

SPORTS

Rams are Ready to Play in CIAA

BY TOLLY CARR
Sports Editor

The Winston-Salem State Men's Basketball team entered the season with a lot of high expectations. Phenizee Ransom, the freshman sensation from a year ago, had become the super sophomore with his preseason All-CIAA honors. Patrick "Pearl" Herron was coming off a year where he had led the CIAA in assists and steals and William "Monty" Gray was returning as one of the deadliest shooters in the league.

Johnny Salley, Carlos Mumford and Mayiik Deng, all new faces, were expected to be valuable contributors on the offensive and defensive ends.

All that looked good on paper. The Basketball Rams would have to perform on the court and to prove what was written in preseason media guides. The Rams opened the season on the road with High Point University. This game was nip and tuck all the way but the Rams lost by two after missing two shots in the final seconds which would have sent the game into overtime. This was not a bad loss because a lot of calls went against the Rams and they were on the road.

At least they did get a lot of dunks in the game, a sight which over the years had vanished from the Ram's program on a large scale.

Two nights later the Rams were on the road again at Shaw University, they started off slow and ran out of gas during a valiant second half comeback.

The Rams played their first home game during Thanksgiving break against Bowie State. The Rams played well from the start and looked like they were going to hold on for the win but in the last five minutes, the Rams stopped executing and allowed Bowie to creep back and steal the victory. At this point in the season the high expectations had turned into an 0-3 record.

The Rams went on the road and started December in the Ricky Williams Classic in Atlanta, Ga. The Rams came back to campus with their first victory of the season with a one point victory over Clark-Atlanta but also with a tough loss to Morris Brown. Free throws were the factor in that game as the Rams shot 15-28 from the line.

The Rams were scheduled to finish out the fall semester with a road game at Hampton University and a second chance at High Point, this time on their home court. The Rams started off slow at Hampton but made a heroic comeback in the second half but could pull no closer

than two in the final minute.

The Rams finally got to play in front of the student body against High Point and they did not hold back. "Pearl" Herron had a career high 16 assists and Monty Gray had a career high 32 points after hitting eight three pointers. Phenizee Ransom put in his usual hard day's work with 20 points and Carlos Mumford scored 15 very spectacular points.

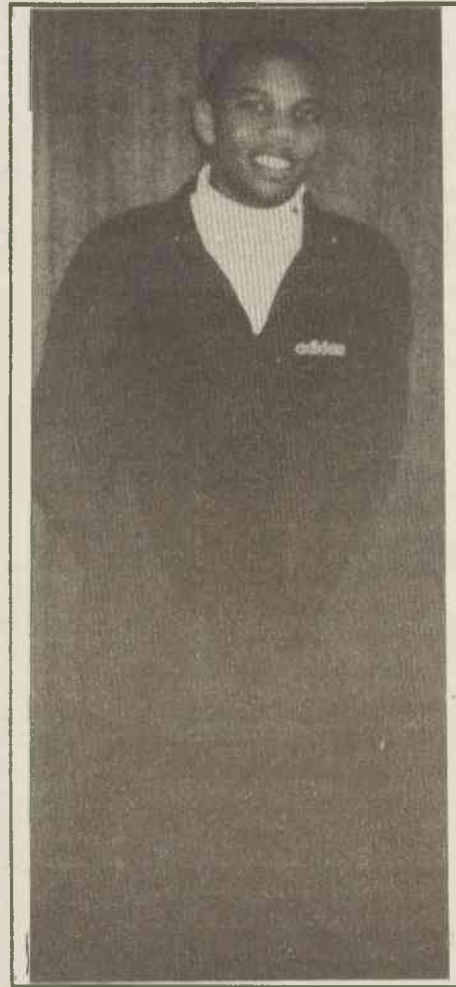
The Rams got a break until the end of December when they went down to Wilmington, N.C. for the annual **Smoke On The River Tournament** at New Hanover High School. The Rams got a split in this one with a victory over Elizabeth City State in the opening round but lost the championship game to Fayetteville State. Phenizee Ransom and Darnell Middleton were named to the All Tournament Team for their outstanding play.

The Rams first game of 1995 was against the best team they would probably face all year, Norfolk State University. To make a long story short the Rams were never in this game at all. Norfolk State, which features All-American Corey Williams, took control from the start and jumped to a 11-2 lead that they never looked backed from. At halftime Corey Williams had 22 points and Winston Salem State's super sophomore Phen Ransom had yet to score. The Spartans led by as many as 40 points in the second half as they cruised to a 106-72 victory.

One bad thing the new year brought the Rams was two key injuries which would hinder their rebounding and bench production. Johnny Salley was lost for the season to a operation that removed bone spurs from his knee. Salley who stood at 6-7 was an excellent rebounder and although not on a consistent basis he could score a lot of points. The other injury was to Earlon Martin, a backup point guard, who will also miss the season with a leg injury. Earlon was by far the scrappiest player on the team and he always gave a 110 percent when he came off the bench to give one of the starting guards a breather. As a matter of fact Martin even started a few games for the Rams. So without a doubt those two guys would be sorely missed for the remainder of the season.

The Rams had a four day lay off until their next game versus St. Augustine's down in Raleigh. The Rams were never in this one as the Falcons blew the Rams away 81-57.

The Rams next game was a rare



Phenizee Ransom

Sunday game at the Lawrence Joel Coliseum versus N.C. Central. The Rams played their hearts out in this one and in the final minute the game was tied at 81 points a piece. The Rams had a chance to hold the ball for the final shot but Monty Gray took a controversial three point shot with nine seconds remaining and missed. Central got the rebound and called a timeout with 5.1 seconds remaining. Central's Levelle Moton took the inbound pass and heaved a desperation shot at the buzzer from just inside the half court line. It seemed as if the entire coliseum went into a dead silence as the ball drifted through the air in the direction of the basket and when it hit the backboard and fell through the nets the Central fans danced in the aisles and the Ram partisans looked on in amazement. Central stole one from the Rams 84-81.

The Rams packed their bags and went on the road again for a trip to Fayetteville to take on the Broncos of Fayetteville State and to Orangeburg, S.C., to battle Division I S.C. State University. The Rams lost to Fayetteville State for the second time this year 94-85 and almost pulled an upset at

S.C. State but fell 73-63 to the Bulldogs.

After the two game road trip the Rams returned home for a five game home stand that began with J.C. Smith on Jan. 21 and would be capped off on Feb. 1 versus N.C. A&T.

The Rams got excellent all around play from the entire team and Otis Attucks emerged as the heir apparent to Pearl Herron's point guard duties as the Rams barely nipped Smith 73-72.

Virginia State would be next on the Ram's menu two days after the Smith victory. The Rams played excellent in this one shooting 53 percent from the field and 70 percent from the free throw line on their way to a dramatic 87-83 overtime victory.

The Rams next opponent would be the defending CIAA champion Virginia Union Panthers. The Rams lead early in this one but once the Union offensive machine began to click it was all Panthers as they cruised to a 92-75 victory.

In the Ram's next game they had a second chance versus the Shaw Bears. The Rams really did not play like a team that looked like they had revenge on their mind as they played lethargically in a 70-63 loss.

The next night the Rams would have to forget all about the bad game versus Shaw because it was now time for the showdown of the year.... **The North Carolina A & T Aggies**. The Rams played the game of their lives as they jumped to a 15-1 lead in the first half versus the Aggies. The Aggies responded to the Rams onslaught by hitting key three pointers to lead by one point at the half. The Rams regained their lead early in the second half and about midway through the second half the lead switched back and forth. In crunch time Ransom stepped up and hit 10 of the last 12 points for the Rams as they beat the Aggies 74-65. Phenizee Ransom's play in this game probably reminded people of the Earl Monroe era as Ransom racked up 40 points against the Aggies.

After the A&T game the Rams were on the road to play Johnson C. Smith in the Charlotte Coliseum. The Rams played competitive in this one but in the end Johnson C. Smith overcame the Rams 76-65 to even their season series at one apiece.

The Rams did not have long to ponder their defeat because next on the menu was the St. Aug Falcons. This game was tight all the way until down the stretch when the Rams pulled away for

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