

New head coach for women's basketball plans to instill 'a new attitude' in players

By Mark Morris

The saga began 12 years ago when coaches at ECSU told five-foot-two freshman Wanda Crump she was too short for Lady Vikings basketball.

Since then the Lumberton, NC native has twice applied for the job as head coach at ECSU: once in June, 1991 and again last summer. Her persistence paid off on her second try when she was hired on September 16 as ECSU's head women's basketball coach, head softball coach and as an academic advisor for student athletes—a tall order for the Lady Viking who was too short.

"I played volleyball and softball and was a cheerleader while I was a student here (at ECSU) from 1978 to 82," said Crump with a smile. "I was told I was too short to play basketball. I didn't necessarily agree but it was something I had to live with."

Crump has always enjoyed athletics. She played volleyball, basketball and softball in high school and even now plays summer league softball with a team that travels as far as California, Missouri and Texas for competition.

Crump graduated from ECSU in 1982 with a B.S. degree in Health and Physical Education. She later earned a masters degree in sports administration from Grambling State University.

She has held teaching jobs in Rustin, La. and in her hometown of Lumberton. Her most recent job was an eight year stint at Lumberton Junior High. For the past four summers she has worked in Elizabeth City with the University's chapter of the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP).

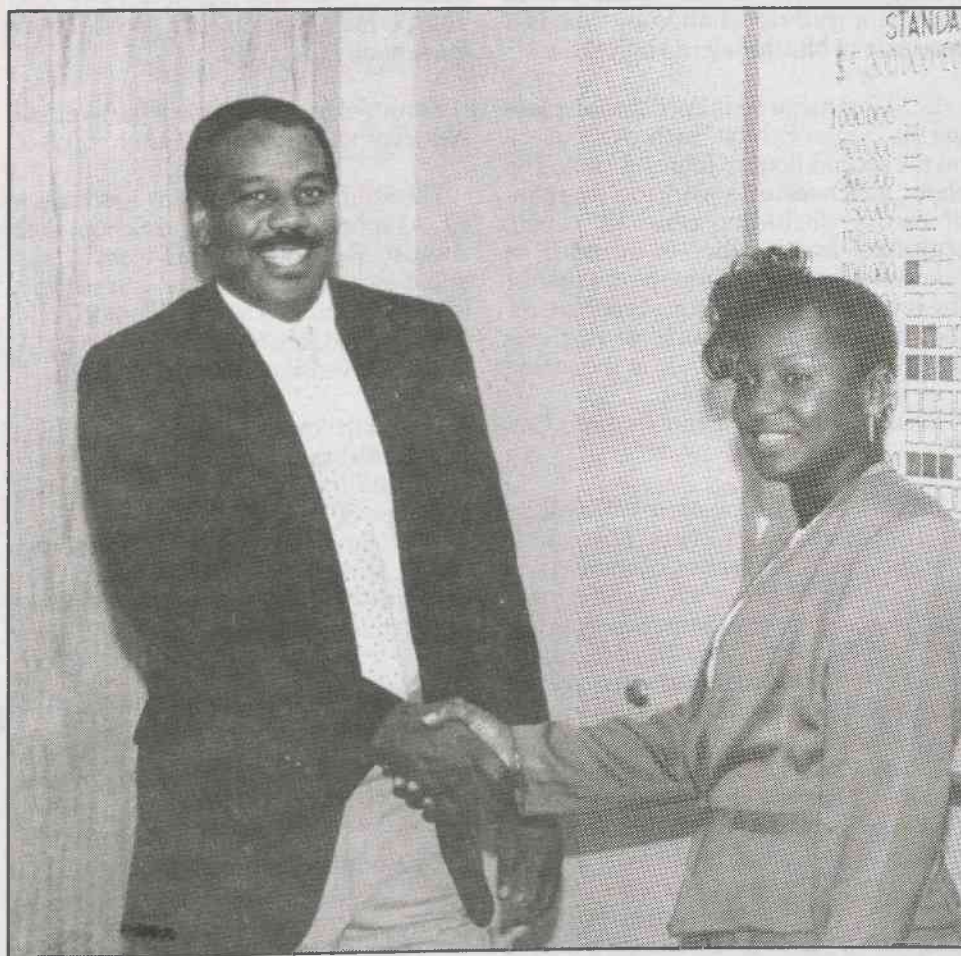
NYSP is a summer program designed for young children ages eight to 14 from which young people learn moral lessons about life through athletics.

The trips back to this area were part of Crump's desire to work here full time.

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Wanda Crump

Photo by J. Gary Brinn



Dr. Will Shaw, Director of the Athletic Department, congratulates ECSU's new coach of women's basketball, Wanda Crump. Crump, an ECSU alumna, will also coach the women's softball team and serve as academic advisor to students.

"Elizabeth City is a home away from home for me," she said.

Crump has six years of coaching experience on the junior high level and two years as an assistant basketball ball coach at Lumberton Senior High School. She doesn't foresee any problems making the

transition to the collegiate level.

"With cooperation between me, the players and the athletic department, we can be successful," she said.

Crump has her work cut out for her. Last season the Lady Vikings were a 6-20 overall and 5-17 in conference play. This

season, the team's leading scorer has graduated.

Crump is optimistic, however.

"I recognize that the CIAA is a stronger conference than it was when I played here," she said, "but I plan to instill a new attitude to do as much as we are capable of doing."

Crump's winning attitude was only one reason she landed the job.

"I was very pleased by my interview with her," said Dr. Will Shaw, ECSU's Director of Athletics. "The other thing that made her stand out is the fact that the NCAA is gearing toward a policy of gender equity," Shaw added. "That is female coaches for female athletes and male coaches for male athletes."

Crump replaces Vikings head football coach Alvin Kelley for basketball and former ECSU police chief James T. Hoggard for softball—both males.

Crump is not just here to coach. She is eager to talk about her position as an academic advisor for student athletes.

"My main priority is to monitor what our student athletes are doing in the classroom and doing all I can to help them," she said.

She added that support from faculty members' of her position as an advisor smoothed the transition from Lumberton to this job.

At a Sept. 23 press conference to officially announce her hiring, Crump jokingly told reporters to "make sure you mention that I'm single."

Crump describes herself as a "friendly, kind and likeable person who likes to meet new people."

She can be tough, however, when the occasion requires it.

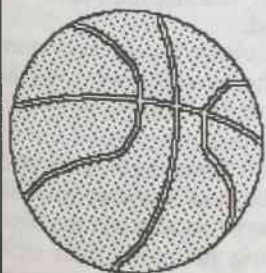
At a recent team meeting, for example, she suggested to her players that they start running daily at six a.m. in order to get in shape for the upcoming season.

"The alternative was to not play this year," she added with a smile.

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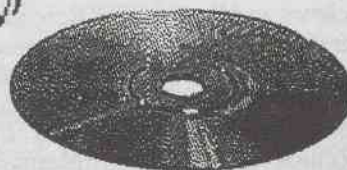


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