

SPORTS

Silent but deadly

Steven J. Gaither
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

What a difference a year makes.

Last January, Winston-Salem State forward Jamal Durham was playing out of position at the center slot.

Most nights, he was matched up against players who stood 4 to 5 inches taller.

To make matters worse, the Rams were in the midst of the worst season at school history, finishing at 5-24 in their first Division I season.

With the Rams devoid of another true inside presence, Durham was asked to guard the opponent's big men, including Georgetown 7-2 center Roy Hibbert and Kansas Darrell Arthur.

Durham's numbers dropped considerably from his freshman season. His scoring average dropped from 9.7 to 8.1, and his shooting percentage dropped from 45 to just under 40 percent.

This season, however, the Rams have added more height to their lineup with 6-9 forward Paul Davis, 6-10 center Corey Morris, and 6-8 forward McIntoché Alcuis, all freshmen.

The Rams' added height and playing against smaller MEAC opponents have allowed Durham more freedom on the court. Thus, allowing him to have his

most consistent season yet.

Through 14 games, Durham was the Rams' leading scorer at 11.3 points per game, their second-leading rebounder at 5.1 per game. He was also second in minutes played and blocks. On Jan. 12, had his best game of the season, scoring 25 points and grabbing eight rebounds as the Rams ran University of Maryland-Eastern Shore ragged in a 105-59 win.

"The added height and the new players are helping out a lot," Durham said. "They're contributing off the bench, giving some quality minutes."

WSSU's head coach Bobby Collins has liked what he's seen out of Durham so far this season.

"Jamal Durham has been playing extremely well for us; he's been playing consistent," said Collins. "It just seems like he's a more rested Jamal Durham this year."

"I knew he could shine within this league. He's playing extremely well for us, he's hitting open shots, he's crashing the boards, and he's doing a really great job for us," he said.

As one of the elder statesmen of the team, Durham says that this year he's leading by example. "If I don't do my best, I can't expect the freshman to do their best,"



Jamal Durham scored a season-high 25 points vs. UMES.

Photo by Garrett Garms

Durham said. "My role is to rebound and to contribute any way I can. If I'm on the floor I'm gonna rebound, score when I have the chance, and just be a leader."

One area that Collins would like to see Durham improve is his vocal leadership.

"One thing that I wish he would do more is communicate his leadership instead of just showing it. Sometimes you have guys who show their leadership, he's one that just does it by example. He doesn't talk a lot, but he wants to win as much as the next guy."

Sports Briefs

Winston-Salem State University defensive end William Hayes has been invited to play in the Texas vs. The Nation All-Star Game in El Paso on Feb. 2, at 6 p.m. at the Sun Bowl.

The Texas vs. The Nation Game is a post-season college football all-star game that was established in 2006 as part of the 2006 NCAA Division I FBS football season. The format of the game pits a team of top-rated college seniors who played college or high school football in Texas against a squad of top-rated seniors from the rest of the nation. Seniors rated in the top 15 at their position by the NFL are eligible to play in the game.

The game is held in El Paso at the Sun Bowl Stadium. The first occurrence of the game was held on Feb. 2, 2007, to conclude the college football season, and was broadcast on CSTV. The 2008 edition of the Texas vs. The Nation game will again be broadcast live on CSTV at 3 p.m. (Mountain Time) from the Sun Bowl in El Paso.

Former Alabama and Texas A&M head football coach Gene Stallings will lead Team Texas in the second annual Texas vs. the Nation all-star bowl. Stallings will go head-to-head with former Philadelphia Eagles and Chicago Bears coach Buddy Ryan in his second year as head coach for Team Nation. Last year, Ryan led Team Nation to a 24-20 victory over Team Texas and looks to defend the Nation's title this year.

Hayes, a senior who led the Rams in sacks last season, has been training in Naples, Fla., with several other players in preparation for the game.

With the invitation to the game, Hayes will get more exposure with the hopes of getting drafted by an NFL team in April. Scouts from 25 NFL teams came to WSSU during the 2007 season to watch Hayes play.

Hayes led WSSU with 8.5 sacks and was second on the team in total tackles with 78. He also broke up three passes and recovered four fumbles, two of which he returned for touchdowns for the Rams.

Over his past two seasons at WSSU, Hayes, a former star at High Point Andrews, combined for 16 sacks and 129



William "Big Plays" Hayes was selected to the Texas vs. The Nation All-Star Game. Hayes is shown making a tackle against

News Argus File Photo

tackles.

Of the two rosters from last season's Texas vs. The Nation game, 78 players signed NFL contracts.

RALEIGH

The Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) announced a special game for the 2008 MEAC Basketball Tournament during a press conference Tuesday at the RBC Center in Raleigh. The announcement revealed that the North Carolina Central Eagles and the Winston-Salem State Rams men's basketball teams will compete in a bonus game on Championship Saturday, March 15, of the 2008 basketball tournament.

"We are excited that the North Carolina Central University and Winston-Salem State University men's teams will be competing against each other on championship Saturday," said MEAC Commissioner Dennis E. Thomas.

"We want to galvanize the Eagle and Ram fans base, alumni and students to experience what our tournament is all about. We feel this is an excellent opportunity for both teams to showcase their institutions."

The bonus game is an added event of the 2008 MEAC Basketball Tournament. The game will tip off between the

women's and men's championship game on Saturday, March 15 at 4:30 p.m. The matchup between the two teams will be the first since their move up to Division I.

"The MEAC is a great conference with a strong history and tradition and we are honored to participate," said Ingrid Wicker-McCree, Interim Director of Athletics, North Carolina Central University.

"I am excited about our student-athletes and coaches having the opportunity to participate with Winston-Salem State University. Both schools are making great progress in their transition to Division I and I think this tournament will showcase what we have to offer to the Division I membership."

"We are excited about this opportunity," stated Dr. Chico Caldwell, Director of Athletics, of Winston-Salem State University. "When you are a reclassifying institution and in transition to Division I you look for any opportunity to showcase your team and institution. I think it is a great opportunity not only for our basketball team, but also for our institution."

"We said since the beginning of our reclassification that this was not just an athletic transition, this is a transition for our university and an opportunity to showcase our university as a part of the MEAC," Caldwell said.

It was the fall of a champion

Jerrod Johnson
STAFF REPORTER

On Oct. 5, 2007, Olympic gold medalist Marion Jones admitted to lying about using performance-enhancing drugs during a 2000 investigation.

"(And so) it is with a great amount of shame that I stand before you and tell you that I have betrayed your trust," said Jones tearfully on the U.S. Federal Courthouse steps in White Plains, New York. "I want you all to know that today I plead guilty to two counts of making false statements to federal agents."

A former American athlete in track and field, Jones won two bronze and three gold medals in the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia. However, rumors surfaced that Jones was using performance-enhancing drugs to accomplish these amazing feats. Her ex-husband, C.J. Hunter, a former shot-putter and confessed steroid user (he was banned from the 2000 Olympics for traces of nandrolone), swore under oath that he witnessed Jones using steroids in the Olympic Village.

In the BALCO case in 1999, Jones denied to federal investigators that she was using the steroid Tetrahydrogestrinone, more familiarly known as THG or "The Clear." She claimed she was made to believe she was taking some flaxseed oil supplement.

Jones' former coach, Trevor Graham, was involved in a major 2005 drug scandal, revealing that many athletes have used performance-enhancing drugs. Baseball player Barry Bonds was among the athletes involved. Jones denied using such drugs herself until earlier this month. In a published letter, Jones admitted she had used steroids until she stopped training with Graham in 2002; she later confessed to lying when federal agents questioned her in 2003, panicking when they presented a sample of THG.

"To you, my fans," Jones said in her Oct. 5 speech, "including my young supporters, the United States Track and Field Association, my closest friends, my attorneys, and the most classy family a person could ever hope for—namely my mother, my husband, my children, my brother and his family, my uncle, and the rest of my extended family. I want you to know that I have been dishonest. And you have the right to be angry with me."

With her family behind her at the podium, Jones then announced her retirement from the sport of track and field.

As a result of her admission of guilt, Jones was asked to return the five medals won in the 2000 Summer Olympics. In addition, all awards and honors awarded to her since September 1, 2000, will be revoked.

International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) president Lamine Diack stated that Jones would be remembered as one of the biggest frauds in sporting history.

There are just as many willing to defend Jones's character as there are those willing to attack it. Lauryn Williams, a 2004 Olympic silver medalist in the women's 100 meters, posted in a blog at The Home of World Champions website (<http://web.wcsn.com/index.jsp>) that she had conflicting views toward the disgraced Olympian.

"When it comes to my feelings toward Marion, I am back and forth between sad for her unfortunate situation and angry at the mess she has created and left for current athletes to clean up."

Williams then said that Jones had treated her "like a little sister" in the 2004 Olympics, and said she does not believe that Jones is a bad person. However, she does believe that Jones should attempt to redeem the sport.

"She shouldn't go hide now in shame...she should speak to children about how not to make the same mistake," Williams stated.

Former sprinter Ben Johnson wasn't shocked by Jones' confession. In fact, he says, he expected it.

"More athletes should admit they use banned drugs as well," Johnson said.

Johnson himself ran a gold-winning, record-setting 9.79 seconds in the 100-meter race at the 1988 Seoul Olympics but was found to have used the steroid stanozolol and was stripped of both honors.

"I believe that everyone on the international level is using performance-enhancing drugs," Johnson said in a radio interview with Al-Jazeera in London on Oct. 12, 2007. "And, you know, it's widespread and it's going to continue on. A lot more people [are] going to be also coming forward."