

TBC Boys Gunning For Warriors

North Edgecombe Goes After Back-To-Back Championships

Can North Edgecombe repeat its undefeated run through the regular-season in the Class 1-A Tobacco Belt Conference?

The Warriors, coached by Warren Jones who starts his 14th year at the helm, finished a perfect 18-0 in the conference only to lose to No. 2 seeded Chocowinity in the finals of the conference tournament.

They advanced to the third round of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association playoffs before falling to Hallsboro.

The Warriors are expected to return three starters among seven lettermen when the football playoffs end.

The football Warriors have advanced to the state quarterfinals leaving Jones with but one varsity candidate to work with. Thus, the Warriors will get off to a slow start.

Jones figures the conference teams will be gunning for his squad this season.

"I think it's going to be tough for us," he said. "I think everybody is going to be laying for us saying 'if we don't beat anybody else, we're going to beat North Edgecombe. I would like us to be on top but, I wouldn't bet on us.'"

But, judging from the talent Jones has available, there are those who would.

Dereke Belcher, the Warriors' sixth man last season and a deadly accurate three-point gunner, is expected to start. Belcher, who is playing football, averaged 14.3 points per game last year and is the second leading returning scorer.

Claude Archer, who is playing in the defensive secondary for North Edgecombe, is expected to get the job done at the point, Jones said.

He will join Rodney Conyers, Larry King and Orlando Whitaker as expected starters. Jones said he looks for Chris Bryant and John Cherry, junior varsity performers last season, to contribute.

Offensively, Jones said he will strive to have his cagers "get up and down the floor under control."

Defensively, he plans to play a strong man-to-man with some trapping and a lot more pressure.

But, all of that will have to wait until the end of the football season.

JOHN A. WILKINSON

BELHAVEN — John A. Wilkinson has a long proud history in basketball. The last chapter, however, will be written this year as Wilkinson will be consolidated with Bath next year to form Northside High School.

However, the Bulldogs, led by second-year head coach Mike Proctor, could go out in a splash of glory.

The Bulldogs only return three lettermen and no starters. But, an influx of players off the 16-2 junior varsity squad have brought an air of optimism to preseason practice.

The returners are Lamont Green, James Mackey and Mike Cox. Green averaged 8.5 points and 4.5 rebounds a game last season while Mackey and Cox chipped in with approximately four each.

Proctor said he expected Adolphous Fonville and Nelson Harvey, up from the jayvees, to make an immediate contribution.

The Bulldogs, which posted a 14-6 record last season and a 15-8 overall worksheet after falling in the first round of the playoffs, will run a motion offense and a man-to-man defense.

CHOCOWINITY INDIANS

Chocowinity enters a new era this season as Steve Robinson takes over as head coach, replacing DeWayne Kellum, last year's Washington Daily News Coach of the Year.

Under Kellum, the Indians notched their best season in five years, winning the conference tournament and advancing to the Sectional semifinals before seeing a 14-game win streak ended against Gates County. Chocowinity finished 19-6.

The Indians overcame a third-place finish in the Washington Daily News Holiday Invitational Tournament as Curtis Myers provided 18.7 points a game in earning WDN player of the year honors.

Robinson comes to Chocowinity after a one-year stint at B.F. Grady Junior High in Duplin County and a three-year reign at Harrell's Christian Academy where he coached both boys and girls.

He has a core of seven lettermen including one starter to work with.



Belhaven Wilkinson Bulldogs



Bath Pirates

He said he hopes to run a motion/flex offense to get the ball inside. Defensively, the Indians will go man-for-man with some zone and full-court and half-court traps.

"We have good quickness and should be a good rebounding team," said Robinson. "Our weakness is experience — I'm worried most about our back-court. But, the boys have adjusted pretty well. They are working real hard with a lot of effort."

Depth, shouldn't be a problem, Robinson said. He hopes to go nine or 10 players into the bench.

BATH PIRATES

Melvin Smith emerged the leading scorer in the Tobacco Belt Conference but the Bath Pirates could only manage an 8-10 TBC record and a 9-11 overall worksheet in the 1987-1988 season.

This year, Smith has gone on to junior college in South Carolina but fellow starters Cee Edwards, an exciting young point guard, and Keith Boyd, a outstanding receiver in football, join lettermen Pooh Woolard and Tony Woolard as the base for the Pirates to build on.

(See TBC BOYS, Page 4)

Warrior Boys, Lady Indians Tabbed

The North Edgecombe boys and Chocowinity girls, for the second consecutive season, are the Class 1-A Tobacco Belt Conference coaches' picks to win the regular-season championships.

In the Washington Daily News sports department's annual poll of the 10 conference coaches, last year's undefeated regular-season boys' championship squad was named to repeat on nine of the 10 ballots. Columbia earned the other No. 1 vote.

The girls' coaches selected Chocowinity, last year's regular-season (17-1) and conference tournament champion, to repeat, listing the Lady Indians on seven No. 1 ballots. Belhaven

earned two first-place votes and Aurora earned one.

In the boys' voting, North Edgecombe finished with 90 out of a possible 90 points.

BOYS		
Team	Record	Pts.
North Edgecombe	26 3	90
Belhaven	13 8	80
Chocowinity	18 6	70
Bear Grass	12 13	59
Columbia	12 9	54
Bath	10 12	51
Mattamuskeet	8 19	49
Creswell	8 13	36
Jamesville	8 15	28
Aurora	8 19	22
GIRLS		
Chocowinity	24 3	88
Belhaven	19 4	78
Bear Grass	11 10	67
Bath	14 9	66
North Edgecombe	12 10	58
Aurora	9 10	57
Mattamuskeet	8 10	48
Columbia	6 16	31
Jamesville	1 20	28
Creswell	2 18	27