

CIAA SCOUTING REPORTS

You Thought Union Was Tough In '83...

By ALLEN JOHNSON
Review Editor

The NCAA's postseason tournament's got nothing on the CIAA's own special brand of round-robin mayhem.

In fact, maybe scouts from Houston and North Carolina State saw last year's CIAA tourney, since their NCAA Division I final seemed remarkably like a carbon copy of Norfolk State's upset of St. Augustine's in the CIAA semi-finals, complete with a desperation heave at the buzzer and a game-winning dunk.

And, as was the case with the CIAA's Virginia Union, which had the big man in the middle in 6-8 Charles Oakley, but exited early in the CIAA tournament, another Virginia team had a taller-than-average player named Ralph, but exited the NCAA's a bit sooner than expected, too.

The story would have been complete had Winston-Salem State's Bighouse Gaines been able to win his 700th game in the CIAA tournament's semi-finals. However, thanks to Hampton Institute and an unlucky bounce or two, WSSU and Gaines had to wait until this year for the milestone, whipping up all over Barber-Scotia in their season-opener.

What's in store this season? Lots of questions.

For instance:

•Is Winston-Salem State going to be as improved as Bighouse Gaines expects it to be?

•Will an enormously solid recruiting year by Virginia Union's Dave Robbins mean curtains for the rest of the CIAA, as Willard Bailey's stockpiles of talent meant in football?

•Will Hampton's 6-10 Cedric Miller mature into a bonafide big man, or will he still only occasionally bother opponents with his height?

•Can Bowie State be any worse than last year's records of 0-12 in the league and 1-25 overall?

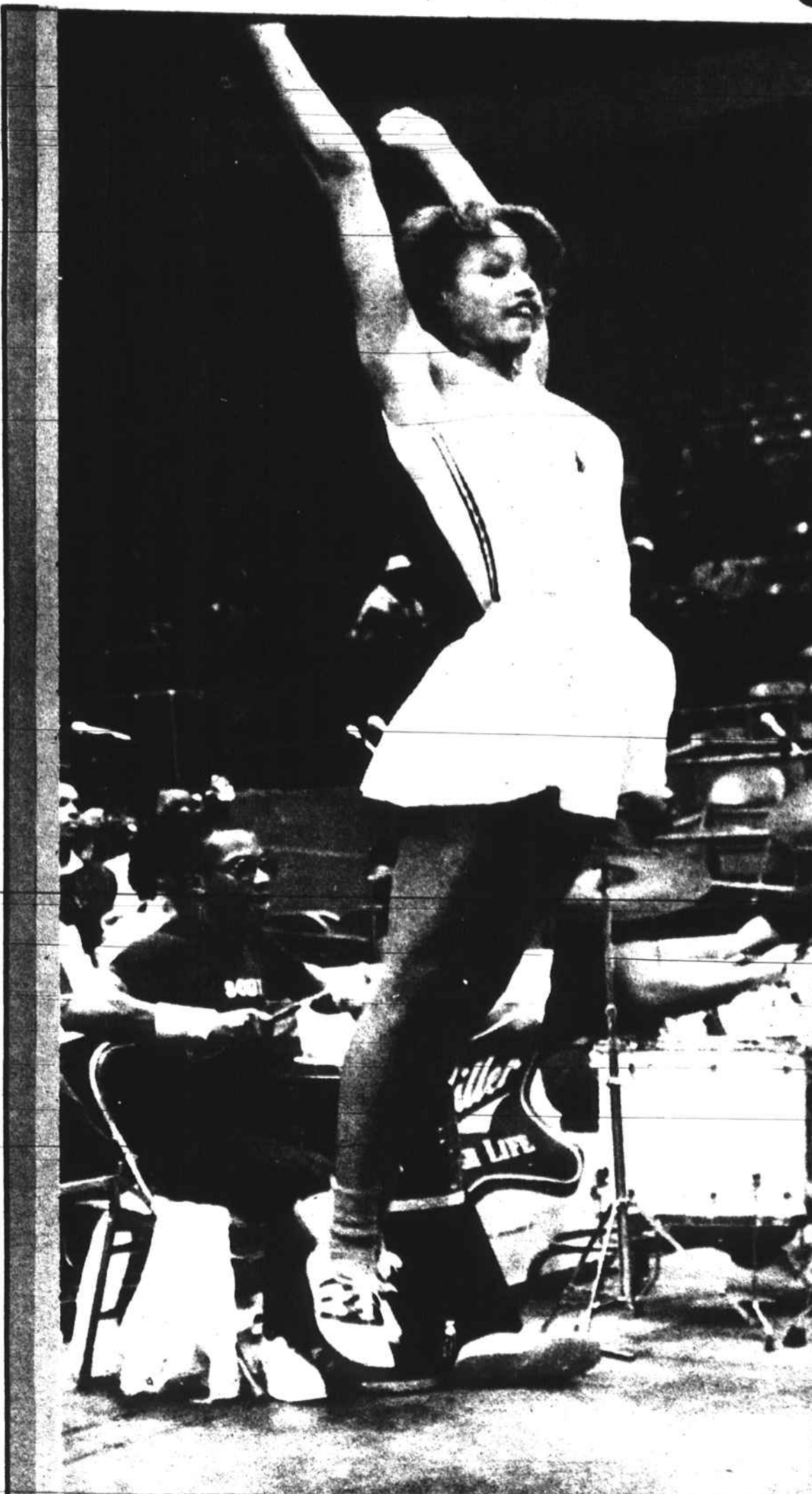
The answers, in order: Probably, possibly, yes and we hope not.

Northern Division

After, for them, a disappointing campaign last year, including a 20-8 record, fourth-place finish in the North and an embarrassing 77-68 loss in the CIAA tourney to underdog Fayetteville State, Virginia Union may be poised this year to make the CIAA regular season and tournament look like a basketball version of "The Day After."

Not only do three starters return in 6-8 center Charles Oakley, 6-9 forward Anthony Singleton and 6-5 forward Gary Dalton, but Coach Dave Robbins will also enjoy the fruits of his most successful recruiting campaign ever.

The Panthers may have made a strong team awesome by signing two of the top three players in the Richmond



Winston-Salem State defenders attempt to smother a layup by A&T's Joe Binion (photo by Joe Daniels).

area in 6-5 swingman Jerry Hargrove and 6-5 forward Greg Williams.

Hargrove, an all-state selection and Williams, an all-Central Region pick, could be starters by mid-season.

Still, Oakley is the key. Though the 220-pound mound of muscle who averaged 19.3 points and 13 rebounds (fifth in the conference) often looked like a man among children, he just as often looked bored or sleepily.

He's got to come to play for Union to be as good as it ought to be.

And how good is that?

"This year's team is being rated as the most talented since the 1980 national championship squad," says the CIAA's pre-season prospectus, "and could conceivably find itself in the same position."

Very conceivably.

To fill the very large gap created by the graduation of stars Greg Hines and Tony Washington, Hampton Institute apparently consulted a travel agent.

Among Coach Hank Ford's 1983 recruiting class are players from St. Croix, the Virgin Islands's Nassau, the

Bahamas, and St. John's Antigua.

Another newcomer at least has an exotic name. Ra'Him Williams, a 6-6 transfer from Monmouth College, will become eligible in January.

And 6-10 center Cedric Miller is a Bahamas native.

Put them all together and you've got one of the most internationally-flavored lineups in the nation.

Whether they'll be all that effective depends on continued improvement in the middle from Miller, who still is

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How They'll Finish:

North

- 1) Virginia Union
- 2) Hampton Institute
- 3) Norfolk State
- 4) St. Paul's
- 5) Virginia State
- 6) Elizabeth City
- 7) Bowie State

South

- 1) N.C. Central
- 2) St. Augustine's
- 3) Winston-Salem State
- 4) Johnson C. Smith
- 5) Fayetteville State
- 6) Shaw
- 7) Livingstone