

Sports

Odd Couple Thompkins and Oliver like family on the court

By RANDY PETTITT
Chronicle Sports Editor

David Thompkins and Mark Oliver aren't brothers, but perhaps the next best thing to it -- doubles partners.

And like any normal family, the two have their differences. Oliver prefers to stay at the baseline and wait for the passing shot, while Thompkins is pure serve and volley.

But despite a broken leg suffered by Oliver that separated the two for over a year, the odd couple of the local tennis world has survived.

Every good comedian needs a straightman -- and so it goes in tennis. It has been the different styles of Oliver and Thompkins that has made them so successful. If the serve and volley of Thompkins fails, the ever-reliable baseline play of Oliver is seemingly always there to bail them out.

Friends on and off the court (except when facing each other in singles competition), the two ris-

ing sophomores at Carver High School both grew up learning the game together. The duo was brought through the ranks by coach David Lash.

Oliver came from a tennis family and began his lessons while Lash was teaching his mother.

Thompkins, who lives with his grandparents Sam and Geraldine Cary, chose the tennis route because it was safer than most other sports.

Despite the differences in their backgrounds, the two shared a common bond -- tennis.

The Way We Were

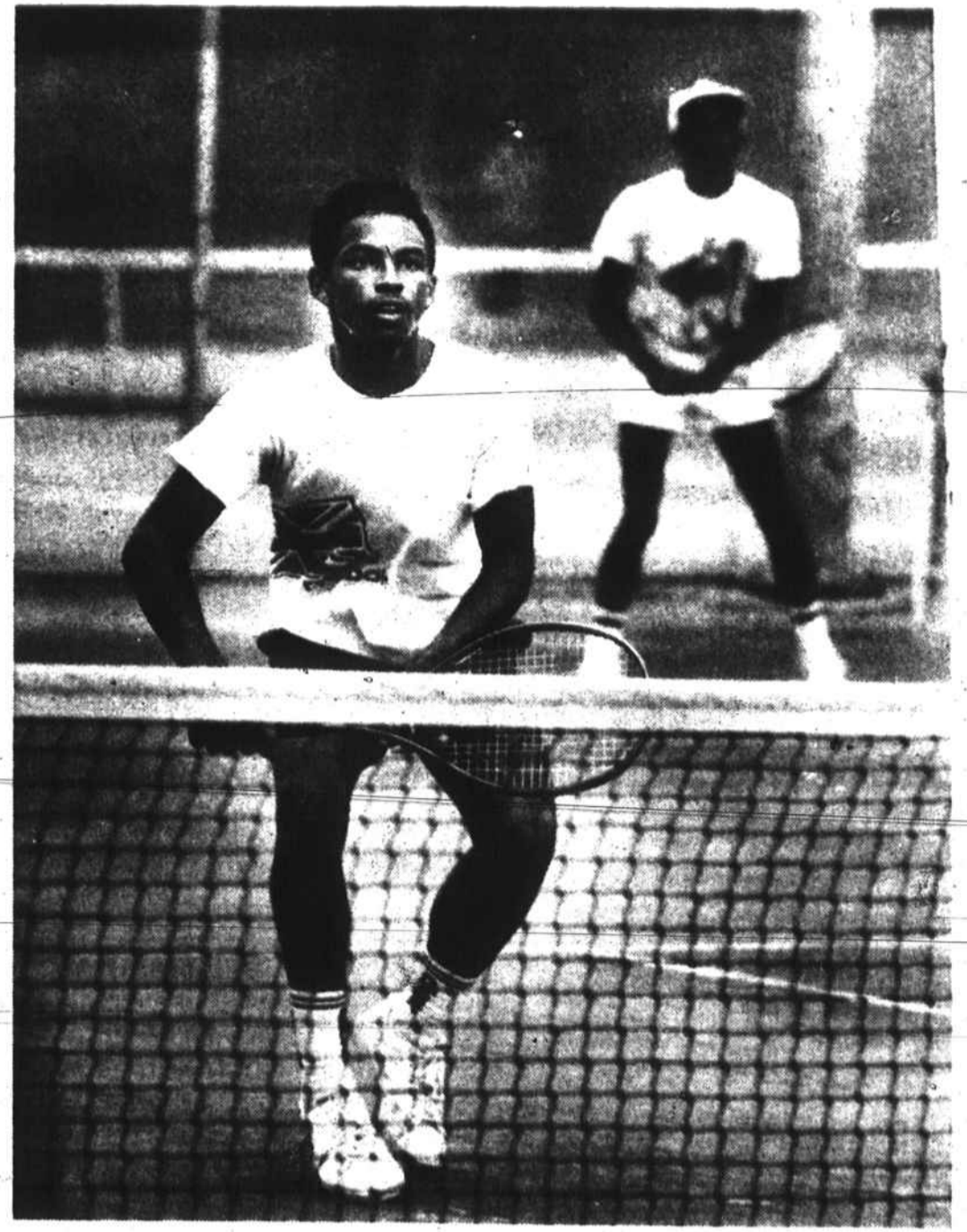
Prior to Oliver's broken leg, the twosome won the 14 and under state tennis championships two years ago and were virtually unbeatable on the local circuit.

Not surprisingly, it didn't take the two very long to recover from the setback.

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Mark Oliver returns one from his favorite place on the tennis court -- the baseline. Passing shots are his cup of tea on the junior tennis circuit (photo by James Parker).



David Thompkins moves to the net as doubles partner Mark Oliver waits in the background if he misses -- but Thompkins usually gets the point across (photo by James Parker).

Winston Lake AAU tourney showcases talent in Tarheel state

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Writer

North Carolina is building a reputation as a rising Amateur Athletic Union power and last weekend's Summer Invitational Tournament at Winston Lake Family YMCA did not do anything to dispel that notion.

Only the programs of Indiana and Washington, D.C., produced better records than those of North Carolina in last year's national competition.

The upset-minded Charlotte Stringers, who captured the state AAU 13-and-under title in May, beat one of the big boys Sunday, edging the Kingman Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Club of Washington, D.C., 77-73 in the 14-and-under championship game. The Stringers rode the 33-point performance of 6-foot-4½, 225-pound Shawn Smith in the final.

Charlotte's win was especially significant because the Stringers lost in the 12-and-under national title game last year to another Washington team and because Kingman will carry the No. 1 seed into next month's nationals in Syracuse, N.Y.

"This was important because the Washington representative won the 13-and-under national

championship last year, so this Washington team gets the top seeding this year," Charlotte Coach Jim Stegall said. "We will be seeded third."

Stegall said Sunday's game had a national championship atmosphere to it.

"This was a great game," the Charlotte coach said. "We had a big lead in the first half, then they blew us out for a couple of minutes near the end of the half. We countered with a three-pointer to end the half and then had a chance to get blown out in the third quarter, but we kept our composure and turned it around."

Norm Joyner, the executive director of the Winston Lake YMCA and tournament director, said it may have been a Pyrrhic victory for Charlotte.

"It was such a good game that you would have to think Washington will have more incentive if the two teams meet in the nationals," Joyner said. "They can make adjustments and get some folks healthy by then."

The Washington team was missing its starting point guard, who had a conflict and did not make the trip to Winston-Salem, and another starter was playing hurt.



County Player of the Year, Kevin Thompson, completes the reverse jam in the Winston Lake AAU Summer Invitational Basketball Tournament held last weekend (photo by James Parker).

"Each of our (starting) guys usually scores 14 or 15 points a game," Kingman Coach Ed Hill said. "I think with our usual production we would have won, but we had a couple of guys who weren't up to par. One guy even broke his hand and another guy just never got into the flow."

Still, Washington had three players in double figures with guard Jermaine Brown leading the way with 19 points. Center Von James added 17 and forward Duane Simpkins chipped in 14.

Considering Hill's team trailed 30-18 with 4:12 left in the half after Michael Brewer's steal and layup for Charlotte, the game was certainly Kingman's to win after a 22-2 run that only took two minutes and 50 seconds.

How could a group of 13-year-old go from 12 down to eight up in less than three minutes? By putting full-court pressure on the opposition -- the likes of which are not seen anywhere in basketball these days except at Georgetown, Duke and Indiana.

Hill was confident at halftime. He said that his team was not playing up to its usual level, but he said it usually plays better in the second half.

Charlotte, however, had other ideas. The Stringers trailed 42-38 after Barry Canty canned that

three-pointer at the halftime buzzer to cut Washington's lead to 42-38. They tied the score in the first minute of the second half with back-to-back base-line jumpers by Canty.

Canty put Charlotte ahead at 48-46, but Brown led an 11-4 spurt that propelled Washington back into the lead by five.

"We didn't put them away right there and that was critical," said Hill, the sports information director at Howard University and a former reporter for the Chronicle. "We had a chance to expand on that five-point lead and made a couple of poor decisions."

With that reprieve, Smith got into the flow for the Stringers. The Charlotte center scored 15 of his game-high 33 in the last 10 minutes of action.

Charlotte took the lead for good with 4:43 left on a Smith inside move. Washington made only one of four free throws in the last two minutes, while Charlotte's Nick Harding, who played the entire second half with four fouls, hit four straight from the stripe, including two on a untimely technical against Hill with 30 seconds left. Hill said his players were trying to get a timeout after Brown made a

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W-S All-Stars win in Pro-Am

By RANDY PETTITT
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CHARLOTTE -- It was the "Alex and Johnny Show", as Alexander Hooper and Johnny Watkins combined for 65 points to lead the Winston-Salem Chronicle All-Stars past Greensboro in the NBA pro-am of Charlotte last Saturday.

The Greensboro 'Barnstormin' Across the ACC' team fell behind early by 12, and thanks to 34 points from Hooper and 31 from Watkins, the Chronicle All-Stars never trailed.

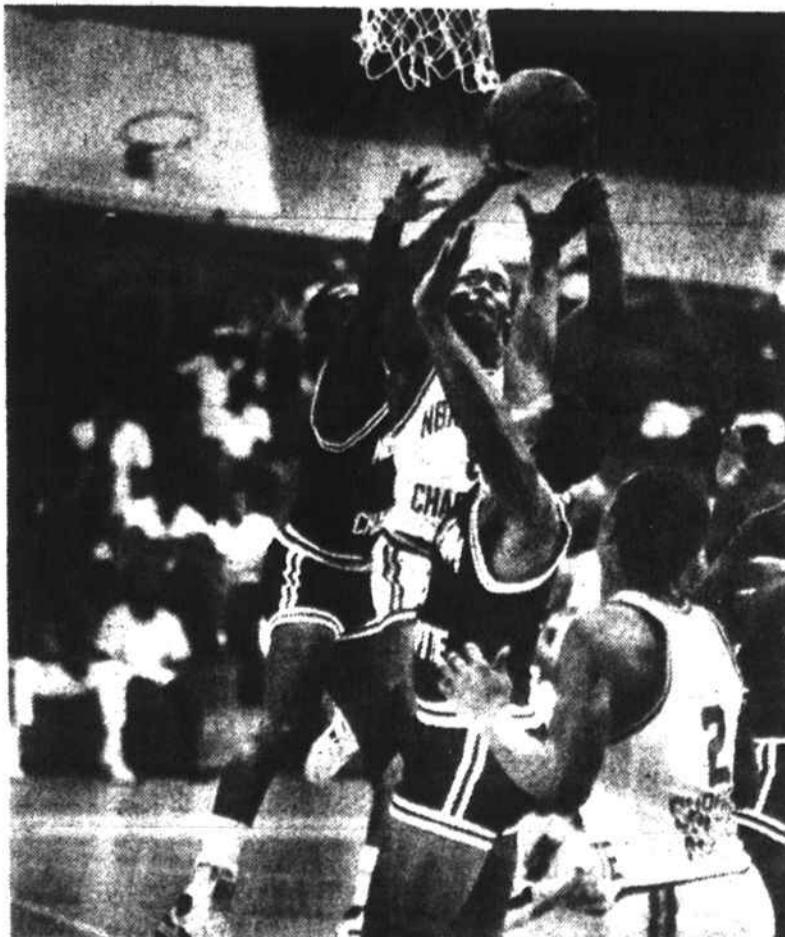
"We just took it to them from the moment they said go," said Winston-Salem head coach, Walter Funderburk.

"We outlasted them on everything -- loose balls, steals, rebounding, shooting. You name it, these guys did it today," he said of the team, which has established quite a reputation for its awesome fast break.

"Our transition game is what really won it for us though. We got more lay-ups and dunks than L.A. did against Boston," Funderburk joked.

Aside from keeping themselves in contention for the post-season tournament, the Winston-Salem team was playing for pride as well -- facing a Greensboro team chocked full of former Wake Forest players.

Namely Delaney Rudd. He busted loose for five three-point shots and a game-high 38 points. But



Alexander Hooper muscles his way inside for two in the NBA Pro-Am of Charlotte. The former WSSU star racked up 34 points to lead the All-Stars last Saturday (photo by James Parker).

despite the outside shooting of Rudd and 26 inside points from Alvis Rogers, the Wake-cloned Greensboro team could never pull closer than four points.

"Every time they got close enough to make us

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Rams football to be televised

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Writer

Winston-Salem is tentatively scheduled to appear in back-to-back telecasts of Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association football in October.

The Rams, four-time defending Southern Division champions, will be shown in games with Norfolk State Oct. 10 and North Carolina Central Oct. 17. The Norfolk State game will be at Foreman Field in Norfolk, Va., at 1:30 p.m., while the Central game will be played in Winston-Salem's Bowman Gray Stadium at 7:30 p.m.

WSSU's appearance on television will be part of a first-ever conference-wide package put together by Anderson Productions of Charlotte and Tempo Television of Tulsa, Okla. Tempo is a cable network that reaches approximately 12.5 million homes in 48 states. Several local cable companies offer Tempo in North Carolina and Virginia, including Greensboro, Raleigh, Wilmington, Burlington, Newport News and Petersburg.

The major corporate sponsor of the football package is Miller Lite. The Miller Brewing Company has sponsored three of the four black conferences -- the CIAA, Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference and Southwestern Athletic Conference -- throughout most of this decade.

The package will include up to 10 regular-season games and the CIAA Championship Game, according to Ricky Clemons, marketing communications supervisor for Miller Brewing.

"We hope to show as many as 10, but realistically

we know with the history of televising black college athletics that we may only do five," Clemons said.

"We at Miller feel confident this will be successful because of the overwhelming support of CIAA football."

Clemons said the package would be aired over Tempo's cable network and would be sold to individual stations in the CIAA geographic area.

"If we can get stations in Tidewater, Richmond, Durham, Winston-Salem and Charlotte, we will be hitting a large share of the CIAA fans," he said.

Larry Anderson, head of Anderson Productions, said the entire package would be sold to individual stations.

"To make this a successful venture, we need for stations to take the whole package so the advertisers can make their money," he said.

All of the game will be aired live. Anderson said some games will also be both live and repeated later the same day, a practice once employed by WTBS, which telecasts the Atlanta Braves baseball team.

"The rebroadcast will be a bonanza for advertisers," Anderson said, "because the second showing will be free."

Clemons, who has a long-time interest in black college sports after serving as sports information director at Howard University, said Miller had made an investment of six figures in sponsoring the CIAA grid package. He said Miller has been looking for a collegiate sports hookup because it is shut out of the other cable networks, BET and ESPN, both of whom are sponsored by ANHeuser Busch,

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