

Four CIAA players perform in Cactus Bowl

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Valero Cactus Bowl, an all-star game featuring NCAA Division II senior football players, took place over the last Friday. The rosters include seven players from HBCUs. Four players represented the CIAA at Javelina Stadium on the campus of Texas A&M-Kingsville.

Elizabeth City State's All-CIAA performer Rod Jones and teammate Sammy Milton suited up for the East Team. Saint Paul's Greg Toler and Jerome Mann dressed for the West Team.

The 2009 edition of the Cactus Bowl featured 19 All-Americans and was headlined by six of the 24 Harlon Hill Trophy candidates: Ted Schlafke (Minnesota-Duluth), Brian McNeill (Nebraska-Omaha), Charly Martin (West Texas A&M), Corey Russell (Tusculum), Kevin McCabe (California-PA) and Mike Washington (West Chester).

In front of over 6,000 fans,



ECSU cornerback Rod Jones was one of four CIAA players to perform in the Cactus Bowl all-star game last Friday.

the East and West all-star teams put on quite a show in the 2009 Valero Cactus Bowl. The back-and-forth affair featured five lead changes and came down to the final moments when the East missed a potential game-winning 34-yard field goal with three seconds to play and the West won 28-27 to snap a three-game losing streak. Toler (St. Paul's College) had one interception that he returned for a Cactus Bowl record 44 yards.

The Cactus Bowl was originally known as the Snow Bowl and was played in Fargo, North Dakota from 1994 through 2000. Starting in 2001, the Snow Bowl was renamed the Cactus Bowl and has been played in Kingsville, Texas. There have been over 100 players drafted into the NFL who played in the Cactus Bowl. All net profits from the Cactus Bowl are donated to Shriners Hospitals for Children.

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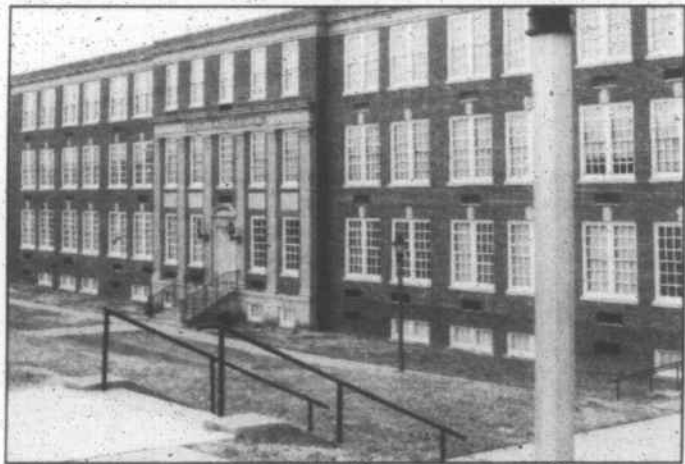
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The deadline has been extended to January 30, 2009. Applications can be obtained at the following locations: Russell

Funeral Home, 822 Carl Russell Drive; Hooper Funeral Home, 1415 E. 14th Street; and Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy at Atkins, 1215 N. Cameron Avenue.

For further information, call 336-995-2789 or write to The Atkins High School Hall of Fame committee, P.O. Box 1079, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101.

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isn't the biggest baller around. Some of you remember me writing a feature on her when she was only a freshman, who'd just moved here from France. She gave it to all of the standout guards in the area back then. She played well against both Rene Rector (formerly of Mt. Tabor) and LaShanda Pratt (formerly of Carver) as a ninth grader. And, she's only gotten better. Hopefully things will progress for her.

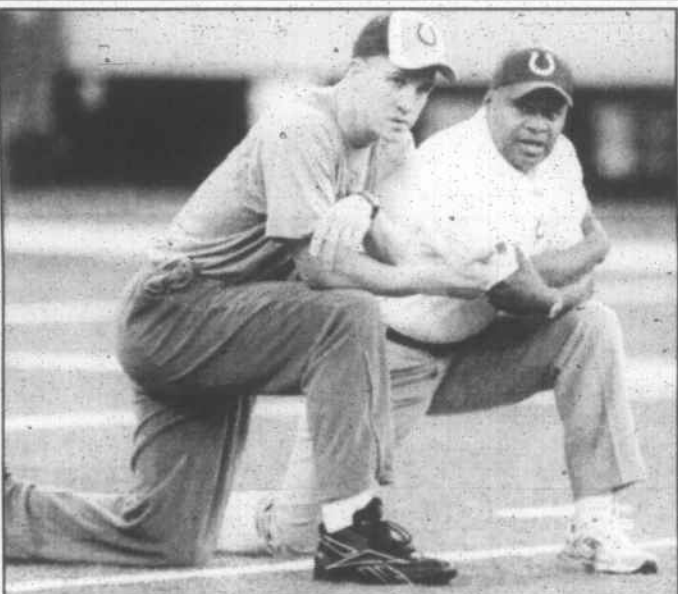
My number four baller is Mt. Tabor's *Melissa Calicot*. I love Calicot's game. Don't get me wrong, I think Shay Jones is special for the Spartans. But Calicot is the key component to the Spartan's success on the court. And, Calicot would be good with any school. She's definitely not a system player.

My number five baller is Bishop McGuinness sophomore *Whitney Knight*. Knight is one of my favorite players. But I don't see her play enough to put her higher on my list. Come playoff time, she'll probably be the main baller I'm thinking about, though. When it comes to potential, Knight blows the doors off the chart. No female baller has more potential than the young and talented point guard. I mean, she was getting ACC letters in middle school. That's potential.

My number six baller is Glenn's *Madison Dulaney*. Dulaney seems like she's got tremendous heart. I mean, the Bobcats aren't as talented as they've been in the past. But they still made it to the Mary Garber title game. That was mostly because of the play of Dulaney. I'd take her any day.

Parkland's Jacmin Cromartie and *J'Mia Pollock* both come in at my number six spot. Cromartie has got some serious skills. And, I really like how hard she works for the Lady Mustangs. Pollock also works hard for Parkland. She could easily be the most athletic post player in the city. Pollock is very athletic. Both of those players make Parkland a serious threat this season.

Carver's Taqeria Rhyne is my number seven baller. She's been hampered by some kind of hand injury for most of the season. But she's still managed to do her thing. She's got one of the best jumpers around



Jim Caldwell was officially named the new Indianapolis Colts head-coach earlier this week.

the city. And, she's fearless on the court. A lot of what Carver does this season is going to depend on how well she continues to play.

Winston-Salem Prep's Raquel Cuffie is my number eight baller. She plays defense like no other. And, she also seems to play pretty hard every game. I like her swagger. I can tell she's confident in her game. Cuffie will be doing her thing at North Texas next year.

Mt. Tabor's Shay Jones is nine on my list. She's the talented baller that's going to Charleston Southern next year. That was also the same school that former Spartan *Natalie Caldwell* attended. Jones seems like a cool girl. She definitely keeps it cool on the court.

Parkland's Victoria Davis is my 10 baller. I actually think she's more versatile than some of the ballers I've already mentioned. I have to see how well she does in a full season of playing guard and small forward. At North, she was purely a post player. So far, she's looking very good.

The final five ballers on my list are *Kaella Bellefeuille (Glenn)*, *Tori Cook (West)*, *Yasmeen Alston (Reynolds)*, *Sydney Surratt (Parkland)* and *Alana Beroth (Reagan)*.

In my opinion, those are some of the best female ballers around.

Caldwell takes over Colts

My favorite NFL coach Jim Caldwell got an early birthday present earlier this week. Caldwell, who turns 54 on Friday, was officially intro-

duced Jim Caldwell as the new Indianapolis Colts head coach on Tuesday.

His new bio was already posted and revised on the Colts website by Wednesday morning. Coach Caldwell signed a four-year deal with the organization.

Caldwell has been my favorite coach ever since he joined the Indianapolis Colts in 2002. Sure, he was an assistant coach. But he was an assistant that I knew. I'm all for athletes and coaches that I know better than others. Coach Caldwell is now a head coach that I know.

In case you didn't know, coach Caldwell replaced Tony Dungy, who decided to retire after 13 consecutive seasons as an NFL head coach. The last seven have been with Indianapolis.

Caldwell has served as quarterbacks coach, as well as assistant head coach. That role gave him more familiarity with the team and its star, Peyton Manning. The new head coach was previously with Dungy in Tampa Bay as a quarterbacks coach, and has held coaching jobs with several schools, including Penn State and Colorado. In his only head coaching experience, he went 26-63 in eight seasons with Wake Forest.

Congrats to coach Caldwell. Also, congrats to Mrs. Cheryl Caldwell (his wife), as well as Jimmy, Jermaine, Jared and Natalie.

Anthony Hill is the sports editor for The Chronicle. He can be reached at 722-8624 (ext. 111) or ahill@wschronicle.com.

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