

**Girls**

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Chapel Hill.

The Phoenix and Camels finished 1-2 in the Northwest Conference this season. In recent years, the two schools located in East Winston have developed an intriguing rivalry.

Prep, the defending state champ, earned its spot in the regionals by blistering South Davidson, 67-34 in the fourth round on Tuesday night. In the meantime, 12th-seeded Atkins took a 5-hour bus ride to the mountains and pulled off a shocking 48-44 upset win over Murphy Hiwassee Dam, the West Region's No. 1 seed.

"We came out ready to play" (against South Davidson)," said coach Eugene Love of Winston-Salem Prep. "We wanted to show our strengths defensively. We're excited about getting back to the regionals. The girls have worked extremely hard all season. We're going to keep our minds focused on our theme: 'It's our time.' That's what we keep telling ourselves."

Although the Phoenix won both of its regular-season games against the Camels, it was hardly a cakewalk. Prep (26-3) registered a 44-37 victory at home in early January.

Three weeks later, the Phoenix prevailed again, but just barely in a 35-34 win on Atkins' home court. The outcome wasn't determined until the final seconds of play.

Atkins (21-6) is having its best season in school history. So, in spite of two losses to Prep, the Camels will not lack confidence in their quest to dethrone the champs. Aside from the narrow margins of defeat, they know that the Phoenix can be beaten because they've done it before. It was last season (when Prep won the state title) when Atkins split its two conference games against the Phoenix.

"There's not a lot of pressure on us," said swing player Dominique Claytor of Prep. "But as a team, it means a lot (to be able to put ourselves in position to win another championship). And it's all because of the work and effort we've put in on and off the court. We just want to finish out our season year with a win."

For Winston-Salem Prep, the third and fourth playoff rounds had a different kind of flow. The Phoenix struggled against East Wilkes in the third round and trailed by seven points early in the third quarter.

Point guard Jada Craig

(19 points) and company turned up the defensive pressure to build a double-digits lead which led to Prep's 53-35 victory last Saturday.

Three nights later against South Davidson, the Phoenix bolted to a 16-0 lead at the end of the first quarter and shifted gears to cruise control to win handily. Craig and Chrisalyn Boston scored 14 points apiece. Claytor finished with 13 and Mychala Wolfe contributed 10 points to the cause.

Atkins overcame a shaky start against Hiwassee Dam to secure its regional berth.

Late in the third quarter, point guard Tyler Mercer scored eight points and had one assist during a 14-0 run that gave Atkins a six-point cushion by the end of the quarter. Mercer was the Camels top scorer with 14 points, followed by Armani Hampton, who finished with 13.

In the third round against fourth-seeded Elkin, the Camels defense set the tone in a 47-33 road victory. The shot-blocking front line of Hampton, Saryna Carpenter and Chandler Robinson made life difficult for Elkins shooters. Taylor Blakely and Carpenter were the Camels' leading scorers with 12 points apiece.



Photos by Craig T. Greenlee  
**Jayde Grant of Prep applies on-the-ball defensive pressure against Tess Jolly of East Wilkes.**



**Coach Louis Lowery has guided the Camels to their best record in school history.**



**Boys**

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offs. The Phoenix, the region's No. 5 seed, punched its ticket by imposing its will in a convincing 68-52 road victory over top-seeded Avery County on Tuesday night in a fourth-round match-up.

"Our motto for this year is: 'tough players win,'" said coach Andrew Gould, whose team improved to 21-7. "We're moving the ball and sharing the ball and we're playing together as a team. Every night, it's always somebody different who

steps up to give the team what it needs."

Prep now shifts its focus to the next round. The Phoenix will face high-scoring Lincoln Charter in the regional championship on Saturday. Game site and tip-off time were announced on Wednesday after The Chronicle went to press.

Saturday's winner will play for the state championship on March 12 in Chapel Hill.

The Phoenix got the max from its inside/outside game, much to the dismay of a standing-room only crowd in Avery County's home gym. Freshman swing player Chaz Gwyn,

who led all scorers with 22 points, provided all the perimeter firepower that Prep needed.

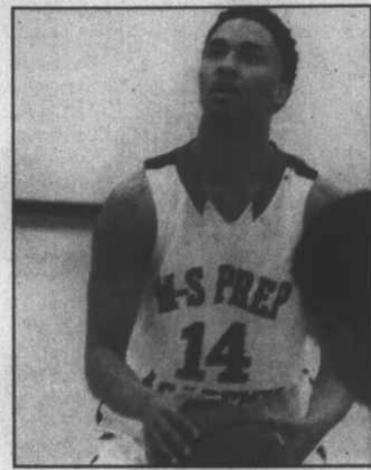
In the paint, 6-7 junior power forward Zaire Williams dominated with 20 points. Justice Goodloe scored 11 points and Kendrick Edwards finished with nine.

The Phoenix got off to a slow start and trailed 15-10 at the end of the first quarter. In the second quarter, the momentum changed in Prep's favor. The Phoenix doubled their first-quarter offensive output to take a 31-25 lead at the half.

Winston-Salem Prep seems to be peaking at the

Photos by Craig T. Greenlee

**Isaiah Penn comes off the bench to provide high-energy and intensity for the Phoenix, who are looking to go to the state championship game for the fifth year in a row.**



**During the late stages of the season, Chaz Gwyn has stepped up as a prime scorer for the Phoenix.**

Phoenix has developed into a bona fide powerhouse at the Class 1-A level.

During that stretch, Winston-Salem Prep has won four state titles, which included a three-peat in 2012, 2013 and 2014. A year ago, the Phoenix lost for the first time in the state finals (73-70 to East Carteret).

Gould has developed a deep appreciation for this year's squad, which has only three seniors on its roster. The Phoenix's collective attitude about the game, he explained, gives this year's team an identity that makes them unique.

"The best way to describe it is all for one and

one for all," said Gould. "Every player is most concerned about doing his part. With this group, nobody cares who gets the credit or the glory. It's all about winning."

Prep reached the fourth round of this year's playoffs by making quick work of Matthews Queen's Grant in a third round contest last Saturday. The Phoenix led 20-4 at the end of the first quarter and never looked back.

Gwyn led the way with a game-high 33 points and Daivien Williams chipped in with 14. Williams finished with 11 points.

**Fame**

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pressures of recruiting can cause some to become disenfranchised with the game, assuming that because they're not recruited by big schools or even at all, that they should end their dream of playing at the next level.

For Tory Woodbury, these hurdles only proved to be further motivation. In his Hall of Fame induction interview with Mr. Charlie Neal, Tory said, "I didn't have many options (after high school). I had a basketball tryout at North Carolina Central that didn't work out, and my grandmother still wanted me to go to school and make something of myself, so I decided to stay home and attend Winston-Salem State ... and I guess you could say it worked out."

To say "it worked out" is an understatement as Woodbury would go from walking onto the team to becoming a four-year starter and team captain for three years at WSSU. During his playing career, he was a natural playmaker at quarterback with the innate ability to move the ball through the air as well as on the ground. In an exclusive interview with The Chronicle after the Hall of Fame ceremony, Tory joked that he "was

Cam Newton before Cam Newton.

"That Superman thing is old, I been doing that; only thing Cam got on me is the dab," he said while we chatted about a highlight on his Hall of Fame video in which he scored a touchdown and lifted up his jersey to reveal a Superman shirt, doing this in 1999, almost 10 years before Cam Newton adopted the gesture at Auburn University.

Similarly to the current league MVP, Tory put up historic numbers in his collegiate career at Winston-Salem State University, leaving as the school's all-time passing leader with 4,493 yards and 38 touchdowns, and running for over 1,000 career-rushing yards.

After an All-CIAA senior season, back-to-back CIAA Championships, and back-to-back Pioneer Bowl MVPs, Tory found himself having to make a similar decision to the one he had made four years earlier. He was not a high-ranked NFL prospect and as an African-American quarterback coming from a small division II black college at the turn of the millennium, his chances of being drafted and making an NFL roster were slim. But again Tory Woodbury was undeterred by his obstacles and decided to continue his football career against all odds.

Through hard work and determination, Tory managed to get picked up by the Jets practice squads for the 2001-2003 seasons, as well as playing with the Buffalo Bills from 2005-2007. His never-give-up attitude and love of the game propelled him to keep pushing forward where others may have hung up their cleats.

Charlie Neal asked Tory during his interview what he took away from his NFL experience. Tory replied, "It's always business first, that's what I had to learn. Being from a small black college and a black quarterback, the odds were against me, but you know, I didn't try to use that as an excuse. It was tough, but I just prayed and worked my butt off."

Since the end of his playing career, Tory Woodbury has re-focused his efforts on giving back to the community and passing his knowledge of the game on younger generations. He has managed to directly affect kids who are growing up just like he did in his hometown through coaching, as well as through The Tory Woodbury Foundation, which provides school supplies, clothing, and meals for community members in need. When asked what his motivating factor for giving back to his community was, he replied, "I've had

so many mentors like (Ben) Piggott and (James) Blackburn, all those guys at the Sims center, and the Boys and Girls club. I knew I wanted to give back, because they kinda raised me when I wasn't at home or my grandmother was at work. I would go to the Sims Center and I knew I was in good hands."

Currently, Tory Woodbury is the Offensive Coordinator at Johnson C. Smith University, serving under the tutelage of his mentor and former coach at Winston-Salem State, Kermit Blount. Charlie Neal asked Tory about his future aspirations in coaching and he laughed as he told him, "My boss is here so I need to be careful how I answer this question ... but I have aspirations of making it to the top, of being the head coach. I've had a chance to learn from Coach Blount for years now and when it's the right time to spread my wings ... I'm gonna take it."

If his past is any indication, you can bet that Tory Woodbury will be making his debut as a head coach somewhere before we know it.

Stay tuned to The Chronicle's social media and YouTube for an exclusive video segment and interview with Tory Woodbury from the CIAA Hall of Fame.



Photos by Walt Pitt  
**Tory Woodbury, left, is shown with his mentor James Blackburn.**