

SPORTS WEEK

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Rams regrouping after losing key players

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE
FOR THE CHRONICLE

Over a two-year span, Winston-Salem State has gone about as far as a team can go in the Division II football playoffs without winning a national championship.

The upcoming season, however, figures to be an uphill climb for a program that lost 22 seniors from last year's team that lost to Valdosta State (Ga.) in the national championship game. Two seasons ago, the Rams lost to Wayne State (Mich.) in the semifinal round.

WSSU is 27-2 over the past two seasons, and even though there were heavy losses, the Rams have a reputation for reloading. So, there's no question that Coach Connell Maynor will have his team primed to make another deep run in the post-season.



Smith

Based on the pre-season national polls, it's evident that the prognosticators view WSSU as a solid choice to earn a bid to the 16-team playoff field. The Rams are ranked sixth (Lindy's Football) and 11th (Sporting News) in the Division II polls.

"Every year our goals are to go undefeated in the CIAA, go to the playoffs and win the national championship," said Maynor. "So the question is whether we can achieve that or not. We have a lot of work ahead of us and there's so much to replace on offense. But we'll find a way. I'm the head coach and offensive coordinator, so it's up to me to figure it out."

Making sustained playoff runs is not an automatic — not even for the perennial national title contenders. In 2011, Winston-Salem State, Wayne State, Pittsburg State (Kan.) and Delta State (Miss.) made it to the Final Four of Division II football. A year ago, WSSU was the only team to make it



WSSU Photo by Garrett Garna

Coach Maynor leads his team to battle.

back to the national semis. The other Final Four schools from two years ago didn't even qualify for the 2012 playoffs.

Looking ahead to 2013, the Rams have major gaps to fill. Kameron Smith, the best quarterback in WSSU school history is gone, and so is All-American center Markus Lawrence. It doesn't help matters that three big-play receivers (Jameze Massey, Jahuann Butler and Jamal Williams) also finished their careers last year. Those three combined for 3,343 receiving yards and 39 touchdowns.

Anthony Carrothers, who served as Smith's backup, is set to take charge. Carrothers turned in stellar relief performances late last season when Smith suffered a shoulder injury during the first half of the CIAA championship game. In Smith's absence, Carrothers threw for 714 yards and seven touchdowns.

While Carrothers has the inside track on

the starting job, it's hardly a lock. Redshirt junior DeShean Townsend could push for playing time.

"Anthony played well last season and he has an edge with his experience," said Maynor. "But he'll have to earn it. We don't give starting jobs away. When practice starts, all jobs are up for grabs."

The defense, spearheaded by All-American linebacker Carlos Fields (117 tackles) has the potential to maintain its status as one of the most formidable in the country. All-American safety Malcolm Rowe will be sorely missed, along with fellow departing seniors Dominique Tate, Darryl Pulliam and Justin Wilkerson.

"Expectations are always high for us and our fans," said Maynor. "We give our best effort to live up to it and try to make it happen (reach the national championship game). It's a major challenge, but we're not afraid of challenges. That's why we coach."



Jackie Joyner-Kersey

Olympic champ helps kickoff competition

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey was the special guest during the Opening Ceremonies of the 47th USATF National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships on Tuesday. The competition is being held from July 22-28 at N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro.

Events begin daily at 8 a.m. and are open to the general public. Many of today's Olympic stars began their track and field careers competing in the USATF National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships. Other current Olympic athletes are also slated to make guest appearances throughout the week.

Up to 10,000 athletes are expected to compete. Entry for this event is based on athlete performances at the Preliminary, Association and Regional levels of the 2013 USATF Junior Olympic Program. Competition takes place in six two-year divisions, with athletes generally falling between the ages of 7-18.

With a seating capacity of 20,000, A&T's Irwin Belk Track hosted the 2006 USATF Youth National Championships and the 2009 Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships. The facility is proving to be a premier host for this year's Junior Olympic competition.

Tickets may be purchased online at <http://www.visitgreensboronc.com/usatf-ticket-sales>.

Deacs, Blue Devils victorious in rec league play

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT



Submitted Photo

The Blue Devils

In week three of the Hanes Hosiery Community Center Summer Basketball League, the Deacons defeated the Wolfpack 29-20 in the 6-10-year-olds division.

Josiah Crosby led the Deacons with 13 points, while Noah Marshall added 8 and Christian Sutton added 3. Reagan Wilder and Calum Davis each contributed 2 points.

Cory Simons, scoring 6 points, and Kyndall Barr's 5 points led the Wolfpack. The Wolfpack received additional help from Makhi Beard, Dion McIntosh, Jordan Mack-Perry and DJ Barkley.

In the division's second game, the Blue Devils defeated the Tarheels 24-21. Jibril Caesar and Josiah Banks each scored 8 points for the Blue Devils. They were aided by Donald Ray-Grier, Elijah Horton, Jacob Brown and Gah'ques Ligons.

Zech Gibson scored 11 for the Heels, while Jerrell Cohen contributed 7. Monay Galloway and Marcaveyon Twitty also contributed points.

Legends to be inducted into Hall

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Rock-n-Roll Express will be honored at the Wrestling Legends Fanfest in Charlotte on Friday, Aug. 2 at Charlotte's Hilton University Place Hotel.

It's been 30 years since the Rock-n-Roll Express (Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson) became The Beatles of the wrestling scene, as they combined sex appeal with high energy and talent in the ring.



Press Photo

A 1980s photo of the Rock-n-Roll Express.

They arrived in the Carolinas in 1985 and, in an auspicious debut, won the highly coveted NWA world tag-team title their first night in by defeating Ivan Koloff and Krusher Khruschev in a Shelby match taped for "Mid-Atlantic Championship Wrestling" television.

Over the course of a career, The Rock-n-Roll Express would hold dozens of regional and world tag-team titles. It was that first world tag-team title victory, however, that Morton cherishes the most.

"That was a big deal," he said. "Winning that first world tag-team title was the greatest of all."

They still remember how wrestling was when they first started teaming in 1983.

"Everywhere we went, we broke box office records," said Gibson. "It was amazing."

If you're a longtime fan, you can probably still remember the pulsating chant — "Rock and Roll! Rock and Roll! Rock and Roll!" — that reverberated off the walls of every building where Mid-Atlantic wrestling was held during the '80s.

In addition to being inducted into the Hall, the duo will sign autographs and pose for photos at Fanfest, which will be held from Aug. 1-4.

"I'm really looking forward to this. Being inducted is a great honor," said Gibson. "It's a chance for us to give back to the fans. We've always put the fans first. It's good to come back to the Carolinas and see old friends."

For more information on the event, visit NWALegends.com.



Submitted Photo

The team poses with coaches.

Mavs reach national title game

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Mavericks 11U AAU D3 Basketball team came up a little short in its bid for a national championship in Hampton, Va. from July 4-8.

The Mavs won an opening pool game against Maryland Rockets by 44 to 21. They lost their second game to the Massachusetts Ballers, 40-37.

They got back on track in the third game, beating the VA Allstar Hawks 25-22. After that victory, the team went on a 4-0 winning streak in Bracket play, beating Maryland's 6th Man Sports 42-31, the Richmond Swoosh 54-41, the

West Va. Rampage 41-36 and Baltimore's Mt. Royal 33-29, a win that put the Mavs in the national championship game.

The team played the Washington, DC Takeover for the title, losing 45-30. The Mavericks 11U record for the year is 33-7. The team finished second in the national ranking.

The team is coached and owned by Mike Gonzalez and Willie "BB" Patrick Jr. The assistant coaches are Antonio Wardlow and Nathan Belcher. The Mavericks are sponsored by Top Priority care Services, LLC and several other local businesses and churches.