

SPORTS WEEK

SECTION B

Also Religion, Obituaries, Classifieds

JULY 10, 2008

St. Aug's hurdler is going to Beijing

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Former Saint Augustine's College hurdler and current Falcon student Bershawn Jackson gained a berth to the 2008 Beijing Olympics with a convincing victory in the 400-meter hurdles final on June 29 at the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials at Hayward Field. This is the first Olympic berth for Jackson, a Miami, Fla., native who lives and trains in Raleigh, under George Williams, the legendary Saint Augustine's College track and field coach and 2004 U.S. Olympic team coach.



Jackson blitzed the field in the finals, crossing the finish line in 48.17 seconds to beat Kerron Clement (48.36) and Angelo Taylor (48.42), who both are going to the 2008 Olympics as well. The top three finishers advanced to the Beijing Games.

Former St. Aug. runner Bershawn Jackson made the US Olympic team.

Jackson, who won his heat in the quarterfinals and semifinals, entered the finals with the fourth-best semifinal time but made an adjustment.

"I got out very hard," said Jackson, the 2005 world outdoor 400-meter hurdles champion. "The wind played a big factor in the race today. I just wanted to relax as much as possible and not fight the wind and conserve as much energy as possible. The main thing was to come home strong and have a kick because I knew it was going to be a tight race."

"I really came on. I felt pretty sluggish today (June 29) but when the race came, the adrenaline put me through the race. I had a hurdle-free day."

Williams said Jackson ran a smart race. "By him being small, (Jackson) let the wind help him on the backside," Williams said. As a result, Jackson attained his life-long goal of making the Olympics.

"My main thing was to make the team," Jackson said. "I was very nervous. If I didn't make the team, I think I would have given up track and field, I was feeling so much pressure."

Jackson, scheduled to graduate from Saint Augustine's College in the fall semester of 2008, is the latest runner under Williams headed to the Olympics.

"He is a great individual to support our country," Williams concluded. "I am thrilled these kind of students come to Saint Augustine's College."

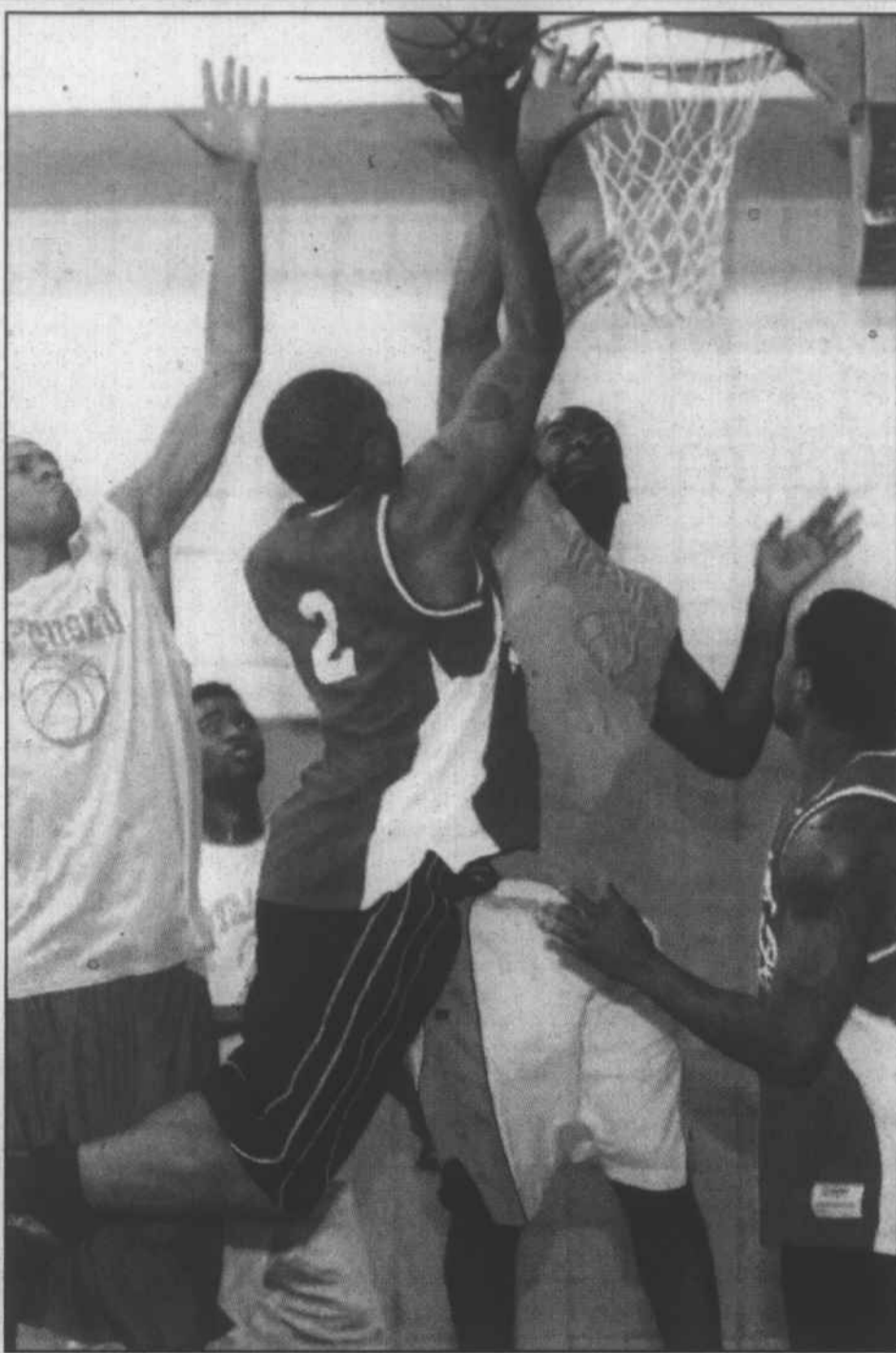


Photo by Charlie Pfaff

Late Nite action gave local fans an opportunity to watch their friends play, as well several former prep and college ballers.

LITTLE CANCELS LATE NITE LEAGUE

It looks like a summer tradition is coming to an end this year. Most of you have experienced the atmosphere of the Late Nite Summer Basketball League. It's hood. It's exciting. It's crazy. It's comfortable. It's fun. And for over 20 years it has been a tradition here in Winston-Salem.

There's nothing quite like Late Nite hoops. I mean, you would see females dressed for the club. You might run into an old friend you haven't seen since high school. It's nothing to run into local high school standouts and coaches during game nights.

I remember also running into guys like Justin Gray, Trent Strickland and Eric Williams in the 14th Street gym to catch some of the action. That's how exciting it was. Winston-Salem State head basketball coach Bobby Collins was on a team for a short period last year.

Everyone wanted to check it out.

It looks like some of the swagger or excitement has been taken away from the league. There was a time when guys couldn't wait to turn 18 so they could take part in the action. There was a time when

guys bragged from one summer to the next after winning a Late Nite championship. Then, there's this year. One and Done and the Hot Boy'z made it clear they weren't playing in the

league this year. Most of them have decided to play in the growing Pro Am League in Lewisville. That seemingly took some of the fun away from participating in the 14th Street league. Teams geared up to defeat both of those squads every week. Due to them not playing this year, not enough teams signed up for the league. That led to league

See Hill on B4

FROM THE HUDDLE

Anthony Hill



CAREER CROSSOVER

Divina Simmons making smooth transition into coaching

BY ANTHONY HILL
THE CHRONICLE

Reynolds assistant varsity girls coach Divina Simmons never imagined being a basketball coach when she was a young baller at North Forsyth. As a matter of fact, Simmons wanted to be the first female to play in the NBA. She altered her career plans after suffering a number of ACL injuries and undergoing five knee surgeries.

"I probably didn't think about being a coach until I got to college," said Simmons, who played her college ball at Virginia Tech. "I wanted to play in the NBA. That was before the WNBA came around. The interest in coaching came about after sitting on the bench, dealing with injuries. You see the game in a different light from the sidelines. It really gives you a chance to reflect and think about some things."

Simmons has always kind of played the role of a coach, though. As a player, Simmons was constantly telling teammates where to go and what to do during certain plays — almost like a point guard. But she was a small forward and power forward during her playing days.

See Simmons on B2



Photo by Anthony Hill

Reynolds assistant coach Divina Simmons is primed to be a head coach one day.

SISTERS IN ARMS



AFP Photo by Adrian Dennis

Venus Williams hugs her sister, Serena, after the pair won the 2008 Wimbledon Doubles Championship on Saturday. Earlier that day, Venus also won the fifth singles title by beating her little sis. Venus Williams is one of only four women to have won five Wimbledon singles titles. The others are Billie Jean King, Martina Navratilova and Steffi Graf.

Bailey putting in extra duties

BY ANTHONY HILL
THE CHRONICLE

Don't tell Carver assistant athletic director Aaron Bailey that he's supposed to be relaxing during his summer break. Bailey spends most of his energy and time teaching kids, ages 9-17, basketball skills at Carl Russell Community Center.

Bailey has been giving free basketball and skill development lessons at the rec. center for almost a month. His passion is simply to help kids that probably wouldn't get special help, due to financial circumstances or other reasons. Bailey also puts on the summer-long clinic to teach the game he loves.

"I really don't get an opportunity to be around basketball as much as I would like, with my job as assistant athletic director," Bailey said. "But I still love the game. So I wanted to give back to some kids that have never played, or need a little help. A lot of these kids are self taught through televi-

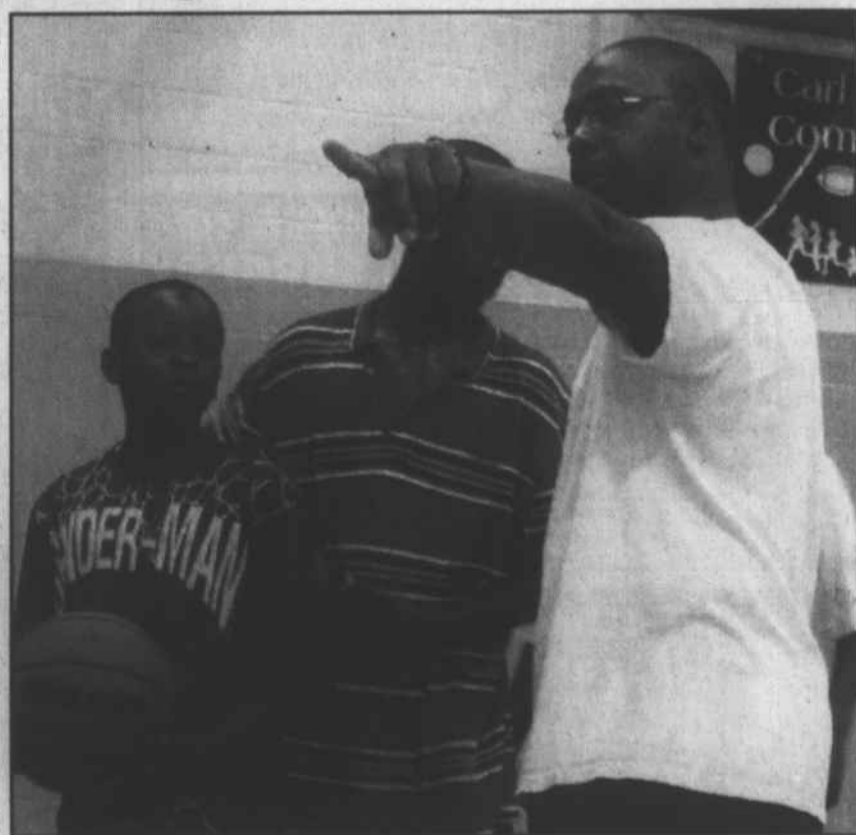


Photo by Anthony Hill

Carver assistant athletic director Aaron Bailey gives instruction during a session earlier this week at Carl Russell.

See Bailey on B4