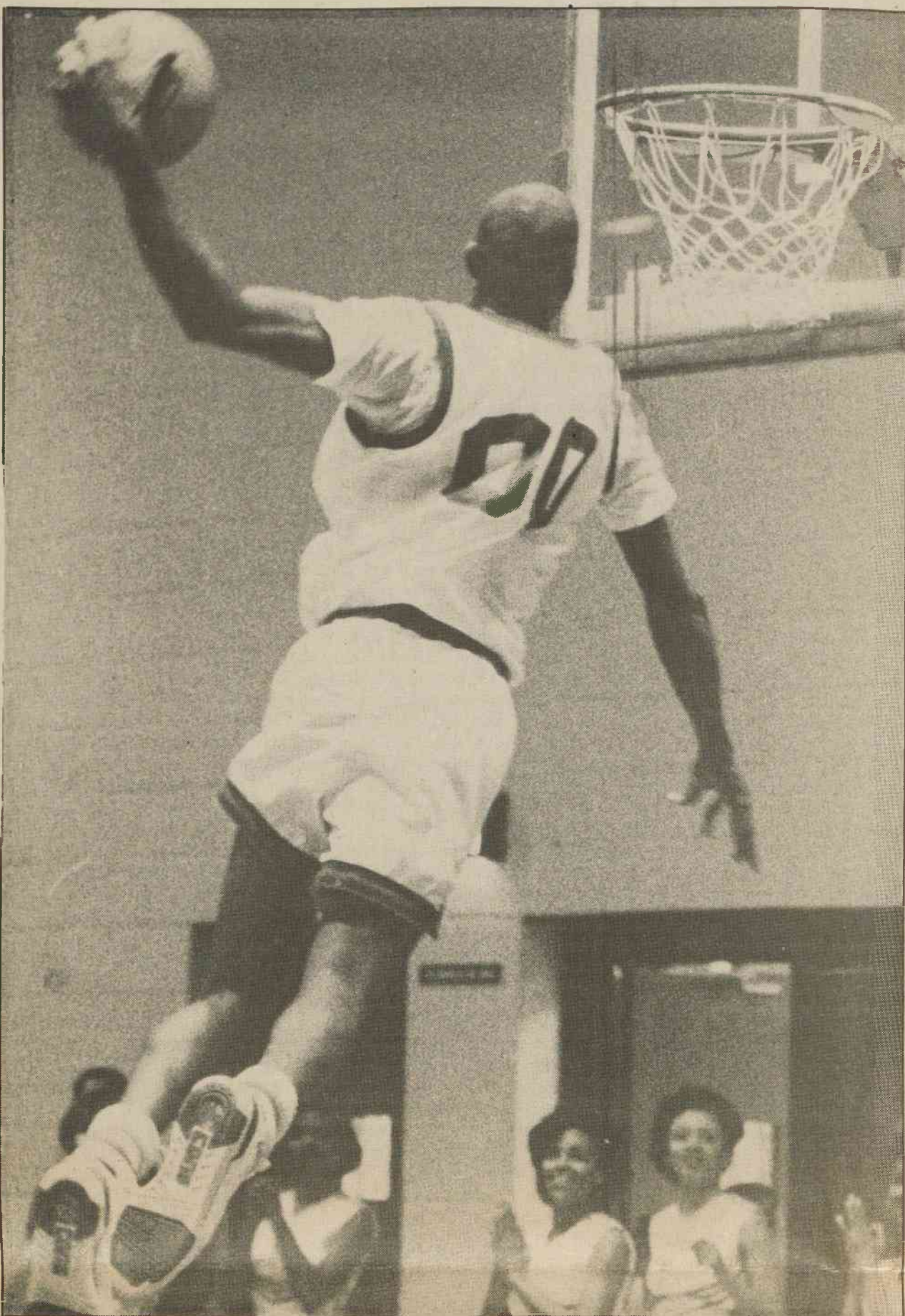


# SPORTS



Freshman forward Nate Higgs glides into a Converse commercial during a 91-76 loss to St. Paul's College in the Vaughan Center on Feb. 2. Higgs must assume a leadership role for the Vikings next year as the team is losing eight players to graduation. Also returning next season will be this year's second leading scorer, John McNeil.

Photo courtesy of the Daily Advance



Long distance marksman Darryl Riddick shoots a foul shot in a home game versus St. Paul's College. Riddick led the Vikings in scoring in his senior season with an average of 15.5 points per game.

photo by Jackie Rountree

## New coach gives life to track team

By Jody Riddick

ECSU's new track coach is regenerating excitement into an almost depleted track and field program.

Chris Egbunike, a former track and field athlete, is from Lagos, Nigeria. His coaching career began in 1979 with the National Sports Commission.

Egbunike has a Ph.D. in organization and administrative coaching from the University of Rumania. There, he served as a student coach on the track team. In the United States, he coached at Washington State University.

He came across ECSU by reading

an article in *The Journal for Higher Learning*. The article listed an advertisement for an experienced track and field coach. The entry enticed Egbunike to make the transition from a Division I to a Division II school.

"There is no big difference in coaching on a Division I or II level," says Egbunike. "The only difference is the availability of facilities, equipment, and funding for travel."

Egbunike said he has been happy with his job as a coach and instructor at ECSU and added that it was hard at Washington State for him to keep a distinction between the two.

Egbunike's presence has already

had an impact on ECSU's track program.

In 1989, the team went to two of eight scheduled meets, and last year the situation was similar. There was even confusion among athletes as to the head coach was.

In the fall of 1990, the team competed in three cross country meets to include the Cross Country Championships at Johnson C. Smith.

Remaining on the schedule for the 1991 seasons are The Raleigh Relays at North Carolina State University, The Tar Heel Invitational, The UNC "Last Chance" Meet, and the CIAA Track and Field Championships.

## Changing of the guard

# 1991-92 season uncertain; Vikings to lose 8 starters

By Mark Morris

ECSU's centennial team went 12-14 this season and faces a roster desamiation that promises a dim future.

The Vikings are losing eight players to graduation, five of which have started most of their careers. James Eaton, Tyson Ransom, and Darryl Riddick all have scored more than 1,000 points in their four seasons.

The other seniors are Ronald Cousar, Patrick Harper, Marvin Trotman, Derrick Alston and Reginald Joe.

"It's a bad feeling in one sense," said head coach Claudie Mackey, "but it is a good feeling in another because it shows that we as an institution are doing what we are supposed to do."

The Vikings started the 1990-91 season playing just above .500 at 4-3. The team then had a 31 day layoff (Dec. 4 to Jan. 5), and went 4-7 in January. Still they were third in the CIAA's northern division with a record of 3-3.

"After we lost to Norfolk State by one point I thought we would get it together," said Nate Higgs, a freshman forward out of Tarboro N.C. "It's like we got right up to the front door and dropped the key."

The nemeses that kept the Vikings from winning the division came in two phases: they were swept by a Virginia Union team that started four freshman this season, and split with two division rivals (Norfolk State and St. Paul's College) that they were favored to beat.

The Vikings took an 11-13 record into the CIAA Tournament where they squared off against Fayetteville State in the first round on Feb. 20.

Eaton was confined to the bench most of the game due to foul trouble. Patrick Harper, a senior guard from Motrie, Ga. was given the assignment of running the Vikings.

Harper's 4 points and 3 rebounds

were not indicative of a solid performance that was one of the best of his career. On the back of 21 points and 9 rebounds by Higgs, the Vikings nipped Fayetteville 79-77 and advanced to the second round to face southern division champion, Johnson C. Smith University.

Despite having four players in double figures, a 15 rebound performance by Darryl Riddick, and a late second-half comeback, The Vikings suffered a season ending 100-80 loss to J.C. Smith.

The Vikings losing record can be partly attributed to dropping half of their ten home games and going 7-9 on the road. The Vikings were also 0-7 during the regular season against southern division teams and were outscored by their opponents 93-78 in the first half. That point deficit could have been alleviated had last year's leading scorer, Tyson Ransom, not suffered from knee pain.

The senior forward only showed flashes of his form from last season when he scored his career high 43 points against Allen University in the 1989 ECSU Tip-Off Classic.

Ransom averaged 7 points a contest and scored double figures in the Vikings 26 games.

The high points of the Viking's seasons came in their two meetings

with Norfolk State.

In game one on Jan. 26, Darryl Riddick sank a CIAA record eleven three pointers enroute to a career high 41 points. In game two, the Vikings gave Norfolk State their lunch winning 90-72 and paying homage to the slogan "nightmare in Vaughan Center".

Darryl Riddick led the team in scoring this year, averaging 15.5 per game followed by John McNeil with 14.2 and James Eaton and Nate Higgs who each averaged 12 points.

Higgs had an acceptable freshman season averaging 12 points, 8 rebounds, and blocking 31 shots. Upset about not being selected to the CIAA All Rookie team, Higgs said he will return with a vengeance next season.

"The conference is going to know I'm back next year," said Higgs. "They won't have to worry about deciding whether or not I should be on the All-CIAA team because my performance will tell them."

He along with John McNeil will be a vital part of coach Mackey's rebuilding process next year.

Also returning to the roster next year will be forward Mike Williams, center Anthony Spellman, and guard Steve Price who has given the team quality minutes and provided a spark off the bench all season.

## Lady Vikes take 'down-hill' slide due to absence of key players

By James Sims

After enjoying a winning record of 17 and 5 last season, the Lady Vikings took a long down-hill slide in this year's standings, losing 14 games and winning 9.

"We didn't have a lot of depth and returning experience," said Alvin T. Kelly, head coach of the Lady Vikings.

Kelly stated that one reason for the losses is the absence of key players. Tara Jackson, a senior All CIAA hopeful this season, reported back to school with ulcers and had to have minor surgery. Karen Pope was not able to return and Drusilla Crawford, a freshman from Chocowinity, N.C., had minor surgery during her Christmas vacation and just starting to play up to her potential late in the season. The loss of Juantisa Brown also hurt the Lady Vikings.

"We also lost a couple of top recruits because of the proposition 48 rule," Kelly added.

Despite the Lady Vikings playing under .500 this year, the seniors played up to their potential.

Anissa McNeil, one of the leading rebounders in the nation, grabbed 277 boards this season and Demetrius Rowe, a senior point guard from Richmond Va., continued her prolific scoring and raised her career point total to 1,330 pts with an average of 17 per contest.

"She's done exceptionally well this year," Kelly said "despite having to play with a freshman point guard (Alexandria Stallings)."

Stallings, who attended a junior college before coming to ECSU, has been away from basketball for two years. Yet no rust was evident from her statistics. Stallings accumulated 90 points and 58 rebounds.

"I didn't want to put Alexandria in the woods right away," said Kelly "but with Tara Jackson and Juantisa Brown gone I gave her a chance."

This is an extremely tough league for a freshman, but she has played well."

The Lady Vikings, will not be left without talent next season.

Coach Kelley referred to sophomore Terri James as "New and Improved".

James was a big plus for the team this year, scoring 212 pts and grabbing 140 rebounds.

"She's been a very hard worker and has done an extremely good job for us," Kelly said "She's played a great deal in Erika Ruffin's absence."

Kelly also called James "coachable" and says that her good work ethic in practice has payed off for her.

Terry James will most likely start at center next year should Kelly not find a recruit to play the position.

Joining James on the front line will be Patricia Taylor, a rising senior from Gwynn Park, Maryland who averaged as much as 17 points at different times during the season.

One goal of Kelley's recruiting effort this year is to put together a good support crew to back up those players that are returning next season.

"The bench has not been very productive for us this year," Kelly said, "because of their youth and inexperience."

Photo by Jackie Rountree



Senior Anissa McNeil looks to score over a St. Augustine's defender on Jan. 23 while sophomore Terri James looks on. McNeil was among the nations Division II rebound leaders for the entire 90-91 season.