

SPORTS WEEK

SECTION B

Also Religion, Obituaries, Classifieds

MARCH 20, 2008

This will be the year that I pick the champs

FROM THE HUDDLE

Anthony Hill

Every year I participate in several office pools during the NCAA tournament. I even still fill out a March Madness bracket for the daily newspaper that I used to work for in Alabama.

I've never won. As a matter of fact, I usually throw my bracket away by the second round. This year I think I'm going to win it all. I must admit that I make different picks on each of the brackets. I try to create more opportunities for myself to be successful. One thing that I think will be the same on all brackets are my Final Four picks. I usually don't disclose my picks because I am superstitious. I feel like if I say something before it happens then I will somehow jinx myself. Not this time. I'll tell anyone that listens that this will be the first year all number one seeds make it to the Final Four. I will go ahead and tell you that the champs will come from the East. It will either be Carolina or Kansas. I have been saying Kansas was going to win it all year. But I have enough brackets filled out to win either way.

The tournament officially begins today. Some of you are watching games now. The Final Four will take place April 5, in San Antonio, Tx. But there's nothing like the first



UNC's Alex Stepheson defends Clemson's Trevor Booker during the first half of Sunday's ACC Championship game.

two rounds of the tournament. That's when the most upsets occur. Sure, you won't see a 16 seed beat a one. But you might see a 12 seed defeat a five seed. Mike Beasley and Kansas State (No. 11 seed) might beat No. 6 seed USC (led by O.J. Mayo). A 14 seed might even beat a three seed. Some people think No. 14 Georgia has a chance of beating No. 3 Xavier in the opening round. I am sure there

will be at least two upsets.

I find the different methods of choosing a winner interesting sometimes. For instance, I know people that pick the higher seeds. I know people that pick based on the school conferences. I even know someone that picks based on mascots. That is crazy. But it's true. I choose based on my familiarity with the schools

See Hill on B2



Prep seniors and head coach Andre Gould pose with the championship trophy.

W-S Prep concludes year with state crown

Phoenix win 1-A title in fourth year of operation

BY ANTHONY HILL
THE CHRONICLE

CHAPEL HILL— If anyone would've told Winston-Salem Prep's Marcus Wright, who was on the first Phoenix team, that he would be a part of a state championship team his senior year after his freshman campaign he probably would've laughed.

Wright couldn't help but smile after he helped his team achieve the seemingly impossible with a 73-42 victory over Pamlico High in the 1-A state championship game in Chapel Hill last Saturday.

"This is a great feeling," Wright said. "Like coach said, this is a feeling you can't explain. I can't tell you how good this feels. I think this championship was well deserved. This is the best ending you could ask for. We're going out on top. I didn't imagine anything like this my ninth grade

year. We weren't that good back then. Then, I talked J-Man (Calvin Gantt) into coming over here. I knew him from AAU. Reggie came and brought even more. It feels great to be rewarded with the title after all the work we put into this program."

Prep head coach Andre Gould added: "This is something I dreamed about when I walked in our gym with seven freshmen basketball players four years ago. Only about two or three of them could really play the game. I walked around the gym and wondered if I would be able to build a program. To see it actually being done in four years actually is a fairy tale ending. This definitely feels special."

The championship tilt began a little slow, with both teams trying to get into gear. Reggie "Big Reggie" Johnson, who finished with an amazing

See W-S Prep on B5

ALL SMILES

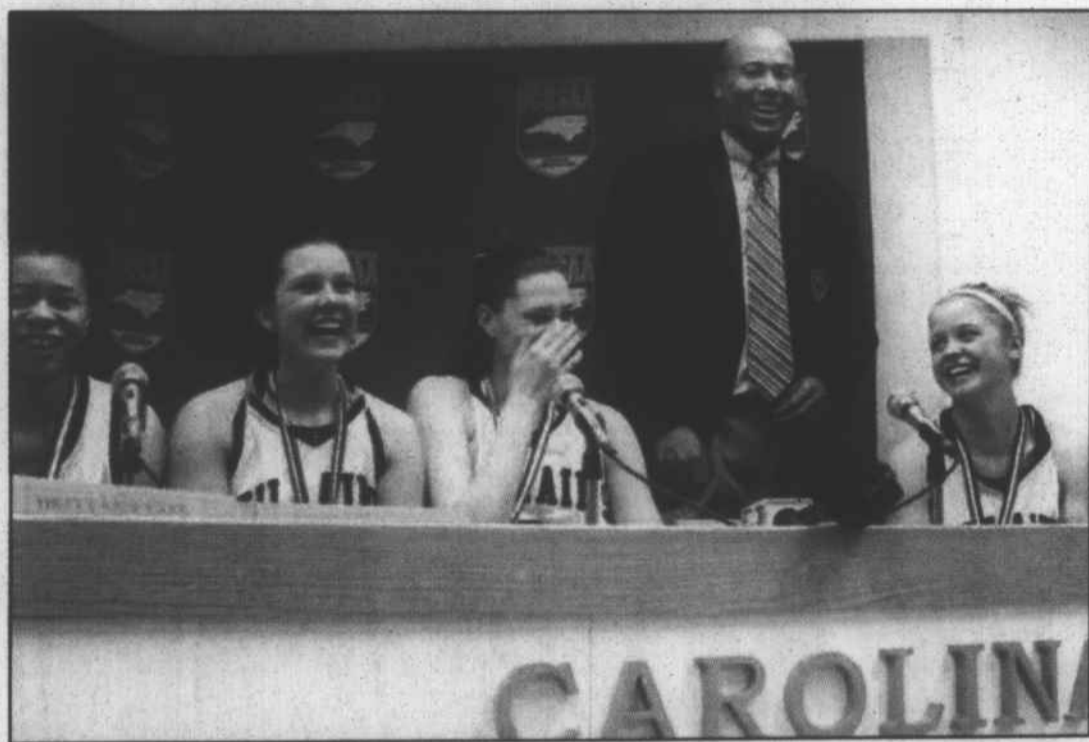


Photo by Anthony Hill

Bishop McGuinness players Whitney Knight, Brittany Cox, Erin Thompson and Maggie Ronan share a laugh with Villains head coach Brian Robinson after capturing the school's third-straight state championship. Bishop McGuinness captured the title after a 56-43 victory over Pender County in Chapel Hill last Saturday.

Fight Night to return March 29

Derek Edwards to continue his march to the top

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Winston-Salem's next Ring of Dreams Fight Night is set for Saturday, March 29, at 8 p.m. at the Millennium Center.

Ring of Dreams is urging fans to come go enjoy Derek "The Black Lion" Edwards, who is garnering an increasing amount of national attention with his undefeated status rising to 21 wins. To prepare for this fight, Edwards has been in intensive training for weeks in Jacksonville, Florida. The Black Lion is at the threshold of a huge breakthrough, according to promoters. His opponent will be the tough William Gill of New Jersey.

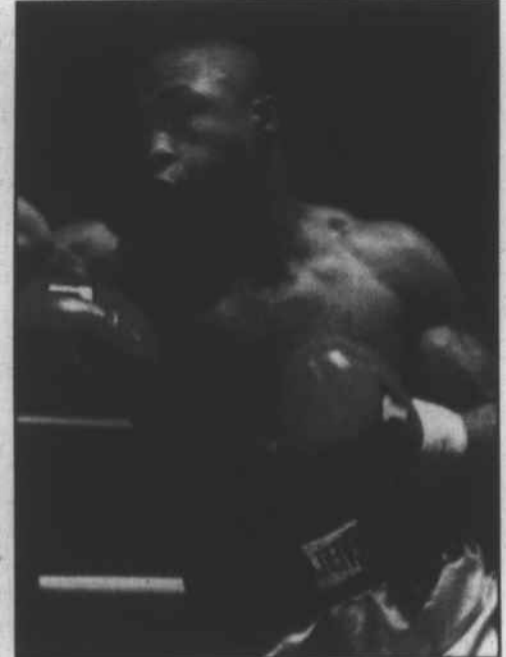
Also on the card is a heavyweight title fight between the undefeated Roberto White (3-0) and David Saulsberry (5-2), seen at previous Fight Nights. Both men will be taking a first shot at the UBC International belt. North Carolina female heavyweights Yolanda Fagan (2-0) of Wilson and Tiffany Woodard of Wilson will be battling it out in Woodard's debut. Several additional local favorites will be on the card, including Rodney Wallace (3-0). There will be at least seven bouts on the card.

The official pre-event weigh-in will be at Dr. J's House of Soul Food, located at 1527 Martin Luther King Blvd., on March 28, between 5:30 and 8 p.m.. All of the fighters will be there.

A victory party will take place immediately following the fight, also at Dr. J's, with admittance at half price with your ticket stub.

That will give fans a chance to get up close and personal with the boxers, and get their autographs. Live entertainment will be provided by well known jazz vocalist Cle Thompson.

Ticket prices are \$40 in advance for general admission, (\$45 at the door), and Ringside Reserve seats are \$50 in advance (\$60 at the door). VIP tables are also available. Tickets can be purchased at RingofDreams.com or by calling Kerry Smith at 336-201-0089.



File photo

Derek "Black Lion" Edwards.

Lady Aggies fall in finals of the MEAC

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

After rolling through the conference season winning games by an average of more than 20 points, all tournament long the North Carolina A&T women's basketball team (25-7) had its character tested late in games and each time they passed with honors - even in defeat.

Coppin State's veteran guard Rashida Suber hit a game-winning floater in the lane with 3.8 seconds remaining to lead Coppin State to a 72-70 win over the Aggies in the championship game of the MEAC Tournament. The Eagles have now won three out of the last four MEAC conference tournaments, and will represent the MEAC in this week's NCAA Tournament.

Lamona Smalley, who made the all-tournament team, led the Aggies with 18 points. Ta'Wuana Cook and Amber



Photo by Charles Watkins

N.C. A&T head coach Patricia Cage-Bibbs gets frustrated.

Bland had 10 points apiece. Suber was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player as she finished last Saturday's game with 19 points and seven assists. "They're an experienced team. They have been here before," said N.C. A&T head coach Patricia Cage-Bibbs. "But I felt like we had what it takes to beat this team. There were several key plays down the stretch where I thought our pressure made them turn the ball over. But what can you say other than I thought my kids played hard?"

The Aggies will still be going to the postseason. They have a RPI of 81 which makes them a bubble team for the NCAA Tournament. As the MEAC regular-season champion, the Aggies received an automatic bid to the WNIT. It is a bid that would have gone to Coppin State as the No. 2 team if the Aggies could have won.

The Aggies found them-

See Aggies on B4