

Sports Beat

Big Apple to operate without sanction

By KENNETH RAYMOND
Chronicle Sports Writer

Some of the most talented basketball players in the community will showcase their skills in the Big Apple League over the next eight weeks at Hanes Hosiery Recreation Center.

Many, however, will be disappointed not to see Kenny Mickens, a former all-city/county performer at Reynolds High School.

Mickens, who is a rising sophomore at UNC-Wilmington, is unable to participate in the league because National Collegiate Athletic Association rules prohibit players from joining un-sanctioned summer leagues.

The success of the Big Apple League last summer had many believing that it would become sanctioned and would allow college players to add to the league's success story.

But the league was advised not to seek sanctioning by the city Recreation Department.

"The league didn't lack a whole lot as far as getting sanctioned," Recreation Athletic Supervisor John Goins said. "But for no more players than it would affect, it didn't seem to be worth the effort."

"Each (college) player would have to have his coach's permission. I might want to have a bench player in the league, but I doubt I'd have one of my stronger players, like a Johnny Dawkins, in it."

Goins said that college players cannot be stacked on one team. For example, if Wake Forest or Winston-Salem State supplied players to the league, they would have to be separated and would have to be shared by each of the league's eight teams.

Sanctioning does not affect NAIA players. So Gilbert Rucker of Atlantic Christian would be eligible to play. However, he has chosen to participate in the sanc-



Kenny Mickens

tioned Wayne Robinson League in Greensboro.

"Potentially, this could be quite a money-maker," Goins added. "But the NCAA doesn't allow that."

Still, Mickens, who is one of many college players in the area, would like to play in the league. He may opt to play in Greensboro's Robinson League, although he would prefer to play in the Big Apple.

"I really don't know too much about the Wayne Robinson League, except that there's good competition," Mickens said. "I really would like to play in the Big Apple. I wouldn't have to travel and I'd be playing with guys that I know."

Commissioner Walter Funderburk and others involved with the Big Apple League would like to see Mickens participate.

"I wish it were in my power to allow him to play without any problems, but it's not," Funderburk said. "I have nothing but the utmost respect for Kenny Mickens and he's the kind of kid you want to be involved with. But I wouldn't dare encourage him to play knowing that he'd get in trouble if he did."

Mickens would have played for the defending league champion Rockets, who believe he'd have made a considerable difference. Louis "Choc" Lowery, who would have been Mickens' backcourt mate, said he would have strengthened the team's shooting game.

"We need that second guard who can shoot around the perimeter," Lowery said. "He could also help with the rebounding and this whole situation is really bad news for our team. He would have been a great addition. He's a smart player."

Rob Little, a former Harlem Globetrotter who will be playing in the frontcourt for the Rockets, believes Mickens should play in some league even though he will be missed on his team.

"We're going to miss him, but he has to do something," Little said. "He plays point guard in college and if he only plays on the streets during the summer, he'll be playing inside and that won't help him too much."

The deadline for filing for an NCAA sanction was in February. Approval would have been given this week. However, nobody in Winston-Salem filed for sanctioning. Ben Piggott, last year's Big Apple commissioner, no longer works for the Recreation Department, although he talked to Goins several times and suggested that someone should apply for the sanction.

Funderburk said he would do his best to maintain the quality of the league so that it could seek a sanction next year.

Among the qualities that the NCAA looks for in a league are adequate facilities, professional officiating, responsible coaching and effective administration.

Officiating was the league's weakest link in its first year. Non-accredited officials called the games. However, Funderburk decided to hire professional referees this year.

College Notebook

MEAC Tourney moves to Greensboro

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Editor

The Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference decided to move its troubled postseason basketball tournament to Greensboro at its recent spring meeting.

The MEAC Tournament, whose winner gets an automatic berth in the NCAA Division I Tournament, was played in Philadelphia the last two years but had trouble drawing fans at both the Palestra and the Philadelphia Civic Center.

Larry Barber, director of the MEAC Service Bureau, said the tournament will be played at the Greensboro Coliseum March 5-8. Both the men's and women's tournaments will be staged there.

The Coliseum was available at that time because the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament will be played in the Capital Centre in Landover, Md., next year. The ACC was in Greensboro this year.

North Carolina A&T has won the men's tournament five straight times.

In other business transacted at the spring meetings at Pinehurst, Maryland-Eastern Shore's Joel Mack was elected conference president. He replaces Henry Jones of Howard University. Mack will preside over the MEAC Delegate Assembly, the league's governing body.

The schools also agreed to establish an All-Sports Award for women's athletics. The first award will be presented at next year's spring meeting and will be named in honor of Mary McLeod Bethune, co-founder of conference member Bethune-Cookman College.

Commissioner Ken Free also was working to finalize the site and date of the Freedom Bowl Classic, an all-star football game that features the top players from the MEAC, SWAC, SIAC and independent black schools.

Grant Honored

Winston-Salem State's Tim Grant repeated as the CIAA Coach of the Year in softball, it was announced at the conference's annual meeting in Charlotte last week.

Grant guided WSSU to its third straight softball championship. He has been named Coach of the Year three times and has a five-year record of 107-42. His latest team went 19-11.

Other Coach of the Year awards went to North Carolina Central's Michael Bernard (men's basketball), St. Augustine's Bev Downing (women's basketball) and Hampton's Fred Freeman (football).

A&T Football

North Carolina A&T's 1986 football schedule includes five in-state opponents, including Winston-Salem State, Appalachian State, North Carolina Central, Fayetteville State and Johnson C. Smith.

The Aggies' sixth non-conference opponent is Mississippi Valley State.

On the recruiting front, the Aggies found it more difficult in the age of Proposition 48. Yet, Coach Mo Forte and his staff landed 19 recruits. The Aggie football staff originally had a list of some 150 players who they felt could help the program and who might be inclined to attend A&T. Forte said most of those were borderline academically and chose to sign with Division II or NAIA programs. Schools like Hampton University, Johnson C. Smith and Winston-Salem State seemed to have been the biggest beneficiaries.

A&T Schedule

Sept. 6 - at Fayetteville State 7:30 p.m.; 13 - Winston-Salem State 1:30 p.m.; 20 - South Carolina State 1:30; 27 - at Morgan State 1:30 p.m.

Oct. 4 - at Johnson C. Smith 7:30 p.m.; 11 - Mississippi Valley State 1:30 p.m.; 25 - at Howard University 1:30 p.m.

Nov. 1 - Bethune-Cookman 1:30 p.m.; 8 - Delaware State 1:30 p.m.; 15 - at North Carolina Central 1:30 p.m.; 22 - at Appalachian State 1 p.m.

A&T Recruits

Lineemen: John Allen (6-3, 245) Tampa, Fla.; Craig Holloway (6-3, 260) Nashville; Mugil Incominicis (6-2, 215) Hampton, Va.; Chris McCarroll (6-3, 240) Charlotte; Dietrick McDonald (6-2, 235) Laurinburg.

Linebackers: T.J. Andrews (6-2, 210) Fayetteville; Demetrius Harrison (6-2, 215) Atlanta; Mike Leathers (6-1, 210) Raleigh.

Defensive Backs: D.J. Biggs (5-11, 175) Washington, D.C.; Norman Hayes (6-0, 175) Silver Spring, Md.; Mike McMillan (6-0, 170) Greensboro.

Running Backs: Donald Colson (5-8, 160) Charlotte; Jimmy Golden (5-9, 195) Montclair, N.J.; Noisette Smith (5-11, 185) Fairfax, Va.

Wide Receivers: Arnold Dummer (6-1, 185) West Palm Beach, Fla.; Morris Greens (6-4, 205) Fort Myers, Fla.; Ronnie Leathers (6-0, 185) Raleigh.

Quarterback: Hilton Winstead (6-0, 175) Hampton, Va.

Howard In NIT

Howard University will play Villanova in the opening round of the Coca Cola NIT Tournament Nov. 21 at the Cat House in Philadelphia.

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