

Trading Punches

Herbert Petty of Fort Bragg, left, and Harold Bennett of Reynolds Park square off in a recent amateur boxing match at the Patterson Avenue YMCA. Petty and Bennett competed in the "All-Star Boxing Show's" 132-pound weight class, with Bennett winning by a knockout. The matches were sponsored by the Patterson Avenue YMCA's boxing team (photo by James Parker).

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Black On Sports

Rams' '700 Club' Will Have A Different Look

By ROBERT ELLER
 Sports Editor

The 1983-84 basketball season will be a special one for the Winston-Salem State Rams. Entering the new campaign, Hall of Fame Coach C.E. "Bighouse" Gaines is only one win shy of the 700 mark. The legendary mentor jokes, "I was denied my 700th win last year, but I am guaranteeing Ram fans that I'll get it this time around."

The Rams will start the road toward not only the coach's 700th win, but toward what many experts feel will be a Southern Division title, when they hold their annual Red-White contest Friday night, Oct. 28, in the Gaines Complex. Game time is 6 p.m.

Assistants William English and Tim Grant will coach the two squads. The English team will feature veterans Kevin Vaughn, the team's top rebounder last season, "Buck" Mitchell, the high-jumping sixth man from last year's team, and part-time point man Lonnie Willis.

Most of the attention will be focused on three newcomers on that squad, however. Linwood Gorham, James Gwynn and Marcus Washington are three of what Gaines calls

his best recruiting class in years.

Gorham is a 6-3 shooter from Patterson, N.J., who might earn a starting spot at the wing because of his fine shooting touch, says Gaines. "He is an all-stater who was a Division I prospect," boasts the usually reserved Gaines. "He is in the mold of Therman Greene."

Marcus Washington is also 6-3. The Philadelphia native is another possible starter at the point. "He can solve our pressure problem and give us additional strength in the backcourt," says Gaines, who saw his backcourt become unsettled when Kevin McCray withdrew from school early last season.

Mount Airy native James Gwynn, also 6-3, will see action as a swingman. Gaines is impressed by his defensive skills and his accurate 12- to 15-foot shooting.

Tim Grant will counter with a squad composed of veteran point man John Watkins, Roger Mason, Troy Russell and Eugene Pennick, along with newcomers Steve Calhoun and Michael Curtis.

Calhoun, a 6-7, 210-pound transfer from Anderson Junior College, gives the Rams their first legitimate pivot man in

years. A native of Indianapolis, Calhoun is expected to give the Rams the inside punch they've been lacking in recent years.

Curtis, while not as well-known as the other recruits, could be a sleeper. At 6-3, he played mostly inside while a prep star in High Point but Gaines says he has shown promise in early-season workouts.

The biggest surprise, however, might be Pennick. The 6-6 sharpshooter scored 19 points in the first extended action of his career two seasons ago, yet has done little since. But Gaines has seen a new Pennick in pre-season drills. "Gene has always had the talent," Gaines says. "He can score and he has the size to rebound. This year he seems to have a different attitude. He seems to have matured."

Now entering his 38th year as the Rams' head coach, Gaines is credited with doing one of his best coaching jobs last year amid a number of problems. McCray left school prior to the semester break but the Rams continued to win with Watkins, who missed some playing time with a hand injury, and Willis handling the point guard duties.

Though a bad situation

became worse, when the high-scoring Troy Russell was injured just before the CIAA tourney, the Rams came within a bad pass of reaching the tourney finals. "I thought the kids played well together last season," says Gaines.

And he looks to the new season with uncharacteristic optimism. "We have some sound veterans back and three of our recruits might end up starting right away," he says. "We lost our two best shooters in Danny Womack and Clifton Whitfield, but we recruited some fine shooters. We added backcourt strength and a big man up front."

With the depth he now has, Gaines says, fans can look forward to seeing more players contribute. And there could be another surprise. "You might see us field a lineup with the shortest player 6-3," Gaines says. "We have some new kids who will be ready to play and the vets will have to hustle to keep their spots."

Though he's on the verge of yet another coaching milestone, Gaines says the thought of Win No. 700 gives him no special feeling. "If I were ready to quit or die, 700 might mean more

to me," he says. "It probably means more to the kids. Right now, my main concern is to put together a team capable of winning the CIAA title."

Standing in the way of that title will be a Virginia Union team that many pick to win the national crown, as well as Northern Division powers Hampton, Virginia State and Norfolk and St. Augustine's in the South.

Gaines says he has only one goal left in coaching. "I'd like to win another national title," he says. "When we won in '67, we had six talented kids (Earl Monroe was one of them). But things have changed. Recruiting at a Division II school is much harder now and keeping kids in school is an even bigger problem."

Gaines, however, is familiar with problems, especially after last season. And he isn't opposed to change. Look to see a number of them in the 1983-84 edition of the Rams.

Roles Reversed For WSSU From Page B1

And the Bulls have had a number of punts blocked. The Rams have also been prone to offensive mistakes of late, suffering a rash of fumbles in their last two outings. Penalties have hurt the WSSU effort too as the Rams have picked up more than 100 yards in infractions in each of their last two games.

Hayes said he isn't happy with the personal foul penalties his team has committed but added, "A lot of our other penalties have come from being aggressive. I don't worry about aggressive mistakes. I want our kids to be aggressive."

Hayes said the Rams will need a better passing attack this week and, while he has not committed himself to starting Karlton Watson, who played briefly last week after missing the Fayetteville contest with a knee injury, said Watson will see plenty of action.

Hayes is also happy to have Thomas Turner and Alex Cowans in the backfield. "Thomas is now

back to about 90 per cent since early in the season and he ran well last week," Hayes said.

The Ram defense had trouble with Bowie's no-huddle offense in the first

half last Saturday but rose to the occasion when it had to. Hayes is hoping for more fine play this week and said it will be needed.

"Smith has a deceptive running game and a fine

passing game," he said. "I just hope they aren't able to do both against us. Smith is capable of beating the living hell out of anybody in this league and we will have to be ready for them."



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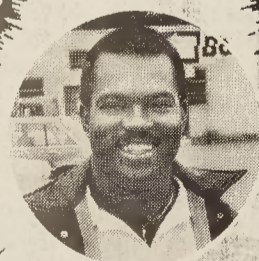
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