

Monarchs Lose In DIAC Championship



Senior guard, Montrell McNair (#21), drives past the Christopher Newport defense. During his final season, McNair earned First Team All-DIAC and Second Team All-South Region honors on his way to becoming Methodist's all-time leading scorer. Photo by S. Galayde.

By Steve Vinci
Sports Editor

Montrell McNair scored 21 points in his final game as a Monarch, but it wasn't enough to overcome a slow start as the number-one ranked Christopher Newport University men's basketball team defeated the Monarchs 63-57 in the championship game of the Dixie Conference Tournament.

Tournament MVP, Antoine Sinclair, led CNU with 21 points and 14 rebounds as CNU jumped out to an early 18-0 lead. The Monarchs could not break the seal in the first ten minutes of the game but the team still played hard and held CNU within reach. With eight minutes remaining in the first half, CNU had a 25-5 lead. Methodist then picked up the defensive pressure and found the range from the field. The Monarchs finished the half on a 19-4 run to make the halftime score 29-24.

During the second half, the Monarchs looked hot. They used pressure defense and good shooting to erase the CNU lead. The Monarchs took the lead on an Auriece McCain follow-up dunk with twelve minutes remaining in the second half. The Monarchs held a slim lead until about five minutes were remaining in the game. CNU

recaptured the lead and made their foul shots down the stretch to win 63-57.

CNU (22-4, 13-1) controlled the offensive and defensive boards out-rebounding the Monarchs 49-31 with 18 of those boards coming on the offensive end. Brandon Jones added 14 points for CNU which shot 16-for-20 from the free-throw line in the second-half. Jones joined Sinclair on the Dixie Conference All-Tournament Team.

McNair led the Monarchs with 17 of his 21 points in the second half of his final game as a Monarch. McNair was named to the Dixie Conference All-Tournament Team. Senior, Johnny Wilson, had 11 points on three three-pointers and also added five rebounds. Senior, Clayton Stewart, ended his Monarch career with two points, four rebounds, and a team-high two assists. Stewart got into foul trouble trying to guard the much bigger post-men for CNU.

The Monarchs finished the year with a record of 16-11, 10-5 in the DIAC. They shocked the league this year by finishing in second place in the conference when they had been picked in the preseason for last place. The Monarchs will have ten players from this year's team returning next year.

Bob McEvoy Resigns As Head Men's Basketball Coach; David Smith To Replace McEvoy

Methodist College has announced that Bob McEvoy is stepping down as head men's basketball coach but will stay on as director of athletics. Assistant coach David

Smith has been promoted to head coach.

McEvoy is leaving basketball after a 26-year coaching career, including the past seven at Methodist. While coaching at Methodist, McEvoy was named the DIAC Coach of the Year for the 1996-97 and 1998-99 campaigns and NCAA-III South Region Coach of the Year in 1996-97. Under McEvoy's guidance, the Monarchs have posted winning records four of the last six seasons after only having two in the previous 13 years.

"This idea was Bob's and not mine," said Dr. M. Elton Hendricks, Methodist College President. "I was very pleased with his performance as basketball coach and thought that he handled the dual role extremely well. However, I understand that the role of director of athletics becomes more and more complex each year and I recognize his need to devote his time solely to that position"

In 1996-97, Methodist became the only DIAC team to go 15-0 against conference teams while sweeping the league's regular season and tournament titles. That squad also established an NCAA-III season-best 20-game winning streak on its way to an NCAA-III Tournament "Elite Eight" finish.

Players that McEvoy coached at Methodist include Jason Childers, MC's only NCAA-III basketball All-American. Altogether, he coached five 1,000-point scorers at Methodist, including all-time leading scorer Montrell McNair.

"In stepping away from basketball, I hope to bring more to the table as the director of athletics in helping our staff to continue to move their programs forward," said McEvoy. "We have a great athletic program here at Methodist and I believe this move will help to make it even stronger."

Prior to coming to Methodist, McEvoy was head coach at Cape Fear High School in Fayetteville for a year. Previously, he served the University of North Carolina at Greensboro as head coach for seven seasons where he was also a two-time DIAC Coach of the Year.

McEvoy was also the director of athletics and head basketball coach at Mount Olive College for two years, the assistant coach at UNC at Pembroke, the head coach at Douglas Byrd Senior High School and a graduate assistant at East Carolina University.

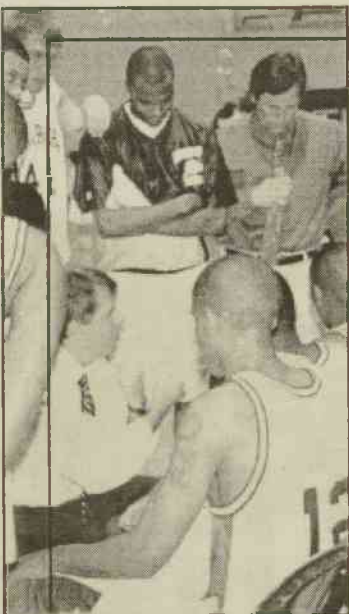
He has received a bachelor of science degree from Kent State University in 1973

and a masters degree in education from ECU in 1976. While at Kent State, McEvoy was a three-year starting guard for the varsity Golden Flashes. The team captain earned honorable mention All-MAC honors twice.

The fifth Methodist College director of athletics, McEvoy will be entering his second year in that position this fall. In this role, he is responsible for the overall management of Methodist's 18 varsity athletic teams. The Monarchs have finished in the NCAA-III's top 25 (out of a possible 373) for the Sears Directors' Cup national all-sports trophy two of the past three years.

Smith was the Monarchs' first-ever full-time assistant coach, this past season, following three years as a volunteer assistant. The 1981 Methodist graduate had previously served on the Southview High School coaching staff. He was also the head coach at Keystone Heights High School in Florida.

"David is a graduate of Methodist and has been a very dedicated member of our coaching staff," said Hendricks. "We are very pleased to have him as our basketball coach. We are confident that he will continue the kind of program that McEvoy had."



Bob McEvoy (kneeling) resigns from coaching basketball to concentrate on his duties as director of athletics. Photo by S. Galayde.