

J.C. Smith's Brown earns all-CIAA honors

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Editor

RICHMOND, Va. — Last summer, Vincent Brown was just a small fish in a little pond.

Brown, a transfer from Gardner-Webb to Johnson C. Smith, refereed in the Big Apple and Winston-Salem Summer leagues while working for the Twin City Recreation Department.

While he eagerly worked on his jumper after the last night of the summer season, he spoke about the possibilities for J.C. Smith's basketball program to continue to make strides in the CIAA's Southern Division under Coach Robert Moore. Brown, a skinny 6-4 guard who sat out last season, was modest about how much he would affect the Golden Bulls, who finished in third place in the division in 1984-85 while producing a 16-13 overall record. But he was bullish on Smith's prospects. "I know we'll be better," he said that August evening. "Look out for us."

The Golden Bulls did improve, coming within a game of unseating kingpin Winston-Salem State for the division championship. In head-to-head competition, Smith proved better than WSSU. While the Bulls split with the Rams during the regular season, JCSU lost by only three at Winston-Salem's Memorial Coliseum but won by 21 at the Charlotte Coliseum. That was WSSU's worst loss and lowest scoring night of the season.

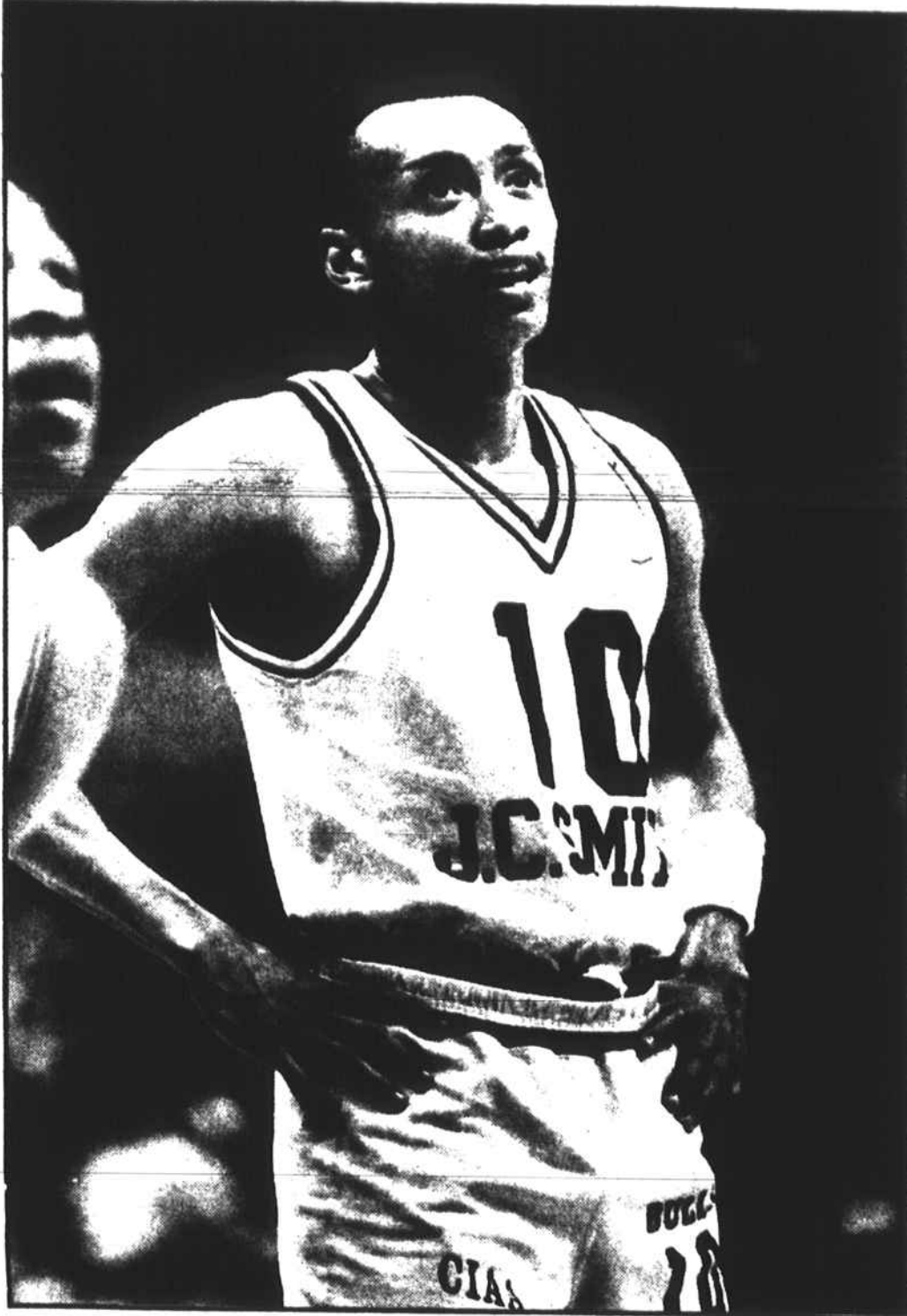
Brown played a large role in the Golden Bulls' 19-9 regular-season finish. The former East Forsyth guard, nicknamed "Fish," was Smith's second-leading scorer with a 14.5 average and leading assist man with a 4.5 average.

The JCSU guard had actually led his team in scoring during the first half of the season. Moore, however, decided to move Brown to the sixth-man role at midseason. That deflated his stats, but made him more effective.

"I'll do whatever it takes to win," Brown said of the move. "Some of the other guys were playing well, so they deserved a chance to play. It was up to me to work my way back in the lineup by playing hard in practice."

Brown's attitude paid off, as he became the only sixth-man to be named to the all-CIAA team.

The Winston-Salem product continued his outstanding play in the CIAA Tournament last week at the Richmond Coliseum. Brown scored 22 points in each of Smith's three tourney appearances, and shot 56 percent from the field and 88 percent from the line. He led the surprising Golden Bulls to the



Brown Bomber

Former East Forsyth guard Vincent Brown scored 22 points in each of Johnson C. Smith's three CIAA Tournament appearances; for his efforts, Brown was named to the all-tourney team (photo by James Parker).

semifinals, where they were eliminated 86-84 on a last-second tip-in by Virginia Union's Tony Dallas.

Brown specialized in the 19-foot, 9-inch three-point field goal that the CIAA has adopted. His audacity to take the three-pointer surprised Virginia Union Coach Dave Robbins, who saw Brown can a 22-footer with 35 seconds left to tie the game at 84.

"I didn't mind seeing him take a three-pointer," Robbins said afterwards. "That is such a low-percentage shot, but one of my assistants told me during the timeout that he could make the three-pointer, especially if left unguarded. But he went ahead and took it anyway."

What Robbins didn't know was that Brown shoots better from three-point than two-point range. He shot 63 percent from three-point range in the regular season, but only 49 percent overall. With that kind of accuracy, Brown earned a new nickname: "Bull's-eye."

Moore, the former Atkins High School coach, said he became interested in Brown after

he scored 24 points for Gardner-Webb against JCSU in a game two years ago. Brown also wasn't hot on little Boiling Springs, the home of Gardner-Webb and former cage superstar named David Thompson. It was no short drive to find a fish fillet.

"There was nothing to do at night," Brown said of Boiling Springs. "You had to go seven miles just to find a McDonald's."

Brown and backcourt mate James Shockley played like men possessed in the CIAA tourney, nearly leading Smith into the finals. The Golden Bulls were not intimidated by either quarterfinal opponent Hampton University, which they beat 92-81, or Union, which JCSU had beaten 80-77 during the regular season.

"We were very intense for the tournament," Brown said. "We just wanted to let them know they couldn't walk over us."

Virginia Union's Robbins didn't want to see his team get into a shoving match with the Golden Bulls. But JCSU plays defense aggressively.

"There were a lot of elbows

flying and they got the best of us for a while," Robbins said. "We were just hoping to hang on and win."

The Panthers did win what proved the tourney's most exciting game, thanks to 25 points each by Jamie Waller and Jerry Hargrove as well as Dallas' last-second tip-in. It came off a miss by Waller, who was triple-teamed.

But Brown had done his part for Smith. Accordingly, he was selected to the all-tournament team.

"Fish" had risen to the occasion when moved to a bigger pond.



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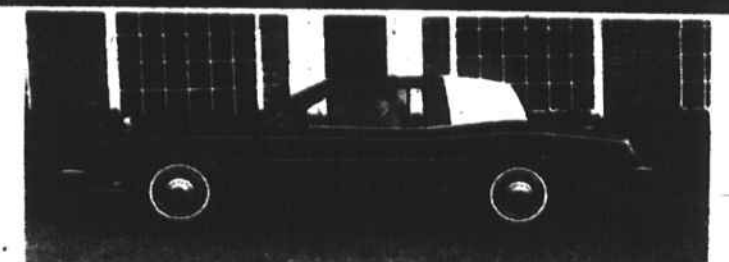
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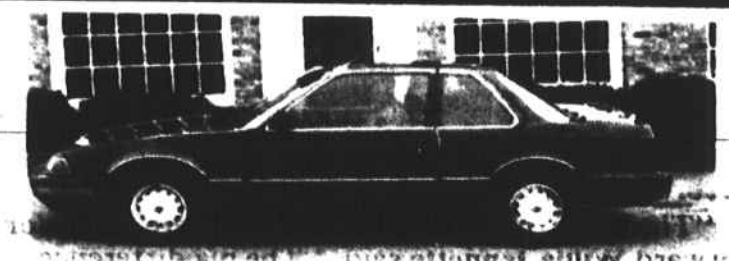
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CIAA Report

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seniors really played some outstanding basketball tonight."

Revell and Dixon were largely responsible for holding the foul-plagued Waller scoreless in the second half. Union's all-America forward had scored eight in the first.

Yet, talented Union climbed back into the game behind the play of reserve guards Doug Cromartie and Raymond Neblett. The 5-10 Cromartie, playing in place of starter Eric Thompson, scored all of his 18 points in the second half. Neblett, playing for a somewhat ineffective Tony Dallas, finished with 17 points, 13 in the second half.

Dallas had been instrumental in landing Union in the finals, beating Johnson C. Smith with a last-second tip-in in the semifinals.

"Cromartie did a super job for them," Christian said. "He shot the lights out. We couldn't stop him."

But the victory would have been impossible without the productive second half by Tally, who

was so emotional that he could barely get out his sentences when he talked to reporters after the title game.

"We had to suck it up to beat Union tonight," said Tally, while crying and hugging his mother, who had come down from Atlantic City. "I hurt my hip last (Friday) night when I ran into the scorer's table and maybe that had something to do with the first half."

"It's very difficult to beat a team three times in one season," he added. "This is one of the happiest moments in my life."

The Spartans hope Tally's right about beating a team three times in a season; the same two teams play again Friday night. The occasion will be the first round of the NCAA Division II South Atlantic Regional at Mount Saint Mary's in Emmitsburg, Md.

"I really don't want to play them again," said Christian, who has a remarkable 75-percent career winning percentage. "Three times is enough. I honestly think Union has more talent

than we do, but it was a case of us wanting it more tonight."

Although Christian might not want another game with the Panthers, don't bet against Tally Friday night.

Final Footnotes: The all-tournament team included Norfolk's Tally, Mitchell, Revell and Darnell Brown; Union's Thompson, Dallas, Greg Williams and Jerry Hargrove; Johnson C. Smith's Vincent Brown and Dante Johnson, and Elizabeth City State's Tim McDaniel

The Spartans have owned this 41-year-old tournament since they joined the conference in 1963, winning it 16 times Since Norfolk State's women captured their final over Hampton, NSU made a clean sweep of the championships. It's only the second time in the history of the tournament that one school has swept the titles. The Spartans also did it in 1975 Norfolk leads all Division II schools in attendance.

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