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SPORTS

Section



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO/GENE J. PUSKAR

Carolina cornerback Richard Marshall intercepts a pass intended for Pittsburgh receiver Santonio Holmes in the preseason finale last week. The Panthers open Sunday against Atlanta.

Hype aside, all eyes on Carolina

Panthers' quest for title starts against rival Falcons

By Herbert L. White
herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

Dress rehearsals, thankfully, are over. The Carolina Panthers face their own expectations and the Atlanta Falcons Sunday in the NFL opener for both teams. The game takes on added importance because it's a division game.

"It has a little bit more importance because it is both a division game and a conference game," coach John Fox said. "Three out of our first four are against division opponents, so it's important that we start fast."

For Carolina, an undefeated preseason means nothing. The same can be said for the hype that proclaims the Panthers the best team in the league. Of course, a lot will happen between now and February when the Super Bowl determines who's best.

Carolina got through the practice games healthy, a good first step. Questions about the health of key defenders like defensive tackle Kris

Please see **START/2C**

Coach K works to a T with pro stars

By Andrew Bagnato
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAITAMA, Japan — As practice wound down, Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski approached LeBron James, who was shooting baskets alone on a side court.

James listened intently as the coach spoke and motioned to a spot in the lane. The two talked for about 10 minutes before Krzyzewski rejoined his staff on another court and James went back to shooting.

Who said NBA stars would never listen to a college coach?

"You know the high-intensity coach that you see on TV," James said later. "You get a chance to see the warm side of him a little bit now on this trip. You get a chance to really know him."

When USA Basketball appointed Krzyzewski coach last October, skeptics wondered whether a college coach, even one as respected as Duke's Hall of Famer, would be able to connect with pampered pros. But those questions have subsided as Krzyzewski led the U.S. to the semifinals of the world championships.

The Americans already advanced farther than they did in the 2002 worlds, when they finished a demoralizing sixth in Indianapolis. While the U.S. didn't win the gold, the ultimate goal is to bring home the gold in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. If Krzyzewski does that, his considerable reputation will have grown exponentially.

"Let's put it this way: As high up the totem pole as he is, his position will only be enhanced in the basketball world with the success of this program and the new relationships he has developed," said USA Basketball managing director Jerry Colangelo, who hand-picked his fellow Chicago native.

For Krzyzewski, success with the U.S. team may bring renewed interest from the NBA. But having

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PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Johnson C. Smith defensive end Elijah Ashley sacks Edward Waters quarterback Kamali Leitner in the season opener Aug. 26 in Greenville, S.C. The Golden Bulls play CIAA East power Bowie State Saturday in the home opener at Belk Complex.

Collision course

To get to 3-0, Johnson C. Smith must handle ground-oriented Bowie State

By Herbert L. White
herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

Johnson C. Smith's gameplan Saturday against Bowie State is simple: stop running back Isaac Redman.

Redman, a preseason all-America, didn't play in the Bulldogs' 38-0 win last week against West Virginia State, but the Golden Bulls are planning for him nonetheless.

Nathaniel Queen stepped in for Redman last week with 112 yards and a score on 24 carries.

"That's what it's going to come down to - winning the game in the trenches," said Smith linebacker Fred Williams, who leads the Bulls with 24 tackles. "And that's how we're going to prepare for it."

That means accounting for Redman, who led the CIAA in rushing last season and is a key

cog in the Bulldogs' championship hopes. The Bulls, who are 2-0 for the first time since 1982, have allowed just 116 yards rushing.

"We want to go out there and play hard, do the things we can do well and gang-tackle on Redman," Smith coach Daryl McNeill said. "That's pretty much what our game plan is right now."

Redman, a 5-10, 230-pound

junior, led the CIAA in rushing last year with 1,512 yards and was a preseason all-CIAA pick. Bowie's run-oriented offense will provide a stiff test for Smith's defense, which switched to a 3-4 scheme this year.

"From what I hear, he's a talented running back and hopefully he'll do his best and I'll do my best," Williams said. "We're

See **BULLS/2C**

East Meck finds offense; Vance surprises

Prep PATs

BEST COMEBACK East Mecklenburg offense. A week after putting together a mere 123 yards against Hopewell, the Eagles exploded for 366 and 40 points against West Mecklenburg. Running back Mike Mayhew accounted for 170 of them on the ground to go with four touchdowns.

BEST UPSET Apologies to Country Day, which stopped Charlotte Catholic's 34-game winning streak, and North Meck (27-6 winner over Providence) but Vance over Butler was huge. No one saw this coming, especially the Bulldogs, who have visions of toppling Independence (who doesn't?)

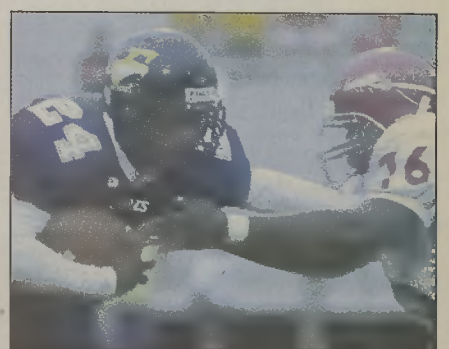
Ra'Shawn Moore's 2-yard run with 1 minute, 8 seconds to go

snatched a perfect season from Butler. Vance also gets an honorable mention for best comeback, too.

BEST BAND PERFORMANCE ON ONE FIELD West Charlotte and Harding. If you didn't go to the halftime show, you obviously weren't at the game. Total funk fest.

BOO AND HISS: N.C. High School Athletic Association for throwing cold water on the Butler-Independence season finale. ESPN wanted to televise the game live, but the state association scotched that idea. I'm betting if the Worldwide Leader in Sports paid a prince's ransom (we're talking high schools here), the gang in Chapel Hill would find a way to get things done.

Herbert L. White



PHOTO/WADE NASH

East Mecklenburg High running back Mike Mayhew rushed for 170 yards and four touchdowns in the Eagles' win over West Mecklenburg last week.

WSSU BASKETBALL IN TRANSITION

Collins jumps into new challenge

By Herbert L. White
herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

Winston-Salem State is familiar with the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference.

Bobby Collins, who resigned as Hampton's coach in March, was named Rams' head coach Tuesday. He will lead the program into its first season in Division I and the MEAC.

"One of the key things that coach Collins brings to us is that he knows the MEAC and Division I well," WSSU

Athletics director Chico Caldwell said

"He has proven that he can win in the MEAC, demonstrating his excellence by winning the conference championship last year and earning MEAC tournament outstanding coach honors."

Collins, a native of Southern Pines, spent 12 years at Hampton as a player and coach, the last four as head coach. He had been under fire at Hampton for the program's failure to win the

MEAC championship before breaking through in March.

At Hampton, Collins was part of three MEAC championships and his 2003 team, which finished 19-11 was the best under a first-year coach.

He also has experience in coaching with teams in transition. He was a member of Hampton's staff when the school jumped from Division II and the CIAA to the Division I MEAC in 1997 - like Winston-Salem is doing now.

Bobby Collins was named men's basketball coach at Winston-Salem State Tuesday.



PHOTO/LEE ADAMS