

Eagles

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"When Battle comes to play we're pretty good," Turner said. "We have to ask a lot from him and he has to play a lot of minutes and do a lot of different things."

In the first half, Battle elevated above several Carver defenders to loft silky-smooth jumpers. When he wasn't pulling up for his jumper he was driving in for layups or median-range shots in the lane.

In the second half, Carver came up closer to defend Battle and he was able to penetrate and dish off to his teammates for shots close to the basket.

That was especially true in the decisive fourth quarter when he found Maurice Evans and John Wilson open deep in the Yellow-

jackets perimeter.

Evans scored six of his eight points in the final period and Wilson added three.

"Maurice stepped up and did a good job for us," Turner said. "That's what you need in the fourth quarter - balance."

Neither team was able to put much distance between themselves and their opponents through the first three quarters. The game went back and forth in the first quarter before East took a 15-13 lead. Carver fought back to lead by as many as four points, 23-19, in the second quarter before East went up 26-25 at intermission.

East ran its lead up to eight points, 43-35, 2:00 to play in the third quarter only to see Carver put together a run to whittle the lead down to three, 54-51, with 38 seconds remaining. That's when

Evans knocked down both ends of a one-and-one to increase the margin to 56-51 and East put the game away.

"The thing about Carver is that they're real streaky," Turner said. "They're always a threat to put together a run and get back into the game with their athletic ability. That's what they did today but we were fortunate to make some plays to hold on."

Turner, now in his second season at the helm of the Eagles' program, said his team is at a crossroads with a week left before it begins its conference season.

He said, "3-6 is not a glamorous record, but anytime you can come away from the Frank Spencer with a 1-1 record you have to feel good. We had some people who are beginning to play well, like T.D. Carmichael and Anson Sides. We just need to be

more consistent with it every game."

Last year the Eagles put together a run after the Frank Spencer and earned a berth in the state 4-A playoffs. East lost several key performers from that team but Turner said he believes this year's team could be a force to be reckoned with in the conference.

"We had some good kids to graduate last season and we had to go back and work with some people who were less experienced," he said. "Sometimes it takes kids awhile to get used to being in new positions with new responsibilities. I think that is the case for this team. I'd like to be further along, but it feels good to be where we are. It usually takes about three or four years for a coach to get his personality and philosophy through the whole program."

Williams

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received."

The success he had during the 2000 football season at East Carolina was a major part of the Pirates' team success. After starting at outside linebacker last year, Williams was asked to make the move to the defensive line.

It was a decision that Williams accepted without reservation and with the aid of James Webster, his position coach, Williams was in the starting lineup for the first game of the season against Duke.

"That was a big game to start the season," he said. "Coming off the loss in the bowl game we didn't want to lose. We have a saying at East Carolina and that is to never lose two in a row."

The Pirates captured a decisive victory over the Blue Devils and that helped start ECU on a big season. Along the way, the Pirates captured impressive victories over Syracuse, Louisville and Southern Mississippi.

"The Syracuse game was a big win for us too," Williams said. "It was not only big for East Carolina, but it was big for Conference USA. A lot of people look at the conference as a smaller, weaker conference."

There were some disappointments along the way, but they didn't dampen the enthusiasm of Williams and his teammates.

"The loss to Memphis and UAB (Alabama-Birmingham) by a total of four points hurt us," Williams said. "But we bounced back to beat the conference champion (Louisville) and that really gave us a push."

Williams' pass-rushing did also. He was among the team's leading tacklers and sackers throughout the season. Perhaps his best game came against Tulane, when Williams had seven tackles and two sacks.

"That was one of our toughest games because Tulane mixed up the run and pass so well," Williams said. "They went without a huddle and we had to go back-to-back plays through the

game."

That game, more than any, helped Williams prepare for the Pirates' bowl game battle with Texas Tech.

"I thought it was a little tougher against Tulane because of the way their offense was balanced," he said. "Against Texas Tech, the linemen took wider splits and that gave you a lane to rush the passer. With the techniques I've learned, it helped me to get to the quarterback."

It also put Williams on the map as far as the top defensive linemen in the nation and helped him take another step in perhaps accomplishing his career goal of playing in the NFL.

"There's a lot of work I have to do to get there," he said. "When I came out of high school (North Forsyth) I had people who doubted if I could play at the next level. Now, I'm still trying to prove people wrong about me playing at the next level."

Williams said he's studied the style of Jevon Kearse of the Tennessee Titans, who has a similar

build.

"I know I don't have the size to just bum-rush offensive linemen," he said. "So I concentrate more on using the God-given speed and quickness I have, along with the techniques I've learned from my coaches."

With one more season of eligibility left, Williams said he plans to get back in training when he returns to Greenville and push himself to continue to improve. He feels confident that he has the speed (4.55-4.6 in the 40) to play in the NFL and only needs to add a little more bulk to his frame.

"They want me to come in around 260 next year," he said. "I hope to be able to put on that much weight and still do the same type things I can do now."

"I have to strive a little harder, to give the best of my ability," he said. "I've asked God for strength, to help me settle down and stay focused. I've got to be strong. I can't give in when things get tough. I have to just keep going."

Demons

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made only one field goal in the final 5:31 and that came on Mitchell's close jumper at the 1:12 mark.

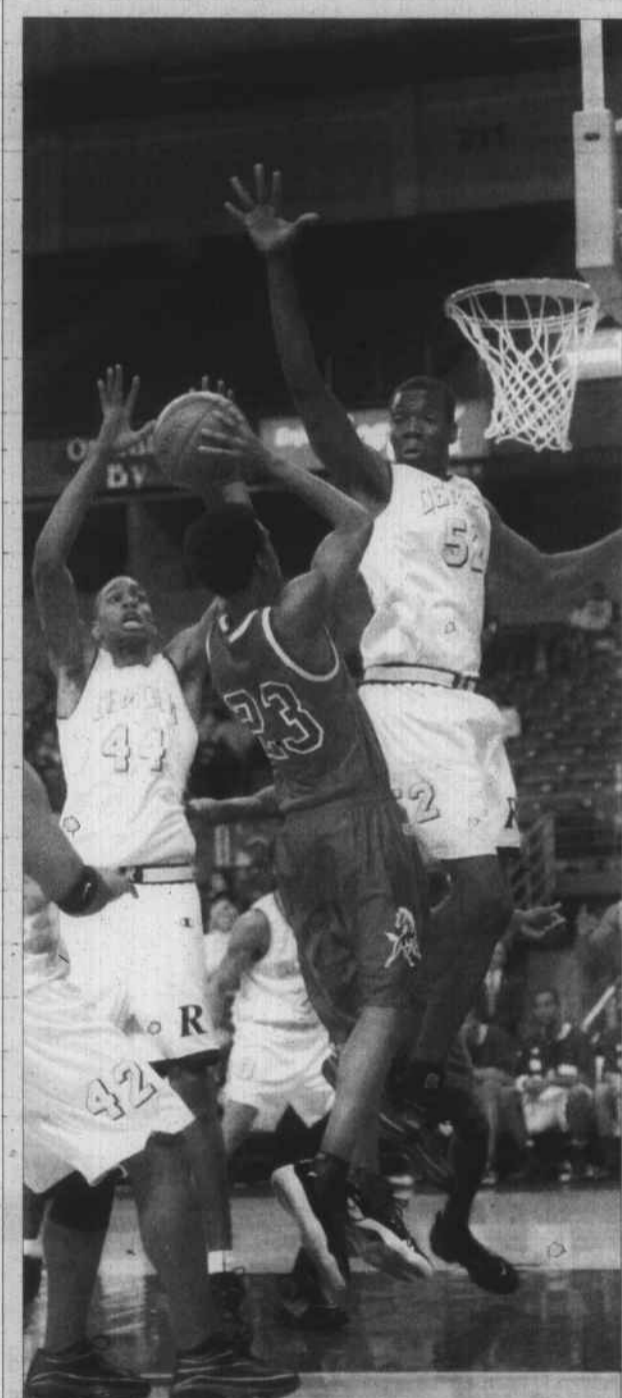
Although Reynolds, the defending state 4-A champion, was an overwhelming favorite to win the tournament, West said the Demons worked hard to earn that distinction.

"To win three in a row is awesome," said West. "It's a tribute to the kids. Being favored isn't easy. It's something we started talking about last March and we've only slipped up in a couple of quarters since then. The kids have so much

pride that they're not going to let themselves play at a level that is unacceptable to them but so long."

C.J. Paul led West Forsyth with 16 points. He keyed the West effort throughout the game with his shooting and pinpoint passes to open teammates. Jason Summers scored 11 points and Tim Crews scored eight.

Paul and Crews of West Forsyth joined Baldwin and Mitchell of Reynolds on the all-tournament team. Ray Bristow of Parkland and Josh Dohner of Mount Tabor were also members of it.



Roadblock!

Photos by Bruce Chapman
 Marcus Jordan (23) of Parkland finds his path to the basket cut off by Reynolds defenders Mike Russell (42), Jason McDougald (44) and Keith Foster (52) in a semifinal game of the Frank Spencer Classic at Lawrence Joel Coliseum last week. Reynolds defeated the Mustangs to advance to the championship game, where it defeated West Forsyth for its third consecutive title.

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