



Ann Hall, left, and Debra Alexander, both Winston-Salem products, placed third and first, respectively, in the triple jump competition at the CIAA Indoors (photos by Joe Daniels).

CIAA Notebook

Central rebounds under Bernard

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Editor

RICHMOND, Va. -- North Carolina Central's basketball program has been the laughingstock of the CIAA for the last two decades.

Before the season, the CIAA's coaches predicted the Eagles would land in the cellar as they did last season.

But NCCU, under first-year Coach Michael Bernard, did the laughing this year. The Eagles came within a game of the CIAA's Southern Division championship and finished with their first winning record (14-12) in 17 years.

"There's a new attitude around here," senior forward Willie Jennette said. "The big difference is Coach Bernard brought some organization and a sense of purpose to the operation."

Last season, under Interim Coach Harry Edmonds, Central posted a 4-21 mark, a rather typical record for NCCU in the '70s and '80s, when the Eagles have had eight had coaches.

Bernard, formerly an assistant at conference powerhouse Norfolk State, inherited a team that was a hodgepodge of bona fide talent and raw street players. Jennette, the 6-foot-8 all-CIAA performer, is a pro prospect. On the other hand, Edmonds recruited several walk-ons to fill out last season's squad.

"The first thing I had to do was run off about eight or nine guys," Bernard said. "It wasn't a lack of talent so much as attitude."

Bernard's first team, which lost to Virginia State 71-65 in the first round of the CIAA Tournament last Wednesday night, featured a tough man-to-man defense and the strong all-around play of Jennette. He finished the season as the conference's third-leading scorer with a 22-point average. He also averaged eight rebounds per game.

"Coach Bernard came in and got us on the right foot from day one," the soft-spoken Jennette said. "We've kept up those positive attitudes."

The change of fortune has not been limited to the NCCU men. The Eagle women, under fourth-year Coach Yvonne Edwards, had the best season in the history of the program. They finished with a 14-10 mark -- the first winning record ever by an NCCU women's team -- with a group composed of six freshmen, three sophomores and three juniors.

Von Fulmore, a 5-11 sophomore center, proved to be one of the conference's best players. She finished as the second-leading scorer with a 24.5 average and the top rebounder at 17.7 boards per game. She set single-season school records for most points and rebounds.

Hampton Wins Track

The Hampton University women unseated St. Augustine's as the CIAA indoor track and field champion.

It was the first time the St. Augustine's women, defending national indoor champions, had not won a CIAA indoor, outdoor or cross country championship in the last decade.

"It seems like they've won it forever and ever," said Hampton Coach LaVerne Sweat, whose team had 179 points, compared to 141 1/2 for the runner-up Lady Falcons. "So we are very elated to come away with the championship."

Debra Alexander, a freshman from Winston-Salem, played a big role in the Hampton victory. Alexander, who won the NCHSAA and TAC national age group last year, took the triple jump in 39

feet, 3 1/2 inches, her best leap of the indoor season. "She's not used to indoors but made great strides throughout the season," Sweat said. "She be nailing 42-footers in the outdoor season."

Sweat said she would probably not take anybody to the NCAA Division I Indoors next week in Oklahoma City, Okla.

Ann Hall, the former Reynolds standout, took third in the triple jump for St. Augustine's. Hall jumped 35-7 1/2.

Hampton's Santa Williams had a field day in the event at Arthur Ashe Center. Williams won the long jump with a personal best 19-2 3/4 and the 55-meter hurdles. She was also third in the 400.

Coach George Williams of St. Augustine's held out two of his top performers in hurdler Patricia Davis and triple jumper Thommie Rucker.



Coach Charles Christian of newly crowned CIAA champion Norfolk State has won 75 percent of his games in 10 seasons with the Spartans (photo by Angela Ross).

Williams' men's team eased to its ninth indoor title in 11 years, finishing 73 1/2 points ahead of runner-up Hampton.

Falcon distance runner Richard Thompkins won the 3,000 and was second in the 1,000.

Pope In NBA

David Pope, the 1984 CIAA Player of the Year, recently signed a series of 10-day contracts with the National Basketball Association's Seattle Super-Sonics.

Pope, who played at Norfolk State, has played in the NBA before, at Utah and Kansas City. He has been in the Continental Basketball Association the last two seasons.

CIAA Notes

- One of the worst aspects of this year's tournament was the lack of officiating. Please see page B9

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