

Johnson to play in All-Star Classic

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Rosters for the 11th Annual Carolinas All-Star Classic, presented by Lowe's Home Improvement, were announced last week by the North Carolina Coaches Association (NCCA) and South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association (SCACA).

The ten roster spots on each team were filled by outstanding high school seniors and represent thirty-seven schools from across both states.

Winston-Salem Prep's star center, Reggie "Big Reggie" Johnson, was among the players named to the all-star squad. Other North Carolina ballers to make the squad were Thomasville's EJ Abrams-Ward, Concord's Daniel Neiman, East Mecklenburg's Malik Smith and Tyler Walker, from Hanover High.

"It's very exciting to be chosen to play with some of the best players in North Carolina," Reggie Johnson told The Chronicle. "I get a chance to meet some of the other good players around the state. This isn't something that I even thought about at the beginning of the season. I was so focused on winning a state



W-S Prep senior Reggie Johnson will play in an all-star game next month. Photo by David Hinton



WSSU's Jamal Durham slams one home. WSSU photo

WSSU ends season with heart-breaker

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North Carolina Central University, charged by senior forward Charles Futrell, refused to lose against long-time rival Winston-Salem State University in the "Bonus Game" of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference Basketball Tournament on Championship Saturday inside the RBC Center in Raleigh, last Saturday.

The Eagles' determination resulted in a 60-56 victory over the Rams, as Futrell poured in a game-high 28 points in his final college contest. The Fayetteville native shot 11-for-19 from the floor, including 2-of-6 from long range, and 4-of-6 from the free throw line, while adding seven rebounds, two blocked shots and the game-saving steal.

Futrell's four made free throws were the only points in the final four minutes of the game, as NCCU's stifling defensive pressure forced WSSU into seven missed shots and two turnovers during the closing stretch.

WSSU stormed out to an early lead, as the Rams scored 14 unanswered points to break a 6-6 tie and enjoy their largest cushion of the game at 20-6 with 11:50 on the first-half clock. The WSSU defense was especially impressive as the Rams held the Eagles to just two field goals in the first three minutes of play.

WSSU's advantage was 31-22 with 3:41 left before the break, when the Eagles scored the last nine points of the first stanza to tie the game at halftime, 31-31. Futrell closed out the opening 20 minutes with two thunderous dunks, one on a put-back with 25 seconds left and the second on a fast break following a Ram turnover just prior to the buzzer.

Aggies

...selves in another tight ball game in the tournament. It took a late 11-0 run before the Aggies could rid themselves of Florida A&M in the quarterfinals. It took late rallies in regulation and overtime before the Aggies eliminated Hampton on Friday, and it appeared on Saturday that the Aggies had one more late run available even though they lost a key component to the team.



Bland

Smalley, who has been the Aggies most consistent player throughout the tournament, was called for a foul with 57 seconds remaining. It was followed by perhaps one of the biggest calls of the game. Smalley, who averaged 13.7 points, 8.3 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 2.0 blocks in the tournament, went up to block a Cunningham jumper. She blocked the shot, but was called for a foul with 52 seconds remaining.

The call prompted Smalley to run to the other end of the floor in disbelief. In a matter of five seconds, the Aggies saw

The two teams, each transitioning as Division I members, played to two ties and exchanged the lead seven times in the second half. NCCU held the largest second-half margin by either squad, when the Eagles went up 51-46 on a three-pointer by Bryan Ayala at 10:46. The Rams were not done, though. WSSU senior forward Darrell Wonge led the WSSU charge. A Wonge three-pointer with 8:32 would pull the Rams to within one point, 50-51.

The game's waning moments were just as exciting as the rest of the contest as both teams would need some clutch free throw shooting to remain in the game. A pair of NCCU free throws with 2:48 left would leave the Rams trailing, 56-58. The two teams would go scoreless for the next minute and a half, setting up a nail-biting final minute of play that featured five WSSU fouls, three WSSU timeouts, and three missed NCCU free throws. Unfortunately for the Rams, it also included three missed shots that could have tied the game. In the end, North Carolina Central would hit a pair of free throws with two seconds left to play to seal the 60-56 win.

Ayala finished with eight points, a team-high eight rebounds, four assists and three steals in 40 minutes of work for NCCU (4-26).

"It's a great feeling to close out our season with a rivalry win in front of our fans," said Ayala, who was brought to tears after the emotional victory.

WSSU (12-18) was topped by senior Darrell Wonge, the lone Ram to score double-figures with 18 points.

The loss will end the Rams' season at 12-18 and the Eagles will end the season with a 4-26 overall record.

two fouls called on their best post player.

"I have to keep my composure," said Bibbs when asked about whether she should have driven her point home to the point of being called for a technical. "If I lose my composure, my team will lose theirs and we couldn't have that during that point of the game. It was a big loss for us because she is a young lady who has been playing some great basketball for us."

Cunningham hit one of two free throws to give the Eagles a four-point lead. But the Aggies have not late deficits affect them in the tournament. Tyrinnica Alford raced down court and scored on a layup to cut the lead to two. After an Oakley free throw, Amber Bland got open for a 3-pointer that she netted to tie the game at 70 with 25 seconds remaining.

"This is very tough on the whole A&T family," said Bibbs. "It wasn't meant to be today, but I told them to remember this feeling because I believe this group will make it back here."



'PRETTY' FAST

Photo by Jeff Sides

The Mt. Tabor girls' 4x400 meter relay team anchored the Spartan outdoor track and field team last week during the highly competitive city/county meet at Mt. Tabor last week. Pictured are (from right) Andrea Beck, Caitlin Brown, Shenita Martin and Taylor Dewberry. The team won the event with a time of 4:06.99.

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