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SPORTS



Fists of fury

Heavyweight boxing champion Evander Holyfield solidified his place in history by beating Michael Moorer. Page 4B

The second season starts for local teams

By Eric James Bozeman  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

The road to the state high school football championship starts Friday.

Four Charlotte teams - West Charlotte, Independence, Providence, and West Mecklenburg - have hopes of winning the prize for the first time since West Charlotte's championship in 1995.

West Charlotte takes a 9-1

record into a first-round game with Greensboro Grimsley. The Lions may have the short road to a championship with the re-emergence of receivers Reggie Blackman and Aaron Alexander in the Lions' 30-13 win over Independence last week.

"Both Aaron and Reggie played well," said head coach Tom Knotts. "They were rusty, but Keith (quarterback Matkins) was glad to see them back, and their

timing with Keith was surprisingly good."

With barely a full week of preparation, Knotts and his staff have worked hard to put more bite in the Lions offense.

"I tend to bear down a little more than the players do, we all as coaches bear down more and hope the kids follow us," he said. "We are going to try to throw to set up the run, and every week we try to add something new, but

hopefully we'll make it real simple for our kids and get back to basics."

Independence (8-3) travels to Greensboro to play Greensboro Page.

"We are very happy," said Patriots head coach Rusty Jester. "It was one of our goals. We are excited to be playing Page. We would rather be playing at home, though."

Independence will try to ride

the arm of quarterback C.J. Leak and the legs of running backs Juan Garner and Antwain Thompson to a first round victory. Jester doesn't plan many adjustments.

"There are no wholesale changes, but we haven't added much all year," Jester said. "If you can stay consistent on offense you tend to do well. When things don't go well, we tend to over-

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PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Dell Curry and Muggsy Bogues were the last of the original Hornets. Now there's only Curry after Bogues' trade last week.

It's hard to say good-bye

By Karl Petraroja  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Charlotte Hornets will never be the same.

The Hornets may be better this year without point guard Muggsy Bogues, whom they traded to Golden State last week, but they won't be as exciting.

Bogues and guard Tony Delk were shipped west to the Warriors for guard B.J. Armstrong. From starting point guard for 10 years to a reserved seat at the end of the Charlotte bench was too much for Bogues. He was unhappy with his limited role and loudly expressed a desire to be traded. The Hornets obliged and a huge piece of their history was gone.

"We've got to realize that trades are going to happen in this business and Muggsy was definitely a leader here and a

well-liked person," forward Glen Rice said.

"I've never seen anyone with such a big heart that is so small and we're going to miss him and wish him the best."



Rice

Though the smallest player in NBA history at 5-3, Bogues' accomplishments in Charlotte were giant. He played in 632 games, second only to Dell Curry, the last original Hornet. Bogues is the team's all-time leader in assists (5,557), steals (1,066) and minutes played (19,768). He ranks 19th in NBA assists all-time and is the league's all-time leader in assists-to-turnover ratio.

"I'm sad to see Muggsy go," center Vlade Divac said. "I'll miss him, he was part of the family but that's how it goes in our business, it's sometimes very tough."

"The trade is unfortunate in a way," said David Wesley, who inherited the point guard spot after signing a free agent contract over the summer. "We all love Muggsy. We all got along, but that's part of the business."

Wesley is younger, faster and has two healthy legs. He clearly represents the immediate future of the Hornets.

So does the 30-year old Armstrong, a nine-year pro who realizes he was traded for the most popular player in Hornets history.

"I know Muggsy had some great years here," Armstrong said. "I know he was one of the first Hornets here and was here from the beginning and he's really contributed a lot."

"He's poured his heart and soul to this organization, to the city and I think what he's done, speaks for itself so I respect

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PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

UNC Charlotte guard-forward Tamika Mackey spent most of last season battling the effects of a tonsillectomy that sapped her strength. The former West Mecklenburg High standout is fully recovered and ready to help the 49ers improve on last season's 7-20 mark.

On the rebound

By Karl Petraroja  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

UNC Charlotte hopes a Mac Attack can help turn its women's basketball fortunes around.

"Mac" is 5-11 junior forward Tamika Mackey, a former West Mecklenburg High standout. Mackey and the 49ers were off to a strong start last season, when an emergency tonsillectomy sidelined Mackey for five games, then significantly sapped her strength the rest of the season.

"I was kind of down because I was off to a good start and finally coming into my own,"

Fully-recovered Mackey is a major cog for UNC Charlotte

she said. "The team, we started pretty well...(but the surgery) set us back a little bit and me back a bit."

Mackey's illness and other injuries forced the 49ers to struggle through a disappointing 7-20 season. Now Mackey's healthy, except for a minor groin strain, and the 49ers' prospects appear bright.

"No negativity at all, right from the coaching staff down to the players," she said.

"We're a stronger basketball team," head coach Ed Baldwin said. "We worked hard in the off-season to get stronger and the kids were really committed to get stronger."

Last season was marked by late-game mistakes which turned promising starts into nightmarish finishes. Mackey says that must change if UNCC is to compete in Conference USA.

"We had a lot of mental laps-

es," she said. "I think that was due to fatigue. Our bodies were physically run down, we weren't in basketball-basketball shape and it started to show towards the end of the season."

"Now we have a new strength coach, Jeff (Watkinson) and he's helped us a lot. You can just tell the difference in our practices from last year. They're a lot more fun because we can complete them."

Despite last season's illness, Mackey was still the 49ers fourth-leading scorer at 8.6

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JCSU in need of major overhaul

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

No size. No depth. No offense.

That was Johnson C. Smith football in 1997, a season that coach Bill Davis would just as soon forget.

The Golden Bulls, who finished 2-8 after a 19-11 overtime loss to Virginia Union Saturday, have nine months to remake the program. Among the concerns:

**No offense.** Simply put, the Bulls couldn't get the ball into the end zone often enough to win. Especially over the last three games, Smith's offense accounted for no touchdowns. The defense, on the other hand, had two.

"You gotta score. We can't win like that," Davis said. "We gotta go to the drawing board over the

offseason, we've got to get in the weight room - we've got to live in the weight room - and get stronger."

**End of the (offensive) line.** Smith's interior blockers got pushed around too much. From the start of the season, Davis was concerned about a lack of depth, but by the end, he wanted to run the entire unit off campus.

"We're just not strong enough," he said. "We've got some holes we need to plug. We need some people with some size up front, some strength."

**Who'll call the plays?** Three underclassmen took turns at

quarterback - junior Keith Mack, sophomore Bruce Harrison and freshman Desmond Brown. They have potential, but who knows given the state of the o-line?

Mack was the best athlete, but went down with a knee injury in the second week. Brown lacked experience, and at 5-7, isn't very tall. Harrison, who got his first collegiate start against Union, was 15-of-31 for 115 yards. Mack should be the favorite should his knee be recovered, but Davis still might try to recruit a new quarterback.

**Calling all linebackers:** They were undersized and undermanned, but sophomore Jerry Manigault was 14th in CIAA tackles with 72. New faces and bigger bodies are badly needed here.

**Secondary is primary.** Three See **BULLS** on page 3B



Davis



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

J.C. Smith safety Angel Rivera (4) and the Golden Bulls defense faced the difficult task of trying to keep games close when the offense failed to score points.