

Sports

Rams set to prove CIAA naysayers wrong; team focuses on transition

BY RASHEED OLUWA
Sports editor

For the Winston-Salem State Rams basketball team, the key theme for the 1998-99 basketball season is transition. Last year's squad was coached by Sam Hanger, and it featured six seniors. A year later, things have changed dramatically. Hanger is no longer coach and many of the players on that team are also gone.

The team this season has an altogether new face. There's a new coaching staff headed by former Fayetteville State coach Rick Duckett, and a roster with six freshmen. On top of that, Duckett also has implemented an entirely new offensive and defensive system for the players to learn. With that many changes it's easy to see how the Rams were picked to finish in last place of the CIAA's western division.

Despite the adversity, Duckett remains very optimistic about the team's chances this season.

"I don't care what the poll has to say," Duckett says. "I've never coached a last place team in my life. The players know better than to accept it (the poll)."

For the Rams to prove all the naysayers wrong, they must receive leadership and stability from their returning core of players. Among those in this group who are expected to give big contributions are Larry Patterson, a junior, and seniors Tyrone Thomas and Windell Owens.

"Tyrone Thomas, Windell Owens and Larry Patterson have all been impressive with their work in practice," Duckett says. "They all play a part in the team's performance this year."

Thomas, the team's leading scorer last year at 14 points a game, is penciled to start



Photo courtesy of William McNeill

(From right, top) Philip Stitt, Farrah Fryar, Bradley Taylor, Kamal Oliver, Marcus Best, Corey Thompson, Russell English, Sherman Ward, Kevin Henry, Larry Patterson, Keith Breland, Chea Johnson, William McNeill, Rick Duckett; (bottom) Torrian Wynn, Tyrone Thomas, Trevor Redfearn, Wendell Owens.

as point guard. Although Thomas is shooting guard by trade, the coaching staff does not expect the move to have that big of an impact on his game.

"Tyrone will probably get better looks in our system than he got last year," explains assistant coach William McNeill. "The way our offense is designed, there will be more offensive balance. This will allow Thomas not to force so many shots."

Larry Patterson will join Thomas in the backcourt. The coaching staff expects Patterson to have a breakout season.

"Larry is the best outside shooter we've got," McNeill says. "We've been working with him and it shouldn't be out of the question for him to average 18 points a

game for us."

Owens will man the power forward position. At 6'8", the coaching staff expects Owens to cause many offensive problems for the opposition. "We expect Windell to take advantage of the opportunities in our offensive system," says assistant coach Philip Stitt. "He'll be able to take the ball outside for the jumper or the quick drive to the hoop."

Aside from those three positions, the rest of the starting line-up is still in the air. However, the early favorites appear to be freshmen: guard Marcus Best and forward Corey Thompson.

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Broadnax prepares to lead Lady Rams

BY RASHEED OLUWA
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When Kesha Broadnax first donned a uniform for the Lady Rams basketball team, there was one thing you could tell from the beginning. She is definitely a person who speaks her mind. Although that trait is commended by a lot of people, referees seem to have a different way of rewarding honesty and forthright dialogue. As Broadnax has found out over the years, it's called the technical foul.

Now in her senior year, Broadnax still remains opinionated. Experience has just made her change the way she approaches things.

"I'm a very aggressive and outspoken person," Broadnax says. "But I've grown, and that (problems with officiating) isn't going to be a problem this year."

"We use last year's failure as motivation. The whole team has been working hard. This off-season is the hardest I've ever trained."

— Kesha Broadnax —

Other people have noticed a change in Broadnax as well. "She's growing in terms of maturity," says coach Terri Eanes, who is entering her second year as a Lady Rams assistant coach. "When I was a coach at Livingstone and we played against her, she

could get really rattled with technical fouls. Now she does a good job of keeping her head in the game."

What Broadnax hopes to focus solely on this year is basketball. Last year the Lady Rams successfully came in first place of the CIAA's Western division only to get upset in the semi-finals tournament by Livingstone. That loss still burns in the mind of Broadnax.

"We use last year's failure as motivation," says Broadnax. "The whole team has been working hard. This off-season is the hardest I've ever trained."

Using that same determination, Broadnax also hopes to motivate her teammates. In carrying out her duties, Broadnax admits that at times she's been misunderstood, but her intentions are good. She plans to lead the Rams to a victory.

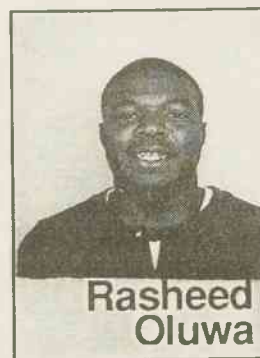
Autopsy gives final rest to FloJo

Now maybe the dead can rest in peace. Maybe a family can rest a little easier without being

bombarded with whispers and allegations. However, one thing is certain: The rest of the world will go on as if nothing ever happened.

When Florence Griffith Joyner was pronounced dead on Monday, Sept. 21, many people had their own spin on the situation.

Some people mourned the passing of a great African-American role model who willingly gave back to the community.



Rasheed Oluwa

Some people mourned over the passing of a great athlete who exuded power, grace and sensuality all at once.

And then there were the cynics. Those who questioned the cause of Griffith Joyner's death included jealous competitors and jaded track and field observers who had marveled at her accomplishments in the 1988 Olympics. There are those who looked in awe at her sudden rise and sudden decline. Those who fell prey to the ugly side of human nature, and slung accusations of steroids.

The whispers abounded: How could a woman achieve such a perfect body without chemical assistance? How could a woman her age die of a heart attack? Joyner Griffith's family was asked to answer questions while they were picking up the pieces.

On Saturday, Oct. 24, a coroner's report announced the cause of death as an epileptic seizure, and not the result of steroids.

The story was overlooked in many newspapers because the Yankees had won the World Series the night before.

Although the story didn't receive as much press coverage as it deserved, Griffith Joyner's family can rest easier now.

They can do what many people across the nation have done: move on.

Have a safe holiday season.