

CIAA champs!

By April Emory
ECSU Sports
Information Director

After dropping the first game 14-10, the Elizabeth City State University Vikings rebounded to capture their first ever CIAA Baseball Championship over Virginia State University 9-6 Sunday at Whaley Colbert Field.

The Trojans, the two-time defending champions, end their season at 15-19. Game one was a see-saw affair with the Trojans prevailing 14-10. In a contest

that saw three ties and four lead changes, VSU used their final at bat to break a 10-10 tie. IN the top of the 9th.

After scoring a go ahead run the Trojans loaded the bases Steve Perkinson, the 2005 CIAA Rookie of the Year, the smacked a bases clearing double to give the Trojans the four-run victory.

Game two would mirror its predecessor with neither team giving an inch. In the top of the fourth inning with the Vikings leading 3-1, the Trojans rallied to score three runs to take their first lead of the game.

It was short lived due to a solo shot by senior outfielder Gary

Taylor tied the score at 4 in the bottom of the inning.

In the bottom of 5th, a bases loaded RBI single by Jamal McCown gave the Vikings a 5-4 lead. Next Victor Branch cleaned the bases with a double to push the lead to 4.

The Trojans would add two run in their half of the 6th but would manage no runs down the stretch while the Vikings added a run in the bottom of the 7th.

Branch, the tournament MVP, was 6-8 with 5 RBIs in the two championship games. The Vikings finish the season at 18-21 and capture their first ever CIAA Baseball Championship.

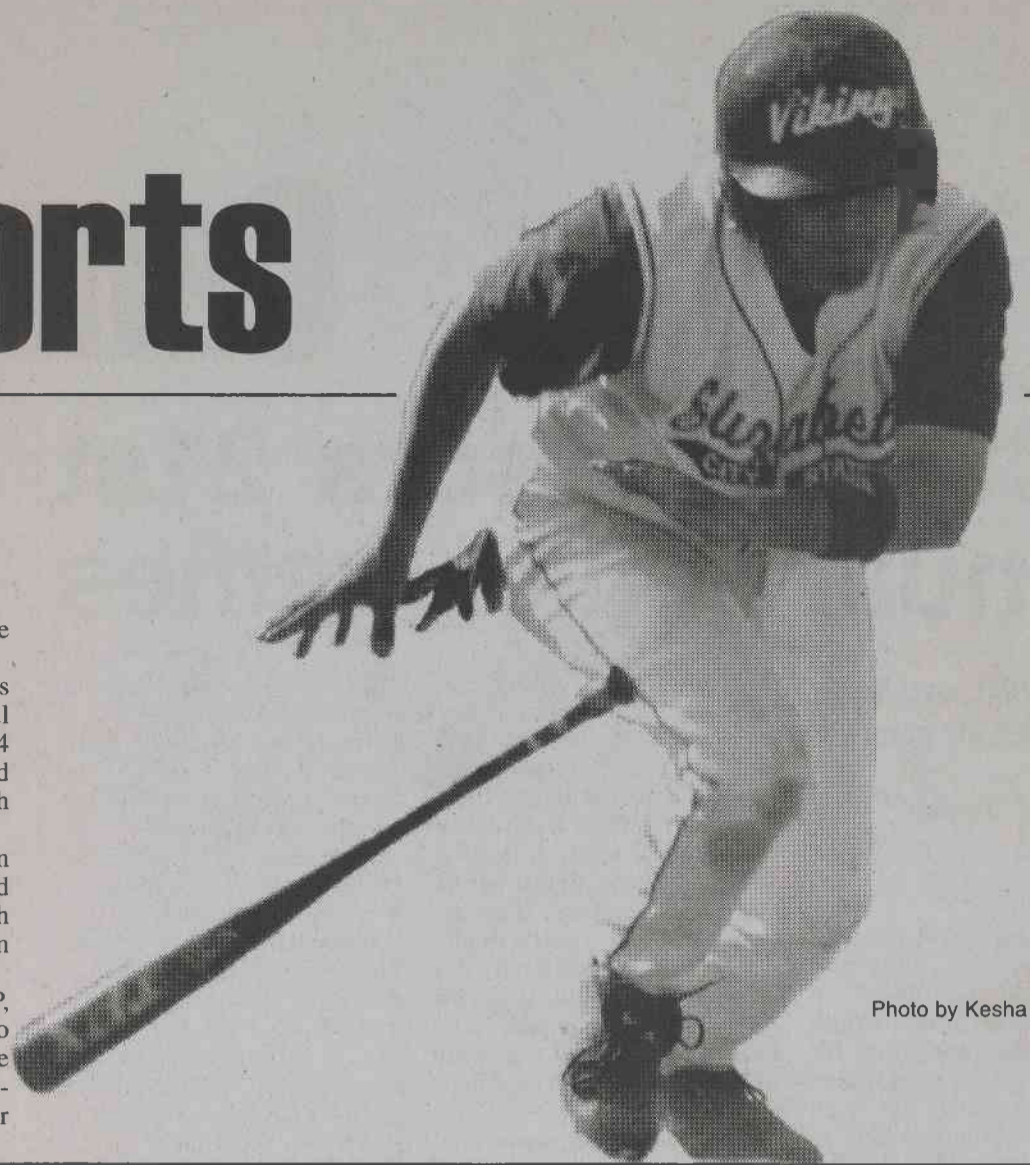


Photo by Kesha Williams

Gutierrez leads Vikings in defeating Virginia State

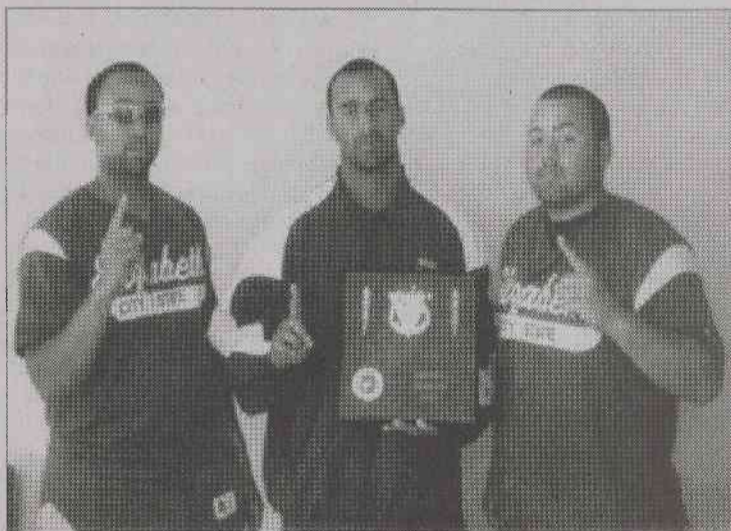


Photo by Bruce Midgette

Vikings baseball team members from left - Rasheed Bradshaw, 3rd base; Carlos Gutierrez, outfield; and P.J. Camacho, 1st base, pose with their new CIAA championship plaque on April 23 after winning the CIAA championship against Virginia State.

Hard work and talent main factors for winning championship

By Bruce Midgette
Sports Editor

Elizabeth City State University's baseball team was honored with many individual awards but a team effort brought home this year's CIAA title on April 23.

"I had dreams about winning the championship earlier this year, so I knew something was bound to happen," said 3rd baseman Rasheed Bradshaw.

Bradshaw, a Richmond, VA native, went 8-14 hitting as ECSU defeated Virginia State 9-6 in the CIAA title game held in

Petersburg, Virginia.

The 18-21 Vikings were the 2nd seed going into this year's tournament and after losing in last year's final, all the pieces finally fell into place.

"I felt like we had the best team in the league last year," said All-CIAA 1st baseman P.J. Camacho.

This year's baseball team was shadowed by losses but they put together a great run to end a season of ups and downs.

"We don't let one game or 13 games end our season. We could have easily rolled over and kept losing games," said outfielder Carlos Gutierrez.

The Bronx, NY native Gutierrez led the CIAA in total bases (69) and homeruns (5). He received Player of the Year, All-CIAA, and All-CIAA tourney honors while leading a talented team to the top with the conference elite.

"I put in my work but without my teammates we would not have won the championship," Gutierrez said.

Lots of credit was given to coach Terrence Whittle who was able to handle a deep Viking bench with talented players at every position.

This year's team also had a great pitching staff led by another Viking All-CIAA player, transfer pitcher Andy Lewis. His teammates agree that his style and work ethic helped greatly.

"Last year we had talent, this year we had better pitching. Our pitchers went the distance during the games," Camacho said.

Hard work and talent really paid off for the ECSU baseball team. With the many All-CIAA awards, Victor Branch managed to nab the tournament's Most Valuable Player Award and players such as

Jamal McCowne were seen as an inspiration for the team hitting.

Freshman shortstop Meshaw Taylor was also complimented by his teammates for maintaining a high level of play under pressure. "He played pretty much as if he were a senior," said Gutierrez.

Many players on the team agree that this team is more like a family on and off the field. They can have an argument at practice and then be seen at dinner trading jokes the same day.

"It's easier to play when you feel like you're a family," Gutierrez said.

For now the Viking baseball family can celebrate but the job is never done when you're defending champs.

"Next year everyone will be looking for us, because now we got the number one spot," said Camacho.

Coach Anton Thomas, far left, gives a pep talk to the softball team during a recent game.



Photo by Rich Harvey

Lady Vikings win CIAA

From Press Releases

The Lady Vikings defeated Fayetteville State University by the score of 12-4 on Saturday, April 23 to clinch the 2005 CIAA Softball Championship in Petersburg, Virginia.

The Lady Broncos, coming out of the consolation bracket, earned their way back into the championship through hard-fought wins and gritty determination, yet it was the Lady Vikings who would prove to be too much for Fayetteville

State as they cruised to the 12-4 win.

ECSU's Alicia Graham won the tournament's Most Valuable Player honors as she and teammate Shameetha Holley earned all-tournament team honors.

NBA seeks to impose age limit on new draft picks

New rules could help improve college game

By Bruce Midgette
Sports Editor

The National Basketball Association's current collective bargaining agreement will expire in two months and Commissioner David Stern is looking to raise the age limit of players entering the league.

The current NBA rule states that in order to be eligible for the draft, a U.S. player's high school class must have graduated; international players must turn 18 before draft day. The Players Union and the league executives who are pushing hard to see a raise in the age limit will look at this rule.

"We are seeking to raise that to 20 or two years out of high school," said Commissioner David Stern. Indiana Pacer forward Jermaine

O'Neal has made remarks that he thinks racism is playing a part in the league's push for an age limit and has said that he can't see a logical reason for a change in the rule.

"As a Black guy, you kind of think race is the reason why it's coming up. If I can go to the U.S. Army and fight the war at 18, why can't you play basketball for 48 minutes?" said O'Neal.

Some critics agree that Stern's supposed new system would improve the college game and make the National Basketball Development League more useful as a minor league. However, a possible change in the rules could push more current collegiate underclassmen players into this year's NBA Draft.

The Atlantic Coast Conference has already seen a change from top to bottom as a result of early entrants into the draft. NCAA Champions North Carolina had four of its top players declared for the draft. Sophomores Rashad

McCants, Raymond Felton, Sean May, and freshman Marvin Williams are all leaving early for the draft. Wake Forest sophomore guard Chris Paul, and teammate Eric Williams are also making the jump into the NBA followed by Maryland junior guard John Gilchrist. The former Salem High School (Virginia Beach native) standout declared for the draft without the approval of coach Gary Williams.

The NBA has seen an increase in high school and underclassmen collegiate players entering the league unprepared in recent years. However, the commissioner is confident of a future change in the rules.

"I'm optimistic the union will agree to some raise in the minimum age in the current collective bargaining," said Stern.

Negotiations for a new collective bargaining contract will begin June 30, one day after the NBA Draft.

THIS BAND ALWAYS GETS A STANDING OVATION



From jazz to rock, show tunes to symphonies-plus, of course, the world's greatest marches-Soldiers play music in the U.S. Army every day around the world. And when they play our national anthem, we all stand and cheer.

Join the band. Call Sgt. 1st Class Toomer at 338-2292 to arrange an audition. And find out about money for college plus other Army benefits.

Or talk to a Recruiter at the Army Recruiting Station, 1419-A Ehringhaus St. in Elizabeth City. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.



AN ARMY OF ONE