

SPORTS WEEK

SECTION B

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MAY 29, 2008

MEAC tourney picks Winston

FROM THE HUDDLE

Anthony Hill



Winston-Salem mayor Allen Joiner greets MEAC Commissioner Dennis Thomas at the Joel on Tuesday.

Finally, something to get excited about. Finally, a conference thinks enough about Winston-Salem to host its basketball tournament here. That's all I could think about when MEAC Commissioner Dennis Thomas made the huge announcement at the Joel on Tuesday.

I was genuinely happy to hear that. I mean, I've been here for six years and all I've heard about was how fun the city was when the CIAA hosted its tournament here years ago. The MEAC has even been in Winston before (1980, 81 and 82). Thomas said the MEAC tournament will be in Winston for the next three years. The only thing Winston has to do is help the tournament grow. That's what Commissioner Thomas told me after we finished with a little interview session.

"You've got to help us grow," Thomas said.

I responded by telling him that I got him, and that I was going to do what I could. I mean, I know the tournament will get bigger in Winston. Look at what happened to the CIAA after it left Winston-Salem. Plus, the numbers indicate the MEAC basketball tournament attendance has increased each year. It went from 15,000 to a little under 35,000 paid fans during the time it was in Raleigh. The commissioner told me that he'd like to see the

attendance increase to 50,000 while the tournament is here.

"The numbers speak for themselves," Thomas said. "In 2004, the attendance more than doubled. I would have cause for concern if we still have 35,000 paid fans after three years."

Don't even worry about, commissioner. I know Winston-Salem is going to help the tournament grow, as well as build a strong relationship with the conference.

I'm also hoping to build a better relationship with the MEAC through this tournament and some

of the things we can do together. I will tell you more about that when things are finalized. But it's looking good. From the looks of things, the tournament should definitely grow in Winston. I mean, this city is hungry for something like that. Seriously. And, I am going to love to be taking one less trip in February next year. Really, I'm pretty excited about the move to Winston.

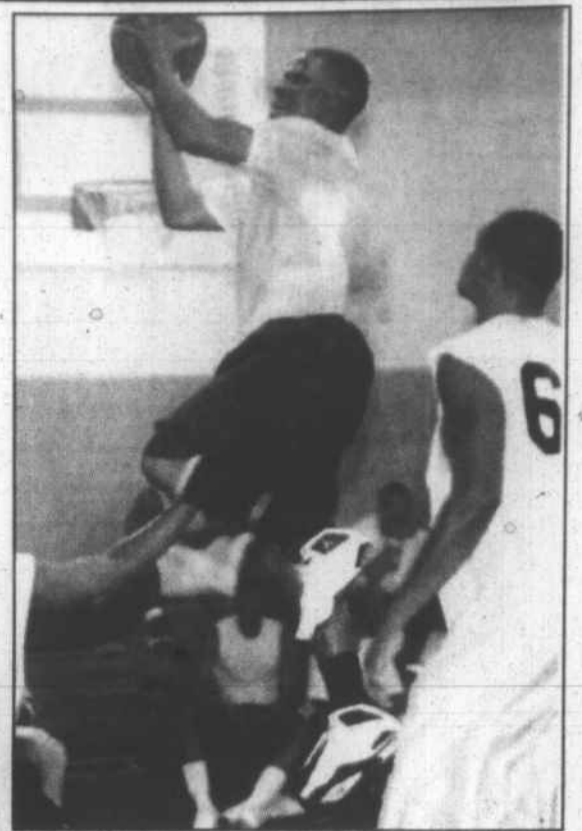
I kind of knew the move was going to be announced. I even surprised assistant city manager Martha Wheelock with a call about

it on Tuesday morning. According to her, she wasn't even sure about the move when I called. But she hit me back (Thank you, Martha) to let me know that I was right. Then, Thomas gave her much praise leading up to his announcement.

"I want to thank Martha Wheelock for her time and effort," Thomas said during the press conference. "She's quite a negotiator. A lot of times it wasn't friendly, but it was always professional."

Thomas also spent quite some time praising the city officials, the

See Hill on B4



Local baller Ray Bristow skies through the air for a score during a game last summer.

Summer tradition returns next month

BY ANTHONY HILL
THE CHRONICLE

Two things are a constant during the summer months. Those two things are hot weather, and sizzling basketball action at 14th Street Recreation Center for the Late Nite summer basketball league.

The Late Nite League, which has been going on for 20 years, will begin on June 25. The deadline to sign up 12-man roster teams is set for June 8. The cost per team is \$300. League and 14th Street director Rob Little seems just as excited as some of the players.

"I guess I'm excited because the league still exist after all this time," Little said. "I also get excited when I think about some of the guys that have come up watching the league when they were little. And, now some of them are playing in the league. Like the Hot Boy'z. I coached most of them when they were 10, 12 years old. They wanted to play 18-year-old kids back then. Now they're one of the best teams every year. Guys like Petey (Mike Noel), Jon Jon and Danny (Gathings) have been around this league for a while."

"I've been getting a lot of calls from other people that want to sign up teams too," Little continued. "I haven't been to the center this week because I am on vacation. But I am sure the calls have been coming in. There's definitely a buzz around town. This league usually gives people something to talk about."

Little expects at least 10 teams to participate in the league. He said he really expects more than last year because he's sensing the league will have more younger squads. Participants must be 18 years or older.

"It really looks like the league is getting younger," Little said. "We have teams like Syracuse Style (Da Cuse) and the Hot Boy'z coming back. I am sure they'll play strong. It should be interesting to see who does what this year. You just never know."

The Late Nite League has turned into a Winston-Salem tradition. More than 400 people crowd the recreation center each week to catch

See Late Nite on B4



Clemson junior D.J. Mitchell had a very solid season for the Tigers.

Mitchell, Parker earn All-ACC accolades

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Former North Forsyth star and present Clemson junior righthander D.J. Mitchell was named to the First Team All-ACC baseball team recently. Clemson freshman utility player Kyle Parker was also named to First-Team All-ACC squad. The team was compiled by a vote of the 12 ACC head coaches.

Mitchell finished with a 6-5 record and 3.47 ERA in 15 starts and six relief appearances. In 98.2 innings pitched, he has allowed 89 hits (.254 opponents' batting average) and 37 walks with 95 strikeouts. He has also allowed just 16 extra-base hits, including only four home runs.

Mitchell, who did not even pitch in a game at Clemson until his sophomore season in 2007, leads the ACC in innings pitched and strikeouts (106). Mitchell struck out 11 batters in only 6.0 innings pitched during last week's ACC baseball tournament in Jacksonville, Fla.

Parker, who should be in his senior year of high school after graduating from Bartram Trail High School in Jacksonville, Fla., a semester early, was one of only two freshmen to earn first-team honors, joining ACC Freshman-of-the-Year Chris Hernandez, a lefthander from Miami (FL).

Parker is one of the nation's highest-rated quarterbacks who signed to play football at Clemson. In 2008, he is hitting .310 with 12 doubles, 14 homers, 49 RBIs, and a .405 on-base percentage in 54 games (52 starts).

He excelled against ACC competition as well. In 29 ACC regular-season games, Parker hit .336 with six doubles, 10 homers, 34 RBIs, and a .441 on-base percentage. He tied for second in homers, was second in RBIs, and was fifth in slugging percentage (.673) in ACC regular-season games among all players.

Clemson's streak of 21 straight NCAA Tournament appearances ended this year.

NFL pros receive their degrees from Wake Forest

BY ANTHONY HILL
THE CHRONICLE

Four Wake football standouts, and Chicago Bears tightend Desmond Clark (A former Wake player) graduated on May 19. The four standouts are also presently with NFL teams.

The players were Steve Justice (Sociology), who actually graduated in Dec 07 — walked last week. Justice is presently with the Indianapolis Colts. The other Wake standouts were Kenneth Moore (Sociology) — who graduated in Dec 07 walked last week (Lions) and Jeremy Thompson (Health and Exercise Science). Thompson is with the Green Bay Packers. Also, Kevin Marion graduated in May, but walked last week. He's presently with the



Justice

Pittsburgh Steelers.

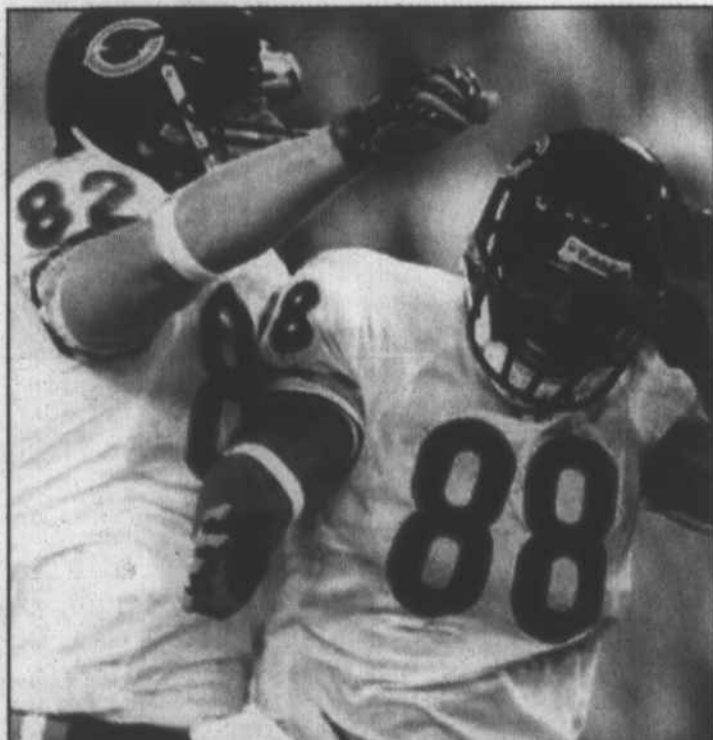
Desmond Clark graduated with a degree in Communication. He is currently the starting tight end for the Chicago Bears (Number 88). Clark has been with the Bears for the past 5 years and has been in the league since 1999. Desmond was not red-shirted while at Wake making it more difficult to finish in 4 years.

According to NCAA 2007 Graduation Success Rates Report and the NCAA 2007 Federal Graduation Rates Report, Wake Forest ranked eighth with a graduation rate of 93 percent among all athletes.

The Academic Progress Rate (also known as APR) is a metric established by the NCAA to measure the success or failure of collegiate athletic teams in moving student-athletes towards graduation. The APR is designed to measure semester-by-semester academic progress, and is separate from the Graduation Success Rate, which only aims to measure the actual percentage of student-athletes who graduate, thus omitting students who would have graduated but left school early for non-academic reasons (such as a professional career).

In the most recent APR rankings published, Wake

See Grads on B2



Chicago Bears tightend Desmond Clark was one of five former Wake Forest football players to graduate last week. Here, Clark celebrates during a game last season.