

BLACK HISTORY

Rivalry between WSSU and A&T has long colorful history

Steven J. Gaither
EDITOR IN CHIEF

When Winston-Salem State and North Carolina A&T meet on Jan. 26 in Greensboro it marked the first time that the two former CIAA powers have met since the 1998 season.

The two schools are separated by less than 30 miles, and while it may not gain the national attention of the Duke-Carolina rivalry, for a time it was arguably just as fierce. In the 1950s and 60's both schools were members of the CIAA. In those decades just before massive integration in major college sports, the all-black schools in the league had their own pick of the top black athletes.

Although the close proximity of the schools made them natural rivals, the rivalry really got cooking when the schools hired two former college teammates to head their basketball programs. Winston-Salem Teacher College hired Clarence "Big House" Gaines as an assistant coach to Brutus Wilson in 1945. Gaines had been a star football player at Morgan State in Baltimore. He was also a center on the Bears basketball squad. The star of the team was Cal Irvin, who was later hired as the head coach at A&T.

Adding fuel to the fire was the competition for players. In those days, scouting and recruiting of players was limited, so most coaches heard about players from former players and awarded scholarships based on that. In 1956, one of Gaines' players told him about a guard from Newark, New Jersey,

but Gaines told the player he needed big men, not guards. The guard turned out to be Al Attles, who went on to a long professional career in both the playing and coaching ranks.

By the following season, Gaines had a Newark guard of his own, Cleo Hill. Hill went on to smash all scoring records at Winston-Salem State and in the CIAA. The peak of the rivalry may have been the 1966-67 basketball season. The Rams were led by Earl Monroe, who averaged 41.5 points per game that year. The Rams also featured future NBA player Jim Reid, and Bill English, who is currently fourth on the Rams' all-time scoring list. Guard Sylvester Adams, and big men Ted Campbell and William Gilmer led the Aggies.

Although the two coaches played together at Morgan, they had two different philosophies when it came to coaching the game. Irvin favored a "platoon" system in which he basically used two sets of five players and when one group got tired, he would just send in another group.

Gaines believed that his best players should start and play the entire game.

"I believe in stamina and conditioning for a team," Gaines said told the Twin City Sentinel. "A team cannot win in basketball if its players get tired easily."

The differences did not stop there. The Aggies were a team built on strength and the Rams relied on their quick, fast-breaking style to outscore their opponents.

"With the schools being so close, it was just a natural rivalry," said

Ernie Brown, a senior reserve that season. "We knew we couldn't just go in there and mark up a win."

Brown says that the reason the rivalry was so good at that time was the students came from most of the same cities. Monroe and teammate Steven Smith were both from Philadelphia, as were A&T's Campbell and George Mack.

The Rams and Aggies played three times that season. The first game was played Friday, Jan. 21 in the War Memorial Coliseum. Monroe scorched A&T with 38 points, but Winston-Salem State barely made it back down I-40 with a win. The Rams did not score a field goal in the final five minutes, but did hit 11 of 12 free-throw shots in that stretch.

The second game took place in Winston-Salem on Feb. 12. Back then, most games against A&T were moved from Whittaker Gym on campus to Memorial Coliseum. This time, Monroe scored 48 points and the Rams won easily by a score of 104-93.

The third time proved to be the charm for the Aggies as they handed the Rams their first of the season (the Rams lost to High Point that season, but was awarded the win by HP forfeit) loss in the semifinals of the CIAA tournament. The Aggies held Monroe to a season-low 20 points and defeated the Rams by a score of 105-82.

The Rams, however, had the last laugh as they went on to win the NCAA College Division Championship, finishing with a 31-1 record. Just three years later,

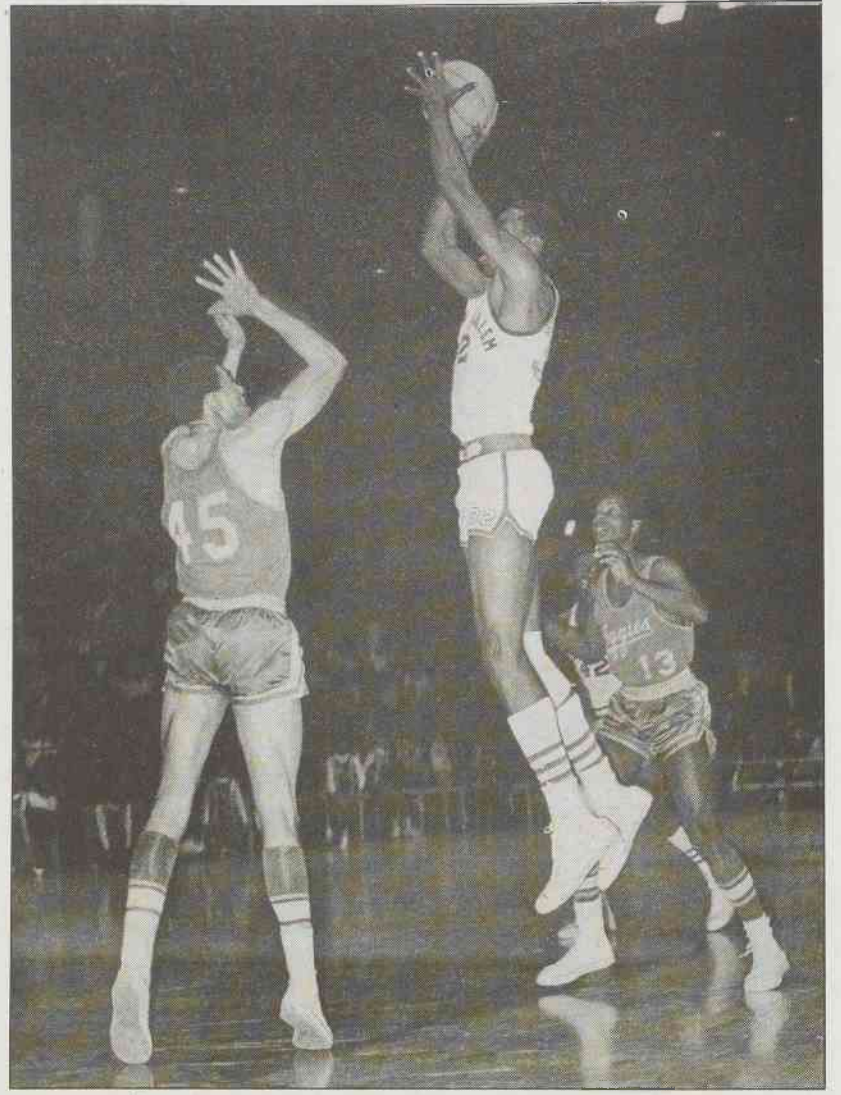


Photo courtesy of WSSU Archives

Former Winston-Salem State great Bill English shoots over North Carolina A&T

A&T and several other colleges left the CIAA. The Rams and Aggies continued to play each other regularly until the 1997-98 season. Now that WSSU and A&T

are both in the MEAC, the teams are once again be conference rivals.

On Saturday, Jan. 23, the Aggies defeated the Rams 75-56.

Words of Wisdom live in all of us.

How will you share yours?

Enter the
Black History Month
Words of Wisdom:
remember, celebrate, act
essay contest
presented by Alltel.

Dr. Maya Angelou

In remembering the past, we learn. In celebrating the past, we honor those who lived it. But it is by acting in the present that we rise into a brighter future.

In remembering the past, what will you do to contribute to a brighter future?

Visit alltel.com/wordsofwisdom or visit your local Alltel store to find out more.

alltel
wireless

Alltel Retail Stores

• These Retail Stores Now Open Sunday

Asheboro

• 1214-D E. Dixie Dr. | (336) 626-0744

Burlington

• 2475 S. Church St. | (336) 229-2500

Greensboro

• 411-A Piggott Church Rd. | (336) 286-3245
• 1603 Highwoods Blvd. | (336) 235-2312
• 1212 19th Bradford Pkwy. | (336) 235-4867
• 3121 Kathleen Ave. | (336) 292-9906

High Point

• Palladium Shop Ctr. | (336) 841-0107

Kernersville

• 950 S. Main St. | (336) 993-3810

Reidsville

• 1960 Freeway Dr. | (336) 348-9916

Summerfield

• 4548 U.S. Hwy. 220 N. | (336) 644-7048

Thomasville

• 1033 Randolph St. | (336) 476-0261

Winston-Salem

• 340 Summit Square Blvd. | (336) 377-2522
• 536 Hanes Mall Blvd. | (336) 790-5303

Shop at a participating retailer:

Equipment & promotional offers at these locations may vary.

Asheboro

• 3-D Wireless | (336) 625-8722
• One-Stop Cellular | (336) 629-6363

Burlington

• Cellular Plus | (336) 584-6379
• One-Stop Cellular | (336) 538-1226

Eden

• One-Stop Cellular | (336) 627-5200
• Post Office Etc. | (336) 623-7999

Greensboro

• Cellular Plus | (336) 282-1006
• One-Stop Cellular | (336) 316-1020

High Point

• Cellular Plus | (336) 895-5050
• One-Stop Cellular | (336) 895-0084
• Parcom | (336) 434-2143

Lexington

• Davidson Comm. | (336) 238-2105

Randleman

• 3-D Wireless | (336) 498-6677

Reidsville

• One-Stop Cellular | (336) 616-1530

Winston-Salem

• ABC Phones of NC, Inc. | (336) 758-7866
• One-Stop Cellular | (336) 774-1590
• Simply Wireless | (336) 794-1999
• Wilson Comm. | (336) 778-1800

WAL-MART

Proud Sponsor of:



For Business & Government Accounts call 1-866-WLS-BIZZ or visit alltelbusiness.com