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SPORTS

Business 8C

Section

McFadden carries burden of greatness

When Darryl McFadden was just 11 years old, his father walked up to famed Charlotte high-school football coach Tommy Knotts and made a bold prediction.

"Hey coach," Darryl McFadden Sr. said, "I've got your next quarterback."

The Independence coach smiled politely and said, "OK," knowing that many fathers around here wanted their sons to become the next



C. JEMAL HORTON

great quarterback for the Patriots, who had the time were starting to become a football power of national proportions.

Fast-forward five years - and five consecu-

tive state championships - and guess who's the starting quarterback for Independence High School?

Yup: Darryl McFadden.

"When coach Knotts came back here (after a one-year stint at Duke) and met Darryl and me, he said, 'I remember what you told me,'" McFadden Sr. said with a broad smile.

"He didn't remember Darryl, because Darryl was so young back when I said that. But he remembered that crazy guy who came up to him and told him he had his next quarterback."

Then, McFadden Sr. paused.

"Watching Darryl perform out there, being successful, for me, it's almost like winning the lottery," he said. "If you know what Darryl has gone through..."

There are definite benefits to being the quarterback at Independence, ranked fourth in USA Today's national poll heading into Friday's N.C. 4AA semifinals against surprising Myers Park - especially when you're as good as McFadden.

Only a junior, the 6-foot-2 1/2-inch, 210-pound McFadden already is receiving notice from major college programs such as Virginia, Notre Dame and Ohio State. His father said "Notre Dame is sending him letters every week."

The two previous starting quarterbacks at Independence - Chris Leak and Joe Cox - have football scholarships at Florida and Georgia, respectively, so the McFadden family knew that among the many benefits of quarterbacking the Patriots was the possibility of earning a big-time scholarship.

What they didn't anticipate, however, was the weight of the burden of replacing Leak and Cox - and maintaining the nation's longest winning streak (90 games).

McFadden's performances against West Charlotte and West Mecklenburg to start the season made some Independence fans nervous - and irritable - even though the Patriots won those games by a combined 69-0.

Some students and adults alike openly criticized McFadden, wondering if he was worthy of being the coveted Quarterback at Independence. And many people did it right in front of McFadden's father and mother, Anita, who somehow managed to keep from shouting back at the "fans."

But that's where this story really gets special.

McFadden's parents put

See PATRIOTS/3C

PIONEER BOWL VIII • BOWIE STATE VS. TUSKEGEE



NEWS & OBSERVER/LISA LAUCK

Bowie State running back Isaac Redman (20) fends off N.C. Central's Chris Curry during the CCAA championship game in Durham. Redman, who rushed for 112 yards and a touchdown against NCCU, will lead the Bulldogs against Tuskegee in Pioneer Bowl VIII Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

"Our kids love football, they love playing and they love working. It won't be hard getting up for it at all."

Bowie State football coach Mike Lynn

Bulldogs, Tigers take to national TV stage

By Herbert L. White  
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Pioneer Bowl VIII is Bowie State's opportunity for redemption.

The Bulldogs (8-3, 5-2 CCAA) play Tuskegee (10-1, 8-1 SIAC) Saturday at Memorial Stadium in the only Division II postseason bowl game. Kickoff is 2 p.m. and the game will be televised on ESPN Classic.

"Our kids love football, they love playing and they love working," Bowie State coach Mike Lynn said. "It won't be hard getting up for it at all."

Tickets are \$10 for children and students (with ID) and \$15 for adults. Military are welcomed in free with proper military ID. Associations like Boys and Girls Club are admitted free.

Bowie State, which won the CCAA East Division, is playing to exorcise a 26-23 loss to N.C. Central in the league championship game Nov. 5. Beating Tuskegee, which finished second in the SIAC and is the winningest black college program of all time (578-332-51), would be a fitting end.

"It's another opportunity to showcase (the program), especially since it's going to be on national

See PIONEER/2C



PHOTOS/CURTIS WILSON

Carolina defensive end Julius Peppers (90) and the rest of the Panthers defense will have to contain Atlanta quarterback Michael Vick Sunday at Bank of America Stadium. Vick has never lost to Carolina as a starter.

Start the stretch run

Atlanta next test in Carolina drive for playoff seeding

By David Dawson  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Coming off of a morale-boosting victory against Buffalo, Carolina still has work to do.

The first order of business is to stay focused against NFC South nemesis Atlanta at Bank of America Stadium Sunday.

The Panthers, who lead the division

at 8-3, know that this is the latest of a string of games that will determine playoff seeding.

"The mood is we have the Atlanta Falcons next. That's what the mood is. Emotions are going to be high. It's no doubt there. It's a team that has our number. We know that. I'm sure they're going to be confident. But we need to be ready to play," said Jake Delhomme.

Atlanta leads the series 14-6. Carolina is 1-6 against the Falcons under Fox and that win came when Atlanta quarterback Michael Vick was out with an injury in 2003. Two of the last three meetings ended in overtime losses when Atlanta picked off Delhomme passes.

More will be on the line Sunday. A Carolina win puts the Panthers two games ahead, while a Falcons victory

See STRETCH/2C

Hot Golden Bulls look to keep on streaking

By Herbert L. White  
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It's been a while since Johnson C. Smith basketball has been this strong at the start of a season.

The Golden Bulls, who are 4-0 for the first time since the 2000-01 season (6-0), will try to extend the streak Saturday against Augusta State Smith, which beat Belmont Abbey 93-56 last Saturday at Brayboy Gym, has succeeded by

finding open shooters and locking down on the defensive end. Smith handed out 20 assists against the Crusaders, with John Fulton and Prince Parker accounting for four each.

"We saw some good basketball plays," Bulls coach Steve Joyner said. "I think they're starting to develop some continuity with each other, knowing how to move with each other, look for each other, so

our assists were up."

Smith's formula has been an effective mix of defense leading to a timely running game. Against Belmont Abbey, the Bulls pulled away with defense, forcing 21 turnovers and limiting the Crusaders to 28.6 percent shooting.

"They're beginning to understand their roles, they're beginning to assume responsibility for what they do on the court," Joyner said.



Joyner



PHOTOCURTIS WILSON

Former Missouri standout Ricky Clemmons has provided a spark for the Charlotte Krunk of the American Basketball Association.

Clemmons gets Krunk for ABA audition

By Paula Young  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Ricky Clemmons is making a new name for himself with the Charlotte Krunk.

According to Krunk head coach Robert Floyd, the former University of Missouri star brings talent and leadership to the American Basketball Association team.

"Ricky is a good player but you know Ricky is trying to turn his game into a professional game," said Floyd. "You can't really look at Ricky for that, it's the whole team."

Clemmons, who declined to be interviewed, was a college basketball vagabond. He played one season at Missouri before he was kicked off the team in 2003 after a conviction for domestic assault. He later did time in jail after violating terms of his probation when he wrecked an ATV owned by

See CLEMMONS/3C