

SPORTS

J.C. Smith knocks Vikes out of tourney

by Jemayne King

ECSU's big hopes for a championship season came down to one season-defining shot:

The score was 86-84 in the last seconds of the game against Johnson C. Smith, and ECSU's Ryan Taylor stepped up to take the shot. If he made the shot, it would have tied the game and forced an overtime period.

Unfortunately, Taylor's shot missed. Johnson C. Smith won the Feb. 26 game and knocked the Vikes out of the tournament.

"The whole experience was very emotional," said Herb Lewis, a Viking shooting guard. The team had high expectations this year, said Lewis, adding "maybe it wasn't the Lord's will for us to win that tournament."

Lewis admitted that the team lacked "mental drive" for that game.

"We fought the whole game and played like the underdog," added Lewis, but he felt the team lacked the necessary intensity. "When the team finally responded, it was too late."

Lewis said the experience has taught him to approach the next CIAA game differently. "It's do or die. If you play lax you go home."

Assistant Viking Coach Rodney Robinson said the team "came out ten-

tative," adding that in this type of situation, players have to be on top of the game.

"And Johnson C. Smith was on top of their game. They had some mature players who stepped up."

Robinson said the season was successful despite the painful loss because ECSU had "great support and a strong parent organization."

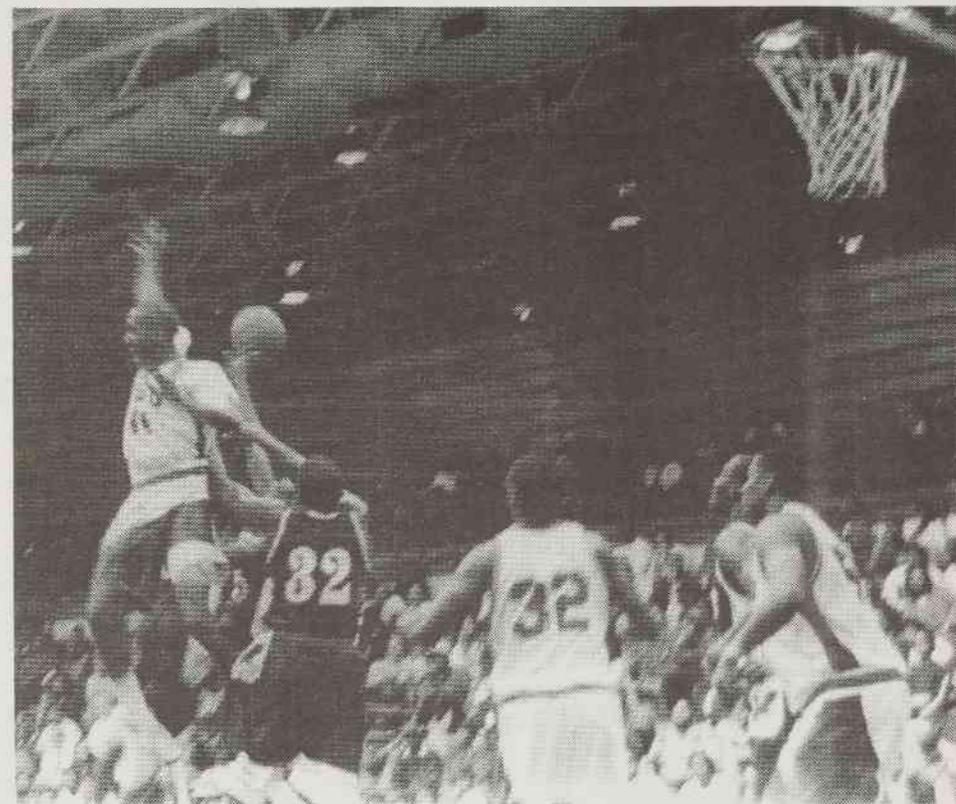
The Vikings rallied from a seven-point deficit to tie the game in under five minutes but were never able to take the lead. All CIAA selection Marcuis Wright hit nine of 11 free throws, most of them coming down the stretch, to hold off ECSU's late game charge.

"Christopher Reese provided a nice offensive game," said Golden Bulls Coach Steve Joyner, "while Marcuis Wright provided senior leadership."

ECSU Head Coach Barry Hamler praised the Viking team for their full-court press.

"Johnson C. Smith turned the ball over 23 times while we turned it over nine times," he said. "That's the first time I can remember that happening with us being on the losing end of the stick."

Hamler said he was surprised by the final rebounding edge "because I



Franklin Scott, Jr. photo

ECSU's Herb Lewis (center) tips off in the Feb. 10 game against N.C. Central University.

thought we were much bigger inside."

Johnson C. Smith held a 42-34 rebounding advantage. Smith's Lemans Shingler led the charge with 11 rebounds.

Johnson C. Smith advanced all the way to the championship final but lost 65-94 to Virginia Union.

In other CIAA tournament quarterfinal games, last place Livingstone College continued its remarkable run through the tournament by upsetting N.C. Central 84-82 in over-

time. One day after winning its first ever tournament game, Livingstone (5-21) got 29 points from Chanta Weathers to shock N.C. Central (18-8).

The hometown Winston-Salem State Rams closed the final three minutes on a 12-2 win to upset the defending CIAA Tournament champions, St. Augustine College 77-69.

Larry Patterson scored 28 points to pace the Rams, who were 14-13. Lafonte Moses scored 22 points for St. Augustine, who won the Western Division regular season championship.

CIAA Tournament a time of pride, nostalgia, and the opportunity to party all night long

by Jemayne King

For Shirley Jones, who describes herself as a retired "30-year employee of ECSU," the annual CIAA Tournament in Winston-Salem is more than a game; it's a ritual that offers her the opportunity to see old friends and reconnect with her past.

"The games bring forth good will even if one's favorite team fails to win," said Jones, after ECSU's recent loss to Johnson C. Smith.

Jones believes the tournament has lost some luster over the years because schools like Hampton University, North Carolina A & T and Norfolk State University no longer participate.

"But the tournament still has a very large following," she added.

For me, the game was an opportunity to meet with friends who attend other CIAA schools, a time to take pride

in my own school, and also an opportunity to sharpen my skills as a sports reporter.

Many people regard the Atlantic Coast Conference as the premier collegiate league in the country. Fans gather from all over the East Coast to sport their Izod golf shirts or sweaters, or team sweats, but they don't hold a candle to the CIAA. The pinstripe suits, the mink coats, the Alligator shoes, and the all-night post-game parties are just some of the scenes you are bound to run into in the basketball Mecca known as Winston-Salem. When the CIAA comes to town everybody knows it.

When I was growing up in Virginia it was not unusual to have teachers "up and leave" school during the last week in February. It was almost a yearly ritual. ECSU's loss in the CIAA Tournament hurts just a little bit, but hav-

ing Virginia Union (of all teams) win the whole thing hurts a lot worse when over a third of your High School graduating class calls Union's hallowed halls home. Bragging rights will surely belong to one particular friend who I have never known to miss an opportunity to "big up" her school during school vacations.

Even though the tournament did not give Viking fans much to root about, the opportunity to fraternize with students of other colleges and universities is a valuable experience that may generate lifetime memories. "Nothing could be finer than the CIAA experience in Winston-Salem North Carolina".

CIAA basketball may even have a larger following than CIAA football. Mostly because the game of basketball is easier to understand from the aver-

age fans prospective than the often time complicated game of football. Also, female fans who may not be familiar with nuances from the game can identify more with a basketball player wearing shorts and running up and down an inside playing arena than a helmeted football player running around an outdoor playing field in 43 degree weather. Either way one must admit that the two chief revenue sports make a lot of things happen all around the CIAA whether it's in the classroom, the neighboring community or the financial aid office.

On thing overall is important. The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association has been, and always will be, based on sportsmanship, fellowship and brotherly love. Maybe the tournament should be held in Philadelphia? ..