

THE COLLEGIATE

VOL. XXV

ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, MARCH 10, 1955.

NUMBER 5

Bulldogs Earn National NAIA Bid

AC Crew Annexes NSC Tourney Title By Record Score

By PHIL HOUCHINS

The North State Conference has a new champion, and for the first time Wilson is the home of the victors.

Atlantic Christian's fighting Bulldogs brought home everything but Betty Jo Ring, Miss North Carolina, as they captured the 12th annual North State Conference tournament at Lexington.

In the final game, which matched top-seeded Lenoir Rhyne and the Bulldogs, AC set a new team scoring record with 108 points; the boys set a new free throw record with 54; they snapped a 20 game winning streak for Lenoir Rhyne; and the two-team total of 193 points is a tournament record. Billy Widgeon brought home the "Most Valuable Player" trophy, and three Bulldog stars were named to the all tourney squad.

Folks in Lexington were not impressed by the supposedly powerful AC crew in the opening round as they banged Catawba 83-62. The 'Dogs looked sluggish and made numerous mistakes in racking up their 3rd victory over the Indians this year. Billy Widgeon and John Marley led the way for AC. Widgeon with 24 and Marley with 22.

Catawba gave McComas' crew a hard time in the first half as the 'Dogs rolled up a 36-31 lead by intermission. At one time during the opening half Catawba moved ahead 25-24.

AC pulled away as the second half progressed and ended with the 83-62 decision over the Indians.

The second round of play saw AC do battle with the Panthers of High Point, a team which had knocked off the "popular" East Carolina Pirates in the opening round of the tournament. The Panthers boasted plenty of speed but no height. The huge crowd of 4,000 saw plenty of running but the Bulldogs ran fastest with the most and emerged with an 82-69 win. Buchanan paved the way for the winners with 22 points while Jerry Williams canned 18 for the evening.

Lenoir Rhyne earned their way to the finals by edging Appalachian in the opening round and then then downing stubborn Elon in the semi-finals.

The two clubs were naturals for the finals; the Bears were seeded no. 1 and the Bulldogs, no. 2 in the tourney. They both have plenty

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Shown above is some of the action which took place in the Lenoir Rhyne-Atlantic Christian basketball game in Greensboro on March 2. The Bulldogs won the tilt 94-85, to advance to the NAIA tournament at Kansas City.



Co-captains, Ronald Percise and Jerry Williams receive the championship trophy from Betty Jo Ring, Miss North Carolina. Inscribed on the award was "North State Champs — '55'".

Down Bears 94-85 For District Crown

Couch Jack McComas's valliant Bulldogs "opened on guts" and Lenoir Rhyne's Bears "folded" as the AC crew battled its way to the NAIA district 26 championship and a trip to Kansas City.

The Bulldogs outlasted the Bears through two grueling weeks of basketball and finally knocked them off, 94-85, Wednesday night in Greensboro. The game matched the same two squads that fought for the North State Conference Championship at Lexington and Lenoir Rhyne came out on the short end of the score again. Wednesday's tilt was AC's third win in four tries against Lenoir Rhyne.

Again, it was John Marley who led the scoring for the locals, this time with 21. Ron Percise and Kim Buchanan chipped in with 20 each, while Bill Tomlinson, AC's flashy reserve guard, hit 10 for the night. Raeford Wells and Bob Ortmyer got 34 and 27 respectively to hog most of the scoring for the losers.

Atlantic Christian opened fast and very quickly led 16-3, but the Bears rallied to close the gap. AC's lead stayed between 6 and 12 points most of the first half and at intermission they were out from 41-37.

At one time during the final twenty minutes, "Pappy" Hamilton's crew came within 3 points, but once again the 'Dogs rallied their forces and surged into a comfortable lead.

Wednesday's victory was the eighth straight for AC and the twenty-second of the season as against six setbacks.

Sunday morning the AC crew were to board a plane for Kansas City where they will scrap for national honors in the NAIA tourney.

Chapel Program Honors Champs

By RUBY WIGGINS

An ovation that seemed as though it would take the roof of Howard Chapel was heard on Wednesday, March 2, when Mr. Allen Sharp presided over the chapel program to honor our victorious Bulldogs.

Mr. Sharp recalled the statement made at the opening of the season that it was our first stop on the road to Kansas City. The coach and the boys meant this and they were determined to make it a reality.

Mr. Sharp also stated that the reason the papers have been so kind to us is because of our fighting spirit. According to Mr. Sharp, the boys are loved by the students, the people of Wilson, and "even the faculty."

Then the coveted first place tournament trophy was presented to the Coach and the champions, with an average of 91.3 per game. When the Coach received the trophy, the applause was not only most gracious, but also thunderous in its effect. Coach McComas stated that he and the boys really appreciated the support and following of the faculty, students, and the people of Wilson.

Next Jim Hebbe, assistant coach, earnestly stated that "as long as we keep old 'Rooster' around everything will be all right."

Roundabout applause followed each Bulldog as he was honored on stage. They were Jerry Williams, Ronald Percise, John Marley, Billy Widgeon, Jim Peebles, Kim Buchanan, Charles Hester, Ronald Baker, Bill Beacham, Billy Tomlinson, Nicky Lazzo,

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McComasmen Route Pirates 107-98 In NAIA Playoff on Kinston Court

By PHIL HOUCHINS

The red hot Bulldogs continued their blistering tournament pace Monday night as they dumped the East Carolina Pirates by a 107-98 count in the NAIA playoffs at Kinston. The Bucs, in their best offensive effort of the season, could not cope with the 62 per cent shooting accuracy of the 'Dogs and lost their second tilt to AC in the past nine days.

Howard Porter's crew, still licking their wounds from the shellacking they took from High Point in the North State Conference Tourney, had three days of rest while waiting for the Bulldogs to return home but still could not muster their forces enough to take the cherished "Bohunk" back to "Pirate Hollow."

John Marley, AC's all conference and all tournament center, poured 27 point through the nets to lead the evening's fireworks. Jerry Williams and Kim Buchanan were not far behind with 22 and 20 points while Billy "Pokerface" Widgeon canned 17. J. C. Thomas flipped in 24 for the Pirates. Cecil Heath, the Bucs' likable captain, finished out his basketball career at the Greenville school with his usual fine performance. He collected 16 points for the game.

"Stung by defeat, the Pirates were rumored to be pointing for a return game" with AC on a neutral court. The Grainger High gym in Kinston is as neutral as can be found and the North State Conference champs took the measure of EC by 9 points, four worse than the margin on the 'Dogs home floor.

Atlantic Christian got off to a quick start and after 3:57 had elapsed they led 16-6, but EC found the range and closed the gap considerably. At the end of the torrid first half AC led 56-51 and the folks in the gym had not yet hoisted their lower jaw back into place.

"Something has to give this half," was a comment made concerning the last half, but the two clubs kept up their unbelievable pace. At one time the Pirates had closed the lead to a mighty slim 90-89 margin, but the 'Dogs bore down to pull further ahead.

"When AC's last hopes were fading, in went EC's fouling team," the ball getters. After a few minutes of banging on AC's guards who went into a freeze, the Bulldogs had widened their lead to 11 points, mainly on free throws.

As the final gun sounded, Coach McComas' crew had won their 21st game of the campaign by 107-98.

Widgeon Wins "Most Valuable"



BILLY WIDGEON

"This year's most valuable player award goes to Billy Widgeon."

They were the words that the P. A. system boomed with when the "Newport Flash" won the '55 edition of the "Most Valuable Player" trophy at Lexington.

Widgeon amazed the crowd during the entire tournament with his array of shots. His jump shot was uncanny, his set shots were deadly, and his drives could hardly be stopped.

His three game scoring total was 65 points for a 21.6 scoring average. In one game he came back into the game after a brief rest and hit four field goals in a row to break the game open.

Atlantic Christian, Lenoir Rhyne Dominate All-Tournament Team

Atlantic Christian and Lenoir Rhyne dominated the All-Tournament team after the 12th annual North State Conference Tournament.

A vote by sportswriters and announcers showed that Billy Widgeon was the only unanimous choice on the mythical star-studded squad.

The first team was composed of AC's 6'11" John Marley, and 6'1" Billy Widgeon, Lenoir Rhyne's 6'6"

Raeford Wells, Elon's 6'5" Ed Juratic, and High Point's 6'4" Jack Powell. The second five on the all-tourney squad is Lenoir Rhyne's Bob Ortmyer and Floyd Propst, AC's Jerry Williams, High Point's Bob Davidson, and Appalachian's Dave Abernathy.

The first team all-tourney teams shows an average height of better than 6'5" per man, with Widgeon at 6'1" the "shorty" of the crowd.