

SPORTS

Looking for that 'special hit':

Coach pins hopes for team on power hitting, less errors

By James Sims

The Elizabeth City State University's baseball team hopes to rebound from last season's 14-17 record by eliminating small mistakes and utilizing power hitters, coach Charles Cullens said.

So far the Vikings have endured close to a .500 season by winning 13 games and losing 14 despite the power hitting from such players as Duane Byrum (.412 batting average), Andre Nelson (.384) and Shaun Bigbie (.373). "Team batting average is great," said Cullens, "but we can't get that special hit when we need it."

Cullens also mentioned that leaving men on the bases is a misfortune that the team must change.

"We must bring in the runs," he added. "We lose a lot of games that way."

No one was left on base when Andre Nelson made that "special hit" and slapped one across the fence for a grand slam against Hiram College March 28, at Knobbs Creek Recreation Park in Elizabeth City. That hit

along with others helped the Vikings win the game 11-9.

Andre Nelson, also a valuable asset to the Viking football team, has made a tremendous impact on the Viking baseball team.

At the All Sports Award Banquet held April 10, Cullens commented on Nelson's possible future on the baseball field.

"When Andre came to play ball for me," said Coach Cullens, "I didn't know he was an honorable mention All-State in High School. If he doesn't go pro in football, he might go in baseball."

Another plus for the team has been the pitching by freshman Shaun Bigbie. Bigbie originally a back-up pitcher, has three wins under his belt and no losses. Bigbie's ERA is 1.40 with 17 strike outs.

"We still need to brush up on our overall pitching," Cullens said.

After losing to Norfolk State twice in a double header, 0-1 both games, the Vikings came back fighting, beating Shaw University twice April 3, by scores of 14-0 and 17-4 and then

beating Virginia State one game in a double header 10-4. Beating these teams made Juan Langford feel as though everything is improving.

"One game we would have poor pitching and the next game we would have bad hitting," said Langford, a junior from Scotland County. "But now everything is coming together."

"The guys have to start believing in their ability," added Cullens. "Once they do, we'll be in the thick of things."

In the thick of things they are, but not in a positive sense. The Vikings lost to arch rival Norfolk State once again, by a score of 13-10 April 17. The Vikings then went on to beat St. Augustine twice in a double header 10-0 and 6-3 April 18.

Saturday April 20, the Vikings travelled to Bowie Maryland only to be upset once more by the Bulldogs 13-10.

The Vikings will be on the road this week for their last two seasonal games against Duke and Shaw University. The Vikings will then take a shot at the tournament championship beginning April 25.



ECSU's Chad Woolard dives head first toward a St. Augustine player as he tries to make it safely to first base. St. Augustine beat the Vikings 12-8 April 13. The Vikings have hovered above and below the .500 mark all season as they head for the CIAA tourney.

Controversy again for Lady Vikes; CIAA commissioner sends a fax

By Mark Morris

The ECSU Lady Vikings softball team finished the regular season with an 11-13 overall record, an 11-11 conference record, and a close call with missing their second consecutive CIAA Tournament.

"In order for a division II school to qualify for an end of season tournament, they must play 24 games against division II opponents," said Andre Smith, ECSU Sports and Information Director. "As of April 17, they (Lady Vikings) had only played 22."

On April 17 Wallace Dooley, the commissioner of the CIAA, faxed a letter to the ECSU athletic department. The letter said that the softball

team would be ineligible for the conference tournament in Hampton last weekend if they did not play two more games against division II opponents.

Head coach James Hoggard scheduled a doubleheader against Virginia State on April 18, one day before the CIAA tournament.

The team played two games in the first round of the tournament on April 19, losing decisively to St. Augustine and North Carolina Central University.

Smith said a large part of the problem lies in scheduling too many games that do not count.

"Games with junior college teams don't count," said Smith. "Our team doesn't play teams in the CIAA south-

ern division because of travel time and other reasons."

The Lady Vikings played four games this season against Chowan College, a junior college in Murfreesboro, N.C.

Last season, the Lady Vikings finished third in the CIAA but did not go to the conference tournament because their statistics were not turned in on time.

When reached for comment at that time, Hoggard told *The Compass*, "I'm disgusted, I'm just disgusted!"

A number of players have expressed discontent about the situation.

"I think the bottom line is lack of leadership," said one player. "It simply has to get better for next season."

Photo by Jackie Rountree



Lady Vikings catcher Paula Forham poised to catch a pitch from Genevieve Moore while a Norfolk State Spartans batter clinches up for a swing. The Lady Vikings were in danger of sitting out of the CIAA Tournament for a second consecutive season.

Changes prevail at spring practice, Vikings hopeful for 1991 season

By James Sims

Clash, Clank, you can do it! These are sounds I've been hearing as my teammates and I have been slamming down weights, straining to lift 300 to 400 pounds off our chests.

For the past three months ever since our season ended, ECSU's Vikings have been preparing for spring football practice. We all know we have to work harder if we are going to improve on last season's 3-6-1 record.

"It's good that the team is preparing so hard," said Jerald Lewis, a junior linebacker from Chicago. "Some guys are not working out and are going to get hurt during practice."

This year's spring practice featured several changes. For example the 15 day spring practice rule.

The NCAA has passed a rule that mandated an allowance of 15 days of spring practice. During ten of them, colleges are allowed to dress in com-

plete uniform and have contact. Those will be ten hard and fun-filled days for the Vikings. They will be battering and competing against each other for a position, trying to make sure there will be a place for each of them on the '91 Viking football team and that none will "smell the fumes" of the bus when it's time to make a road trip.

Another change is the intensity of practices. So far, the running and exercise done in practice has been a tremendous pain for some players.

"The practice sessions are harder than they used to be," said Darrin Stewart, a 6 foot 3 inch 345 lb offensive tackle from Washington D.C. "I don't mind though, because I know it will pay off in the end."

Vikings say they are excited, motivated and are beginning to develop more comradery because of Kelly's psychological impact on the team.

"Under the coaching of Alvin Kelly, I think that we will have a new

and improved team," said Spencer Abraham, a 6 foot 2 inch 242 lb linebacker from Greensboro. "He has a way of motivating us and making us feel like a family."

Vikings say Coach Kelly is not just a guy who teaches football, he also teaches the players about their moral values and that they have priorities they have to deal with.

Kelly stressed the importance of academics and social behavior in a previous meeting held with the players.

"You must go to your classes," Kelly said, "If you haven't been working like you're supposed to, you still have time."

Kelly also stated that if players are caught getting in trouble that he will not hesitate to get them sent home.

"I will go in my pocket if I have to and send people home who are putting a bad reputation on the team," Kelly said.

Athletes honored at sports banquet

By James Sims

ECSU's top student athletes received awards and recognition at the All Sports Awards Banquet held April 10, at the Kermit E. White Graduate Center.

Big awardees of the banquet were graduating senior linebacker, Michael Mabry and junior defensive end Everette McIver. Mabry totaled five awards including the Hardees' MVP of the year Award.

McIver walked away with three awards including the Coca-Cola Golden Helmet Award.

Even though these were two athletes who received special awards for outstanding performances in sports, no athlete was left out. Every player received awards for participating in his/her sports for one, two, three or four years.

First year players received letters, second year, trophies, third year, watches; an; fourth year players received plaques.

Recipients of the Coca-Cola

Weekly MVP Awards in football were: Curtis Perkins, Greensboro; Nelson Welch, Fayetteville, Ga.; Tim Johnson, Sumpter S.C.; Darrin Mitchell, Ahoskie; Jimmy Smith, Scotland county; Johnnie Carr, Wilmington; Demetrius Hardison, Ahoskie; Mark Hines, Greenville; Billy Powell, Currituck; Michael Mabry, Rocky Mount; Stuart Squires, Juan Langford, Scotland county; Roderick Barfield, Wilmington; Emanuel Smith, Scotland county; Spencer Abraham, Greensboro; Everette McIver, Fayetteville and Andre Nelson, Lugoff S.C.

Other special award recipients were: Joynita Robison, Coca-Cola Most Spirited Cheerleader Award; Erika Ruffin, S.T. Holmes Sportsmanship Award; Stuart Squires, Hodges & Alford MVP Award.

Squires, who has kept a GPA of 4.0 throughout his four years at ECSU, will receive a scholarship in the name of Hodges & Alford to attend East Carolina University's Medical School. Recipient of the Coca-Cola MVP

Award for basketball was James Eaton and the Robert L. Vaughan MVP Award was presented to Darryl Riddick.

Eaton and Riddick will travel to Winston-Salem April 22, to play in the Black College All-Star Basketball Classic.

Head volleyball coach Debbie Lynch mentioned that Terry James, a sophomore from Elizabeth City, was selected as All Conference in Volleyball.

Guest speaker for the banquet was ECSU alumnus Lawrence Alford. Alford, Director of Personnel for the Norfolk Shipyard, stressed the importance of doing more than asked to succeed in life.

"If a coach tells you to run 40 yards, run 60," he said. "Go that extra yard to be outstanding."

Alford also stressed the importance of responsibility in athletics.

"It's the athletes' responsibility to attend class," he said. "Coaches should not find ways to get you to go to class."

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