

SPORTS WEEK

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FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Girls' Track



Katlin Sherman (left) and Ebony Williams (right) ran wire-to-wire in the 300-meter dash at the state indoor track championships.

Parkland girls repeat as state indoor track champs

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE
FOR THE CHRONICLE

It really didn't matter that Parkland wasn't at full strength last week. The Mustangs repelled all challengers to win the team title at the girls' Class 4-A State Indoor Track and Field Championships for the second year in a row.

As the meet entered its final hour of competition at the IDL Fast Track in Winston-Salem, there was no doubt about which team would reign. The only question was who would finish second, third and fourth.

Parkland piled up 89 points to win handily over Apex (47) and Cary (46) and Leesville Road (41).

"It was a job well done," said Coach Antwan Hughes. "The girls put forth a lot hard work and dedication on the track and they deserved every moment of excitement that came their way during the championships."

Individually, there was no denying senior hurdler/sprinter Ebony Williams. After posting runner-up and third-place finishes at state meets in

previous seasons, Williams delivered a sweetheart performance on Valentine's Day - winning four gold medals and being named the state championship MVP.

"I was surprised when they called my name," said Williams, who signed with Clemson. "Winning MVP just topped everything off."

Williams bagged the first individual state championship of her career in the 55-meter hurdles. After getting off to a slow start, she accelerated after the second hurdle to breeze to a state-record (7.81 seconds) over runner-up Gabriele Cunningham of Mallard Creek (7.87).

"She beat me to the first hurdle, but I didn't panic

because I was still within striking distance" said Williams. "Once I got my speed going around the third hurdle, I felt good about my chances. I didn't expect to set any records. All I focused on was winning."

The 300-meter dash proved to be a replay of an on-going battle between teammates, which takes place every day at Parkland practices.

Williams and Katlin Sherman matched each other stride for stride, but it was Williams (39.06 seconds) who prevailed by an eyelash over Sherman (39.09) at the end.

"Ebony and I are even-

See Parkland on B2



Williams



Photo by Livingstone College Athletics
Cierra York of Livingstone glides to the basket for a lay-up.

Cierra York of Winston-Salem helps Livingstone women shine

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE
FOR THE CHRONICLE

As a basketball player, Cierra York of Winston-Salem knows all about lean times. That's because her first three seasons at Livingstone College are memorable for all the wrong reasons.

During that torturous stretch of 82 games, the Lady Blue Bears posted a forgettable winning percentage of .329.

Up until last weekend, this current season was one for the record books. York's team was the sizzling-hot topic of CIAA women's basketball. Livingstone was 22-0 and No. 5 in the USA Today Division II national rankings for the week of Feb. 10.

The dream season, however, quickly turned into a nightmare. The school conducted an internal investigation and discovered that the women's

team had used an ineligible player.

Livingstone forfeited 18 games and its once-perfect record went to 4-18. On the day after the school publicized its finding, the Lady Blue Bears suffered their first on-the-court loss of the season to Johnson C. Smith (70-66).

Kyra Crosby, a gifted power forward who led the team in scoring and rebounding, has been ruled ineligible. Initially, Crosby played at Alabama then transferred to Georgia State prior to her arrival at Livingstone.

York and Coach Anita Howard declined to comment about the infraction because the school's investigation is still in progress.

Even with all that has happened, York remains upbeat. With two games left to play in the regular season, she's confident that Livingstone will regroup.

See York on B2

JV Basketball

Mount Tabor subdues Reagan in JV play

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE
FOR THE CHRONICLE

At every level of basketball, rebounding is fundamental.

In the case of the two best junior varsity teams in the Central Piedmont Conference, rebounding was the telling story. Mount Tabor used its size and muscle to subdue Reagan in a convincing 76-64 road win on Feb. 10. With the victory, the Spartans clinched the conference championship with one game left to play in the regular season.

Coach Willie Harrison's crew had visions of closing out their season with an unblemished record in league play. Instead, the season ended on a low note as the Spartans suffered an agonizing 58-56 overtime loss to Davie County in the season finale on Feb. 13.

The War Eagles helped their cause immensely by

hitting eight 3-pointers for the game. Early in the third quarter, Davie went up 39-18, but Mount Tabor clawed its way back into contention in the final minutes of regulation, which ended in a 47-47 tie.

The Spartans had an opportunity to pull out the victory in the final seconds of OT, but Isaiah Wilkins' 3-point shot attempt from the right corner bounced off the rim as the final buzzer sounded. Kai Leslie topped Mount Tabor with 19 points, Wilkins contributed 11 and Tyrek McNeil finished with 10 points.

"We played well in the third and fourth quarter. That's what enabled us to make a comeback," said Harrison, whose team finished the season at 16-4, 10-1 in conference play. "Our ultimate goal was to go undefeated in the conference, but we couldn't get it done. We didn't want the end our season with a

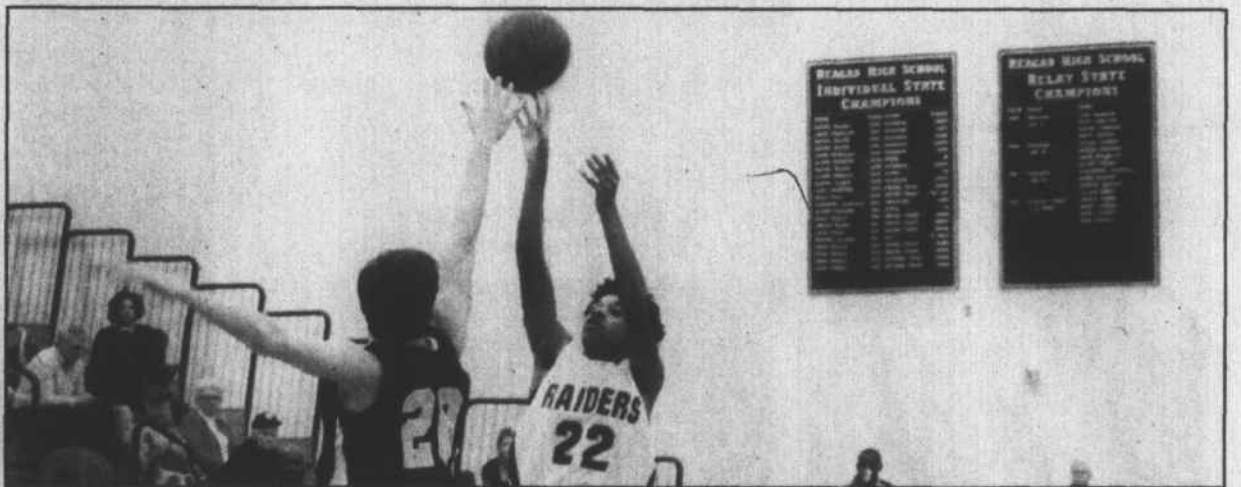


Photo by Craig T. Greenlee
Raiders guard Trey McDaniel launches a jump over stretched-out arms of Mount Tabor's Bond Craver (20).

loss. There's really no reason to cry about it, especially since we had already won the conference two nights earlier."

In a game that was expected to be tightly-contested from start to finish, Mount Tabor managed to keep Reagan from gaining momentum. Every time the

Raiders pulled to within 5 points of the lead, the Spartans were able to score enough points to maintain a comfortable working margin.

"Coming in, we knew that we'd get Reagan's best shot and we were ready," said Coach Willie Harrison of Mount Tabor. "I thought

we outplayed them at both ends. Even though we had some foul trouble, we executed very well on defense."

Up until the fourth quarter, Reagan (18-4, 9-2 conference) never trailed by more than 8 points. The Raiders were forced to play catch-up because the

Spartans owned the boards. Reagan rarely got off more than one shot per offensive possession. Mount Tabor, in the meantime, maintained its cushion by capitalizing on back-door lay-ups and offensive put-backs.

"Our kids battled and

See Mount Tabor on B2

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