

Sports

ECSU VOLLEYBALL PLAYER ADDS ANOTHER ACCOLADE

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ELIZABETH CITY, NC- Elizabeth City State University Senior Sharon Gorgani has been named CIAA Volleyball Player of the Week.

In a two-match, seven game span, Gorgani amassed 20 kills, 5 errors, 9 service aces, 19 digs, 1 solo block and an assisted block as the Lady Vikings went undefeated last week with victories over Saint Paul's and Bowie State. Her best all-around performance came against the Bowie State Lady Bulldogs with 15 kills, 18 digs, 2 service aces and 1 assisted block. This is the second such recognition for Gorgani as she received the same honor during

the 2001 volleyball season.

This is only one of many honors Sharon has received during her matriculation at ECSU. Some others include President of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, the SAAC National Representative on behalf of the CIAA, and a member of the Inaugural CIAA All-Community Works team in 2001. Sharon is also a member of the 2002 CIAA Softball Championship Team and has twice been named to the CIAA Commissioner's All-Academic Team (2001, 2002).

A native of New Bern, NC, Sharon is majoring in Business Administration. She is a 1999 graduate of New Bern High School.

BEDGOOD AND SMITH NAMED TO PRE-SEASON ALL-CIAA TEAM

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RALEIGH, NC-The 2002-2003 Basketball Season officially got underway as the Pre-Season Teams and Predicted Order of Finish were announced Thursday in Raleigh, NC. Both Elizabeth City State University Teams were represented, as Kim Bedgood and Tyrone Smith garnered pre-season accolades.

Bedgood, a senior from Shorter, AL, received her third consecutive pre-season selection. Last season she averaged 11.4 points and 4.2 rebounds per contest as the Lady Vikings finished second in the CIAA Eastern Division.

The Lady Vikings, who finished 2001-2002 at 14-13, have been predicted to finish third this season.

Smith receives his first pre-season nod after last year leading the Vikings in scoring (18.5), assists (5.6) and steals (3.29). A native of Chesapeake, VA, Smith was named to the 2002 CIAA All-Tournament Team. In the CIAA, he finished the 2001-2002 season ranked 5th in scoring, 4th in free throw percentage (.796), 2nd in assists, and 1st in steals. Nationally, he finished the year ranked 3rd in steals, 23rd in assists, and 57th in scoring. The Vikings finished last season at 13-15 (3rd in the CIAA East) and have been picked to finish in fourth place.

BASKETBALL SEASON STARTS WITH A NEW COACH

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New Elizabeth City State University head coach Shawn Walker says he is doing more than just coaching basketball, he's coaching skills of life. As a result, Walker says the players have adopted his changes, which includes changing their image and being more "business like" about basketball, but also about business.

If you haven't noticed, members no longer wear cornrows, bushes or dreads, a suggestion to them made by coach Walker.

"Well, first it was hard for me to cut my hair because I had my hair for 2 years, but he approached me in a nice way; he didn't force me to cut my hair that was my own decision. Eventually I will have to cut my hair to get a job," said Gregory Moustapha.

Walker has also implemented a new Men's day on Wednesday's where the basketball team dresses up in shirt and tie. One of the coaches' main reasons for making the image change was to prepare them for jobs. He "doesn't want anyone to question their character based on their appearance." Coach Walker says that coaches are multifaceted, that they serve as mothers and fathers. He says that coaches who only concentrate on wins and losses are letting their players down. He runs his practices like the real world, "you can't come late to work so don't come late to practice," he says.

Walker's main focus is on his agenda of winning basketball games. The first five or six weeks were the toughest for this year's team, with pre-season conditioning that required the team to get up at 5 a.m. and head to the Vaughn Center for early morning running and practice.

Courtney Oglesby said, "I feel as if it is all about discipline, if you are disciplined enough, you will be there every morning, you won't miss a morning. Those who are not disciplined weed themselves out."

An intricate part of ECSU's success lies in the hands of the team captain Tyrone Smith. Smith has been selected to the Pre-season All CIAA team for 2002-2003.

Walker feels in order for ECSU to be successful Smith has to make plays. Smith says, "Well, I like the leadership role. I'm a leader and I will do what I have to do for me and the team to win, that comes with the territory. I'm not looking for individual accolades I'm looking for what is best for the team."

The goals for the team are to play harder and smarter and longer than everyone else.

The players have adapted well to their new head coach.

Jonathan Harris said, "I feel as if it is for the better that the school found a coach, in coach Walker who is going to help push us to the limit, who is going to help us better ourselves in game time situations. When it boils down to it we are going to be the team to beat."

VOLLEYBALL TEAM SETS UP FOR CIAA TOURNAMENT

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The volleyball team is knocking opponents down, and setting up for the CIAA volleyball tournament, winning consecutive games against Bowie State and Saint Paul's College. ECSU defeated Saint Paul's College in straight games on September 30, 2002, 30-11, 30-14, and 30-9. Captain Nicole Higgins lead the team with 18 assists and freshman sensation Nickesha Neal followed with 2 assists. Lisa Harris had a big game with 10 service aces and Sharon Gorgani stepped up with 4 service aces to aid in the win over Saint Paul's College. The team is back in full force implementing Kandis Riddick and Kristen Bowen back into the line up after nearly suffering season threatening injuries in the ECSU vs. Virginia State game. Neal is excited about their come back.

"They have brought back leadership qualities to the team because they have experience and they give us ample amounts of energy on the court,"

says Neal.

On October 5, 2002 the volleyball team started their winning streak with a huge win over Bowie State University improving their division record to 2-3. The team captains dominated the game. Gorgani lead the way with 15 kills, 18 digs, and 2 services aces, Kandis Riddick showed little signs of injury tallying up 10 kills while Higgins displayed her leadership with 24 assists, 6 kills and 7 digs. The Vikings are enthusiastic and optimistic about their two-game winning streak.

"I hope that the streak continues, now that Kandis is back, I feel a lot more confident about the rest of the season. I think we are really starting to turn things around," said Higgins.

The Vikings now, are healthy and well prepared for any challenge. By working together as a team, Bowen now feels that the team is starting to play at their full potential. The volleyball team is concentrating on the CIAA tournament hoping that they will be able to continue their winning streak for the remainder of the season.

FOOTBALL TEAM IS STILL IN THE PLAYOFF HUNT

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The Elizabeth City State University football team is optimistic about making it to the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association playoff. Their standing in the division is 0-1, following a loss to Virginia Union, the defending CIAA Champions. Despite how the team has struggled, ECSU's offense is showing maturity every week; the offense had 367 total offensive yards on October 5 against a tough Johnson C. Smith defense with running backs rushing for a sum of 204 yards; Carlos Smith had 126 yards on 20 carries, Calvin Hudgins rushed for 78 yards on 6 carries and a touchdown. Hassan Jones had 71 yards.

"Our freshman quarterback is finally coming around, he is finally understand our system," coach John Wright said of Donald Norman.

Norman credits most of his success to relentless hours spent in the film room and also being able to get the majority of his experience in games rather than in practice. His accuracy and completion percentage has improved dramatically with each game.

The Viking's defense is what people have been talking about. One of the biggest factors is because of their defensive end, the humble and laid back, Sean Wilkes, who was named CIAA Defensive player and CIAA Defensive Player of the Week. The chance to still being able to make the playoffs is what drives this defense. "What forces the defense to execute every game is we know that we have a chance in any football game to dominate," said Wilkes.

There are four teams in the Eastern Division, Elizabeth City State, Virginia State, Virginia Union and Bowie State. ECSU must win their next two games against VSU on Oct. 12, and BSU on Oct. 19 in order to make the playoffs.

"I feel the team is very confident on the field because we are working harder and harder each week to play better. We just need to eliminate mistakes," said Howard Williams, Jr.

Critical mistakes in the clutch have cost ECSU ball games they needed to win. Wright is confident that the team will rise to the challenge and hopes that the players are ready for the game and that they keep improving each week.

REMAINING FOOTBALL GAMES

October 26 Livingstone in Salisbury, NC at 2:00pm
November 2 Saint Augustine's in Elizabeth City, NC at 2:00pm
November 9 Winston-Salem State in Winston-Salem, NC at 1:00pm
November 16 CIAA Championship TBA

REMAINING VOLLEYBALL GAMES

October 22 Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville, VA at 6:00pm
October 24 Peace College in Elizabeth City, NC at 6:30pm
October 30 Shaw University in Raleigh, NC at 6:00pm
November 15-17 CIAA Volleyball Tournament in Winston-Salem, NC TBA

THIS YEAR, LET US SUPPORT THE VIKINGS AT THE HOME GAMES AND THE AWAY GAMES. GO VIKINGS!! GO VIKINGS!! GO VIKINGS!!