

# North Carolina A&T softball takes down Norfolk State to share MEAC softball title

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The North Carolina A&T softball team took care of business at the Lady Aggies Softball Complex by using a six-run fifth to defeat Norfolk State 7-4 Sunday as seniors Chaola Simmons and Sylvia Felder were honored before the game as a part of Senior Day.

The Aggies then received good news from Florida. Florida A&M defeated Bethune-Cookman to give the Aggies a share of the MEAC

Southern Division title. It is the program's first regular-season title of any kind. The Aggies are 29-15-1 overall and 9-3 in the MEAC, the same conference record Bethune-Cookman holds.

The Lady Aggies will likely play either Morgan State or defending MEAC Champion Howard from the North to open the tournament. But before the Aggies get to the tournament — played May 8-11 in Ormond Beach, Fla. — there are a few things head coach

Mamie Jones wants to correct. After beating the Spartans in five innings twice thanks to the 8-run mercy rule on Saturday, the Aggies did have a tough tussle with the Spartans on Sunday. A Micki Rodriguez homer to left and two errors on one play by the Aggies helped Norfolk State take a 2-1 lead over the Aggies in the fourth.

But the Aggies bats awoke in the fifth. Freshman Ryanne Hill hit a one-out single to right, which was followed by a

RBI triple from Channing Statham to tie the game at 2. Sophomore Brittney Reddick continued the rally by launching a towering shot to center field that almost left the park. It resulted in a RBI double for Reddick and 3-2 Aggies lead. Felder, who had nine RBIs on Saturday, recorded another RBI with a single to right to score Reddick.

Felder's hit chased away

Spartans reliever Sarah Wittwer and placed Rodriguez on the mound. Rodriguez ran into more trouble. After getting Simmons to line out, she walked Yahamma White and surrendered a RBI single to right off the bat of Tangie Conover. Larson closed out the offensive inning by hitting a two-run RBI single to right field to score White and Conover for a 7-2 Aggies lead.

The Spartans kept fighting. Ashley Archer hit a two-run RBI single off of Aggies starter Jennifer Luper to move the Spartans to within three. But Luper settled in, retired the last five batters she faced and made history in the process. She improved to 19-4 on the season and broke the school record for wins in a season. She broke the record teammate Sasha Philpot set last season.



Photo by Michael Simmons

N.C. A&T ace pitcher Jennifer Luper has been solid this season for the Lady Aggies.

## Jeptolo posts historic finish at Penn Relays

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The Winston-Salem State Lady Rams track & field team made history, Thursday afternoon when the team took part in the 115th Penn Relays in Philadelphia, PA. WSSU senior Irene Jeptolo had the best finish in school history, placing 12th in the championship heat of the women's 3000m steeplechase.

Jeptolo finished 12th in the event in a time of 11:13.15. She competed in a talented pool of some of the best runners in the country. The finish marked the first time in school history that a WSSU distance runner placed in the championship round of the event.

Also competing last week were the WSSU relay teams. The Lady Rams 4x100m relay team placed eighth in their heat, posting a time of 48.45 in their heat, which included teams from the University of South Carolina, UCLA, North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and North Carolina A&T.

The Lady Rams 4x400m relay team took the track as well, placing ninth in their heat in a time of 4:08.58. The Lady Rams' team, which consisted of three freshmen and a junior gave fans a glimpse of the great future of Winston-Salem State women's track & field.

For the men, The Rams placed sixth in their heat in the men's 4x400m relay in a time of 3:16.57. The Rams ran head-to-head against teams from Duke, Norfolk State, and East Carolina, among others. The Rams 4x200m relay team took part in the event, placing sixth in their heat in a time of 1:28.34. The Rams found themselves up against some top notch competition running head-to-head against teams from Liberty, the University of Florida, and the University of Delaware.

For more results, please visit [www.thepennrelays.com](http://www.thepennrelays.com).

## Tournament

from page B1

cess of the last two tournaments we already have a lot of things in place. We hope to have 25 to 30 teams. That's our goal."

The price for a (four-person) team is \$400, and \$100 for individuals. The cost covers green fees and golf cart use. Lunch and refreshments are also covered. Companies can purchase a hole for \$500. As previously mentioned, proceeds from the tournament go toward the funding of the Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines Scholarship Fund. The scholarship fund is in honor of Gaines and his dedication to Winston-Salem State University and his support of

the Reynolda Rotary Club — as well as Cook Elementary. Gaines was one of the founding members of the Reynolda Rotary Club.

The golf tournament and scholarship fund are an extension of the Rotary Club's commitment to Cook Elementary and WSSU — the school that Gaines basically put on the map. Club members hope to raise enough money to award at least one deserving former Cook Elementary student with a full scholarship upon admittance into WSSU.

Anyone interested in becoming a sponsor or registering a team should contact Mel Pearce at 336-575-1729 or [mpearce002@triad.rr.com](mailto:mpearce002@triad.rr.com).

## AD

from page B1

be a core focus for our department."

Wicker-McCree began her career at NCCU as the head coach for women's volleyball and softball. She became the first coach in NCCU history to win conference championships in multiple sports, capturing the school's first-ever CIAA titles in softball (1998) and volleyball (1999, 2004, 2005). A three-time CIAA Volleyball Coach of the Year (1999, 2002, 2005) and former member of the NCAA Division II National Volleyball Committee, Wicker-McCree earned 239 match victories in 12 seasons as head volleyball coach at NCCU. She was also inducted



Nelms

into the NCCU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2004 as head coach of the 1998 softball team.

She began her coaching career as a graduate assistant coach for the women's volleyball program at N.C. State. She then spent two seasons (1992-93) as head volleyball coach and student-athlete academic counselor at North Carolina A&T State University before returning to her hometown to begin her NCCU tenure in August 1994.

Wicker-McCree has been involved as a player and coach in the USA Volleyball Carolina Region. She also served as director of three USAV Junior Olympic Teams and director of the Y.M.C.A. Middle School Girls' Volleyball Camp.

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