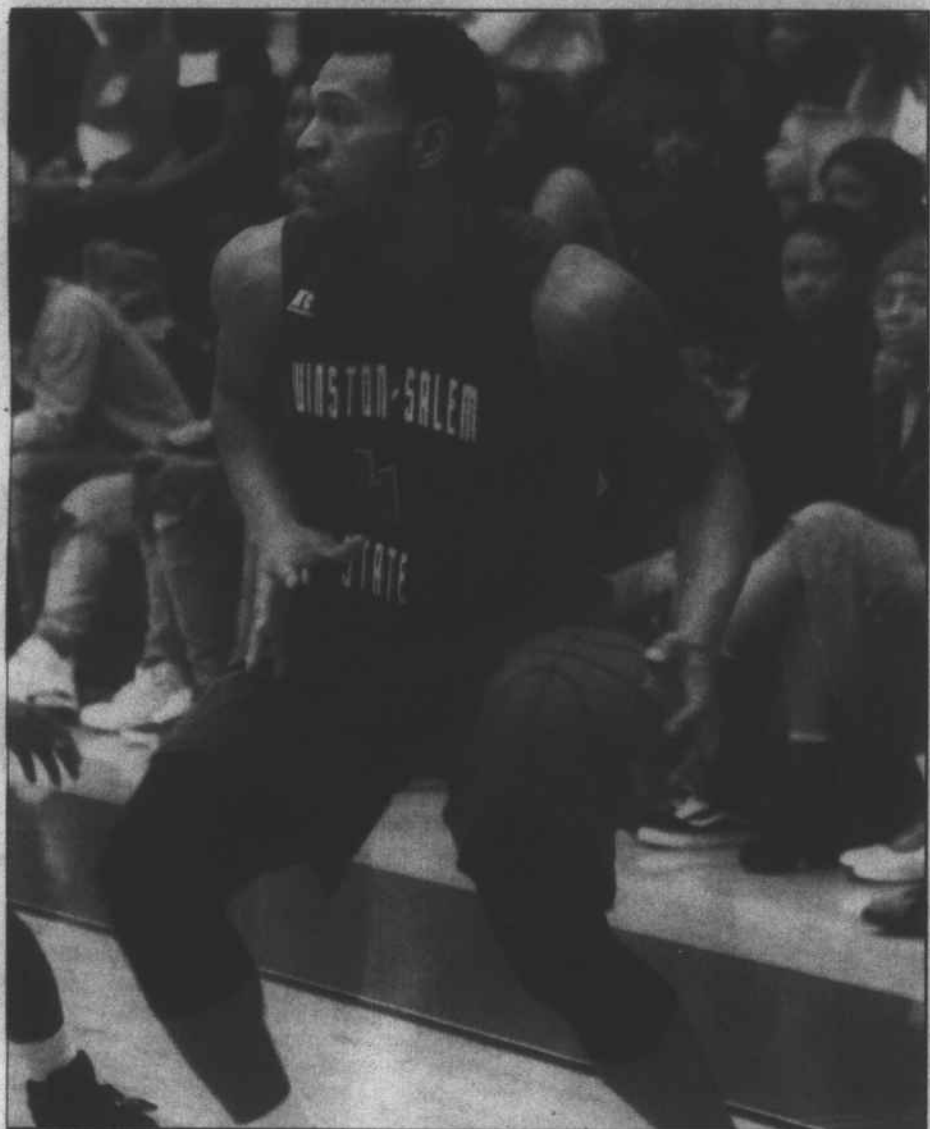




Kandace Tate (3) is the leading scorer and rebounder for the WSSU women.

Photos by Craig T. Greenlee



Ray Harris, a 6-5 guard, has recorded multiple double-doubles for the Rams

## Teams

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McAllister — have played well at times.

The Rams have seen-sawed their way through the season. Whether they can finish on a high note in the league tournament next week remains to be seen.

"For us to play to our full potential, it's important for us to cut down on turnovers, get some balanced scoring, and do a better job from the free throw line," said coach James Wilhelmi of WSSU. "This has been a weird year in the CIAA. It's been a season in which any team can win on any given night. So, we're hoping to finish (the regular season) strong and we'll see what happens in Charlotte."

### Women will lean on defense

The chief issue for Winston-Salem State's women is anemic offense. They're not the worst shooting team in the CIAA (39.3 percent from the field). When it comes to putting points on the board, however, the Lady Rams

are at the bottom of the stack in a 12-team league, averaging in the neighborhood of 59 to 60 points a game.

There are no double-digits scorers on the roster. Kandace Tate (9.7 points) leads the way, followed by Jasmine Carter (8.5 points).

"There have been some good showings this season," said coach A.G. Hall. "What's really hurt is that we've had problems putting the ball in the basket. We're not shooting the ball as well as we need to. That's why points are so hard to come by."

Additionally, turnovers have stymied this team in its efforts to establish winning consistency. Coming down the stretch of the regular season, Hall's crew averaged close to 23 turnovers per game, the fourth-highest in the conference.

A prime reason why the offense has struggled is due to the absence of sophomore guard Tiana Edwards, who averaged 9.1 points prior to being sidelined for the season with a stress fracture. Edwards has played in only nine games

and hasn't been available since late December.

"In spite of those shortcomings, we continue to put forth the necessary effort," said Hall. "We have players who are still committed to finding ways to win. They're determined to make a big push in these last few games as they look forward to the upcoming conference tournament."

Defensively, the end results have been the direct opposite. The Lady Rams are tops in the conference in points allowed per game (58.4) and field goal percentage defense (.351). The ability to slow opponents down has Hall excited about the possibilities for the conference tournament.

"Defense is our strength and that's what wins championships," said Hall. "That's what we hang our hats on. For this group, it's a matter of each person getting a little better offensively every day. If we can do that, take better care of the basketball, and defend the way we have all season, I like our chances in the tournament."



Photo by Craig T. Greenlee

Spartans forward Darren Crump (5), guarded by Dashan Adams of Reynolds, gave his team a boost with his all-around play at both ends of the floor this season.

## Mount Tabor

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Spartans 63-52 victory. Darren Crump (15 points) led the offense that had three other players who scored in double figures. Dillon Bullard (fouled out in the fourth quarter) and Recardo Paige finished with 13 points apiece. Quest Aldridge chipped in with 11.

Mount Tabor got sizzling perimeter shooting from Paige and Aldridge who combined to hit six 3-pointers (three each).

The Spartans took control of the game for good midway through the third quarter. West Forsyth rallied to close the gap to 48-44. At that point, Mount Tabor started to pull away.

Bullard completed a three-point play, followed by Crump's steal and score on a fast-break lay-up. By the end of the quarter, the Spartans held a commanding 58-48 lead.

"We got off to a good start, made some shots and played defense very well, especially at the beginning," said Harrison. "They never adjusted to our (1-3-1) zone in the first half. Other than a few slip-ups in the second half, we were able to maintain on offense and defense."

In the final analysis, the Titans

couldn't overcome the Spartans' decisive run over the last half of the third quarter.

JaQuan McMillian was the top scorer for West Forsyth with 17 points. Jaylon McMillon was next with 12 points.

"We were able to get it (deficit) down to four points in the third quarter," said coach Jefferey Williams of West Forsyth. "But then, they came down and had an and-one (three-point play). After that, we couldn't get much going. They did a good job of opening us up (on offense) and attacking the gaps."

In the loss to Davie, the Spartans failed to close-out on 3-pointers and it cost them dearly in a 74-70 overtime loss last Tuesday. This defeat could be considered somewhat surprising. It was almost a month earlier that the Spartans beat the War Eagles by 27 points (59-32).

Bullard topped Mount Tabor with 26 points and Paige added 13. Carson Anthis and Aldridge contributed nine points apiece.

"Davie shot the 3-ball very well," said Harrison. "And they got some good looks on dribble-drives and kick-outs (passes). We didn't do much with our help defense and they just killed us."



Photo by Craig T. Greenlee

In this first indoor state championship, Joseph Littlejohn of Winston-Salem Prep won medals in the 300-meter dash (third) and the 55-meter dash (fourth) in the Class 1-A/2-A state meet.

## Track

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Not only that, but there was nobody in the field who could push her to her limit.

At the start, Torres seized control as the front-runner. With a little over 300 meters to go, McNeill bolted to the lead and never looked back. Torres eventually faded and finished a distant second at 1:15.98.

"Initially, I was going to try to beat the state record," said McNeill, who signed to run track at North Carolina last November. "I had a pretty decent race. I got a little bit slower (over the first 200) than usual. That kind of hurt me in the end, even though I had a strong finish."

For the day, McNeill won two medals in the three events she competed in. Aside from winning the 500, she ran the opening leg of Parkland's 4x400 relay, which included Kimani Davis, Shannone Cannon and Zjinaiya

Francis.

The Mustangs four-some finished as the runner-up (3:59.97) behind state champ Southeast Raleigh who clocked 3:53.64. McNeill added to Parkland's point total with a fifth-place finish in the 300-meter dash.

"McKinley came in and did her thing," said coach Antwan Hughes of Parkland. "Since she came in second last year to Layla White, I knew she really wanted it. In the 500, she did what she wanted to do."

As for the 300 (40.25 seconds), it was only a matter of her coming back and giving whatever she had left in the tank to give. McKinley pretty much did what we asked her to do, so I congratulate her on this being her first state championship in the 500."

Ironically, it was McNeill who had a direct hand in the 500 record being set in last year's race against three-time indoor 500 champ Layla White of

Cary. In that race, McNeill competed from start to finish and lost by less than a meter as White collapsed after crossing the finish.

White and McNeill resumed their friendly rivalry during the spring outdoor season. At the state championships, McNeill evened the score by beating White in the open 400 meters to claim her first state championship in an individual event.

McNeill hasn't run her best races yet. This year she got a late start in training because of all the traveling she did as a prized college track recruit who had nearly 20 scholarship offers.

"With all the official visits I made, I didn't start training until mid-November," she said. "Usually, I start in early October. But I always feel that there's room for improvement. I'm still working towards reaching my peak during the outdoor season."