faked three times and probably had the ball stuffed back in his face. Bilas is a tremendous force inside now.

Duke, in my opinion, has only one problem -- too much balance, too many good scorers. This sounds like a plus, but in basketball it often is not. Usually a couple of good scorers, one inside and one out, are what a team needs. They take most of the shots, or they create opportunities for the other three when they have the ball. At Duke, the constant danger is that someone is going to shoot too soon, before a good opportunity presents itself.

Although Duke could do what it wanted on offense, while Virginia had to struggle just to complete passes, Duke still took more bad shots -- poor-percentage shots -- than Virginia. (My count was 17-15.)

When the game goes along and Alarie suddenly realizes that he hasn't shot for awhile, he throws up a quick one from outside. He did that five times against Virginia. Johnny Dawkins, who I think led

the ACC in bad shots last year, does the same.

With Meagher playing confidently, and Bilas a big threat now, too, each player realizes that someone is going to shoot soon. If a tough competitor wants to get his team two points (and the Duke players ARE tough competitors), he better do it now, because the others aren't likely to wait.

Even Tommy Amaker, a great steadying influence on the team who generally shoots only a few times a game, often takes bad shots. You can see his mind work -- "It's time I take some offensive initiative" -- and off he goes, usually deciding to shoot a more difficult shot than he has already passed up several times.

Against most teams, most of this won't matter. The Duke defense and ability will simply be too much for opponents. But against the nation's best -- and against N.C. State (which is certainly one of those) -- a more careful shot selection will be required.

A PREDICTION FOR UNC-WAKE FOREST -- For you betting fans, put the ranch on the Tar Heels on Saturday. The big-timers will think Wake at home should be tough. But Wake is much too small for the Heels. Brad Daugherty could get 40 points inside.

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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