



Mt. Tabor guard Javon McAlister tries to get by a Reynolds defender during the championship game on Tuesday, Dec. 6. The Spartans fought hard but in the end Reynolds took home the 2016 Branded for Knowledge Basketball Classic title.



Branded for Knowledge CEO Bobby Kimbrough presents Reynolds point guard Travon Murphy with the Most Valuable Player award following the championship game on Tuesday night.

Photos by Tevin Stinson

Freshmen take center court during Branded for Knowledge Classic

Demons hold off Spartans to take 2016 title

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

With December upon us the 2016-2017 basketball season is starting to pick up steam. While upper classmen prepare for big name tournaments like the David Lash, earlier this week the ninth graders took center stage during the Branded for Knowledge (BFK) Basketball Classic.

This year eight local schools; Atkins, East Forsyth, Glenn, Mount Tabor, North Forsyth, Parkland, Reagan, and R.J. Reynolds battled it out for the title and bragging rights for an entire year.

The only tournament in the area exclusive to high school freshman the BFK

Classic was started by security expert Bobby Kimbrough in 2014. Each year the tournament held at Glenn High School is filled with tons of excitement and this year's tournament was arguably the best yet.

Here's a summary of the semi-finals and the finals.

Mt. Tabor 49, Reagan 47; after picking up easy wins in their first round games against North Forsyth and Atkins, the Spartans and Raiders added another chapter to their storied rivalry that dates back to 2005 when Reagan first opened.

What looked like an easy win for the Spartans early quickly turned into an instant classic. In the first half the Spartans used their height, and a fast pace offense to jump out to an early lead, but the Raiders came storming back. After trailing 31-18 at the half Reagan started the third quarter

with a 19-8 run to cut the lead to only two points.

The Raiders threatened again late but in the end, the Spartans managed to hold on to the lead, and take the victory. Javon McAlister, Ogden Kirk, Michael Rawlinson, Davis Blackwell led the way for the Spartans. Aaron Potter and Happle Randolph put on notable performances for the Raiders.

The second semi-final match up

Parkland 46, Reynolds 50; the second semi-final match up was just as exciting as the first. In the battle between the Mustangs and the Demons, the lead changed at least 10 times. Both teams used a fast pace offense to catch the other defense off guard.

In the game filled with "and ones" and sharp shooting from behind the arc the

Demons upset Parkland, 50-46. Reynolds was led by Tyler Thaxton, Travon Murphy and William Capeeze. Tamauri Miller, Chaz Phifer and Denaris Wardlow had stellar games for the Mustangs.

The championship game

Mt. Tabor 37, Reynolds 45; in the championship game the Cinderella story continued for Reynolds who had the seventh seed coming into the tournament. Behind some strong guard play from tournament MVP Travon Murphy, the Demons escaped with the victory.

Capeeze and Miles Simms also had productive games. Although they fell short of reaching their goal McAlister, Rawlinson and Blackwell all had good games for the Spartans.

Hanes continues to donate sweatshirts to Lash-Chronicle tournament



BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

Hanes has been connected with the David Lash-Chronicle tournament for over a decade. They provide sweatshirts free of charge to all of the team players and coaches. They will also set up donation spots for their sock drive in each high school and the school that has the most donations will receive a donation from Hanes, for their Junior Varsity basketball team.

Hanes, America's No.1 apparel brand is a leading brand of intimate apparel, underwear, sleepwear, socks and casual apparel. Hanes products can be found at leading retailers nationwide and online direct to consumers at www.Hanes.com. Hanes is a flagship brand of Hanesbrands Inc.

"Here at Hanes we've been long standing supporters of the Lash-Chronicle tournament and the reason why is simple. It represents all that is best about our Winston-Salem community which is the value of hard work, dedication and being a part of a team," said Cheryl E. Lindsay, Director of Human Resources- Global Diversity & Inclusion/Global Community Engagement for Hanes.

"These teenagers are really the future and we want them to know that they're valued and that we really care about what they accomplish. This is a tournament we look forward to every year. It's both exciting and inspiring and we are thrilled to have the chance to be a part of it," Lindsay continued.

Director of the Lash-Chronicle tournament since its inception, Robert Wynn, says he has really enjoyed the support of Hanes throughout the years. He said the kids

really enjoy the hoodies especially the ones with "champion" printed on the front. He wanted to thank Hanes for their continued participation in the tournament.

The coaches and players are very appreciative of Hanes for the donations as well. Walkertown head coach Charles Thomas says he still has his hoodie from years ago and is proud to wear it.

"You definitely need sponsors when you have any type of large event going on and with it being Hanesbrand which is local and homegrown, you're definitely glad they are a part of it," Thomas said. "It means a lot to those kids to have those sweatshirts because you see the pride the JV players walk around with when they have that David Lash sweatshirt on. To have Hanes, a name that's recognizable and one of the top brands out there in the industry, it means a lot to be able to wear that."

WSSU freshman revving up to become next driving sensation

SPECIAL TO
THE CHRONICLE

Walter Thomas III, the youngest of four siblings from Indianapolis, Indiana, always had auto racing in his blood. It's a generational thing going back to his grandfather and his father, who were both race car drivers.

"I fell in love with the sport at a very young age.



Thomas III

Some of my very first memories of life were of being at the race track with my father back when he used to race," recalls Thomas, a freshman at Winston-Salem State University (WSSU).

"As time went on, my dad noticed that I had taken a liking to the sport and decided to give me a shot. And, I guess you could say the rest is history or my story," he says.

His first taste of racing was at the age of 4, behind the wheel of a quarter midget, a developmental race car for children. He

advanced from racing quarter midgets to junior dragsters (a scaled-down version of a top fuel dragster, which can reach speeds of up to 85 mph), and from junior dragsters to bandoleros (a type of entry-level racing in the United States and Canada, where cars can reach in excess of 50 mph, but do not accelerate very quickly. Cars are built like miniature stock cars, with a tube frame and sheet metal cage).

Thomas became the first African-American to win the Outlaw Track Championship at Indianapolis' Speedrome in 2012, even before he was old enough to have a driver's license. He was also awarded NASCAR's Diversity Young Racer award.

"The NASCAR 'Drive for Diversity' searches for minority drivers all over North America, Canada, and Mexico. I'd love to compete on their race team [Rev Racing, owned by Max Siegel] based out of Concord, N.C.," he says. Thomas in regards to his pursuit of becoming a professional racecar driver, "I want to be 'The Michael Jordan of NASCAR.'"

Thomas first best choice to reach his goal was by deciding to attend WSSU. He attended Lawrence North High School, where he had a 3.9 GPA. "I chose WSSU because it was one of the only schools in the entire nation to provide a motorsports program of this caliber. I made up my mind a long time ago about attending this university just for that reason," Thomas said.

Thomas aims not only to make the honor roll but also to make NASCAR's Drive for Diversity 2017 Race Team, a development program that aims to identify young, ethnic minority, female drivers and pit crew members. In October, he was one of 17 drivers who competed at Florida's New Smyrna Speedway at a national tryout. His top speed on the track was 120 miles per hour. Six drivers will be chosen for Rev Racing in January.

"If I am chosen, I'll be able to run in the Whelen All-American series here in North Carolina at Hickory Motor Speedway," Thomas said.

Thomas' long term goal is to obtain his bachelor's degree in Motorsport Management, to become a

full-time cup driver in NASCAR and own his own racing team.

"Through the program at WSSU, Walter will be able to develop the skills

he needs, such as sponsorship management and public relations, to enhance his racing career," said Clay Harshaw, assistant professor in the Department of

Human Performance and Sport Sciences, and coordinator of the WSSU Motorsport Management program.

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