

'Black Magic' sets ESPN ratings record

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Last week's first part of ESPN's critically acclaimed Black Magic, which aired commercial free in two parts March 16 and 17, was watched by an average of 1,211,000 households (based on a 1.3 rating), making it ESPN's most-watched documentary.

The film, directed by Dan Klores, tells the story of the injustice which characterized the Civil Rights Movement in America, as told through the lives of basketball players and coaches who attended and worked at Historically Black Colleges and Universities



(HBCU).

"With the national discourse swirling around the topic of race, the success of Black Magic speaks to the desire of sports fans for content that explores new voices

on the American sports story," said Keith Clinkscales, senior vice president, ESPN content development and enterprises. "We thank Mr. Klores for delivering such a high quality and thought-provoking film, as we endeavor to deliver more from ESPN Films in the coming months."

Black Magic broke the record set in March 2006 by Through the Fire (1,140,000 homes, based on a 1.3 rating) and averaged 1,546,000 viewers (P2+). The second part of Black Magic also performed very well, with an average of 948,000 homes (1,182,000 viewers), based on a 1.0 rating.

Hill

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gave me to lose. The four hour, two-part television show carried black basketball from the playgrounds, high schools, colleges and on to its final destination — the NBA. This brought full circle the hopes and dreams of most black athletes, a life in the fast lane of professional sports. For some it was their only way out.

The show's title, "Black Magic" was the footprints in the sand of the man who revolutionized offensive guard play in basketball — Earl Monroe. He is also a part-time magician. I found the show to be enlightening and educational even though I lived most of it. I was a student-athlete that played football and basketball for the legendary Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines at Winston-Salem State. During my era (59-63) I was the only athlete under 6-5 he permitted to play two sports. Bighouse knew I could do two things well, catch a football and score on a basketball court. But he made it clear that he had only one basketball and it belonged to Cleo Hill. Like it or not I had to wait my turn.

The enlightening stories for me started with Perry Wallace, athletic director at American University and the first black to play at Vanderbilt University. Also, the perseverance of NBA player Bob "Butter Bean" Love, and the hidden story that Ben Jobs was one of the greatest college basketball coaches of all time. Coach Jobs' accomplishments and basketball success stayed under the radar of major media for decades. ESPN's Black Magic made it perfectly clear he could have easily been a success on any level, but was denied to excel because he was black.

The real story of the NBA lynching of Cleo Hill by the St. Louis Hawks was long overdue. In Black Magic there was mention of Cleo being the greatest player of his era. He could have been the greatest player of any era where he was allowed to play. Cleo had every shot imaginable.

Bell also wrote about coach Gaines, who he called Big Daddy; coach John McLendon (who really invented Four Corners), Sam Jones and sever-



Earl "Black Jesus" Monroe dunks.

al other pioneers.

"A re-done BLACK MAGIC on DVD should be in every middle and high school library and every Blockbuster Video Store in America," Bell said. "With a financial supporting cast like Spike Lee, Chris Paul, Denzel Washington, Samuel Jackson and others, where is the beef? I've e-mailed Earl Monroe, James Brown, Michael Wilbon, Dave Aldridge, Elmer Smith, Jarrett Bell, Butch McAdams, Andrew Dyer, Howie Evans, Anthony Hill, Courtland Milloy, Coby King — among others, my thoughts and concerns. Our children need to be made aware that they are descendants of king and queens, and not hoodlums and thugs. Earl Monroe and company need to go back and get the stories of Pop Gates, Curley Neal, Sam Jones, Spencer Haywood and more. We must stop settling for second-best. Racism is alive and well in American media. If you think not keep watching the run for the White House."

Harold Bell is a former student-athlete at Winston-Salem State and a radio and television sports talk show pioneer / hkbell@comcast.net.

Wilkes will be missed

Most of you know that I have a real good relationship with coach Keith Wilkes. For some reason he and I simply clicked when I first moved here over five years ago. He's easily my favorite coach around here.

It's nothing for me to drive to Carver real quick and get the weight room keys from Wilkes to get it on for a minute. We're cool like that. I consider him a friend. He's even invited me to several CIAA cookouts in Charlotte. So, I was extremely sad to hear he was leaving last

week. It felt more like a family member moving away than a coach moving on. Underneath the sadness, I am happy for him. He's getting a chance to move closer to his mother and make a lot more money along the way. That's always a plus.

I'm simply wondering where this will leave Carver athletics. Everyone knows that's a football school. On top of that, Wilkes was always the coach you could say was going to get guys in college. Not saying he's the only one. But he was definitely at the top.

"I'm sure they will bring in a good coach," said Wilkes. "I am sure the next coach will do a good job. It was just time for me to move on. It was sad. It's probably the hardest move I've had to make."

Just know that you'll be missed Big Daddy. I'm going to keep your number, and hit you up when I'm in your neck of the woods. Good luck to you homie.

Coker could be named VUU coach

Winston native Willard Coker is rumored to be the next head basketball coach at Virginia Union.

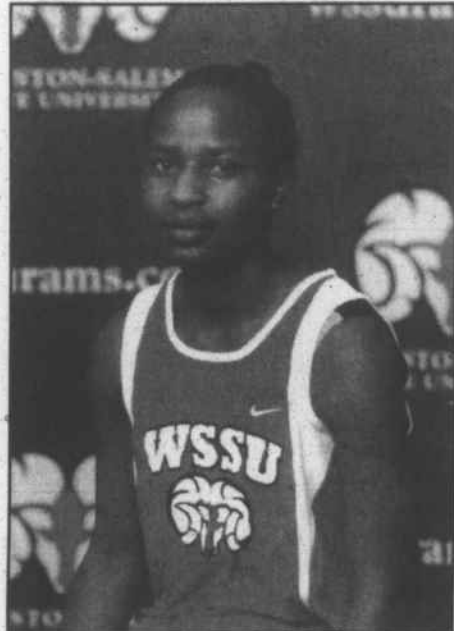
I can't get anyone to confirm that for me yet. But it's definitely looking as if it may be true. Hall of fame coach Dave Robbins is contemplating retirement. I actually heard it was a done deal. But no one from the university has issued anything official yet. So, I am just here waiting. Well, I hope Coker gets the job. And, I'm looking forward to hearing the final news.

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Jeptolo dominates field, wins 3000m steeplechase at Wake

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The Winston-Salem State Lady Rams showed the hometown crowd just what the team was made of with some stellar performances on day one of the 2008 Wake Forest Open, last Friday. The Lady Rams had a number of top finishes at the event, highlighted by WSSU senior Irene Jeptolo, who took her third straight first place finish in the women's 3000m steeplechase.



WSSU senior Irene Jeptolo continues to run well.

Jeptolo, a senior from Kapsabet, Kenya ran her best time of the season in the event with a time of 11:18.80. With the win, she remains undefeated in the event this season. Not to be outdone, WSSU junior sprinter Wykeita Barnett continued her strong of impressive performances, placing seventh overall in the preliminaries of the women's 100m dash and qualifying for the finals of the event. With a time of 12.06, she left 51 runners in her wake, including sprinters from UNC-Chapel Hill, North Carolina A&T, Georgia Tech, Morgan State, Hampton, and Appalachian. Barnett had a great day with a pair of fantastic finishes as well as a great performance with the women's 4x100m relay team. Barnett got the day started with a women's 100m dash final. Barnett finished fourth in the finals in a time of 12.11. The fourth place finish was the best finish of the season for the Eden native. She also had a great finish in the women's 200m dash, placing 22nd in the event in a time of 25.29.

WSSU sophomore Kayla Long had the second best WSSU finish in the event placing 31st in a time of 25.53. The WSSU freshman duo of Chantelle Bethea and Allegra Seegars also had some strong finishes in the event. Bethea finished 32nd in a time of 25.56 while Seegars placed 35th in a time of 25.75.

The Lady Rams 4x100m relay team also had a great finish on the day with a ninth place finish in a time of

48.17. The WSSU men closed out the meet with some top notch performances that gave the WSSU fans an up close look at the team's progress and potential.

WSSU junior sprinter Richard Marcellus, Gerrod Sidbury, Jordan Holley ran good races for the Rams. Rams sophomore James Legins, III was also strong in the event, finishing 30th in a time of 59.41.

The Rams will return to action this weekend when the team takes part Adidas Invitational in Raleigh, which is hosted by North Carolina State.

Wilkes

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right now. "My mom lives there," Wilkes said. "... and she was kind of laid off her job. I really want to go down there and help her out too. I want to be there for my mom. That played a part in me wanting to work in Georgia too."

He's going to have his work cut out for him at his new school. Shiloh hasn't exactly enjoyed the same type of success as Carver. The school hasn't even won five games in two years.

"They're not a winning program yet," Wilkes said. "They've had three different coaches in six years. But I feel like it's a school with a lot of potential. It had some of the best facilities I've seen in high school. They have a 10,000-seat stadium, with a weight room that's as good as Wake Forest. The size of the kids let me know they have some potential too. We're going to see what we can do."

Wilkes will get to hire his own staff in Gwinnett County too.

"It's a different set up than it is in North Carolina," Wilkes said. "You bring in your coaches and handle the whole program from a financial standpoint to what you do on the field. It's going to be nice. But I'm still going to miss it around here. I'm going to miss kids coming back to talk to me. I'm definitely going to miss that. Like I said, you can't get over the relationships I've established here."

No time table has been set for the hiring of a new coach at Carver. Montague said she expects to receive a lot of applications.

"We still have the student-athletes," Montague said. "We just have to find someone that can keep the program on the level it has been. We don't have a timeline yet. But we hope to hire someone by the end of May, or the first of June. I'm sure we'll get a lot of calls from all over. We're going to post the job soon."



Wilkes seems excited to start at new program in Georgia.

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