

TOBACCO ROAD CLASSIC

North Forsyth fast break avenges early-season loss, stopping Mount Tabor, 61-47

By RANDY PETTITT
Chronicle Sports Editor

North Forsyth's girls basketball team continued its assault on the Central Piedmont Conference by hammering Mount Tabor 67-41 in the opening round of the high school portion of the Tobacco Road Classic at Wake Forest University.

In the other first round game, Starmount jumped on Reynolds from the outset and never looked back en route to a 54-32 victory.

The 7-1 Lady Rams clipped North, 59-49, in the finals of the tournament, but not before the Lady Vikings avenged an early-season loss to the Spartans.

Paced by the inside tandem of Val Crowell and Jean Canady -- both had eight points at halftime -- the Lady Vikings managed to force a 29-24 edge at the break.

But North missed five straight shots mid-way through the third quarter and the Spartans closed the gap.

Traci Clinkscale and Kim Kelly both hit jumpers to put the Spartans within striking distance, 35-31. North then traveled and Kelly hit two free throws to close to within two.

Freshman Beth Kilby came through like a veteran, though, as

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eight points, as North advanced to the title game.

Mount Tabor, led by Kelly's 14 points, Melanie Young's 13 and 12 from Traci Clinkscale, fell to 5-2 with the loss. They rebounded, however, to top Reynolds in the consolation game.

**-- Mike Espisito
Lady Spartan's Coach**

she canned a long jumper and a three-pointer to put North back on top 39-33 at the end of the third quarter.

North then went on a 10-0 run and dominated behind the play of Crowell, Canady and Kilby's shooting from the outside.

The Vikings' big center finished with 14 points, while Canady had 13 and Amy Cole hit 12 from the perimeter. Kilby chipped in

"I thought we played very passively," said Mike Espisito, the head coach of the Lady Spartans.

"We beat them early in the year and we knew we could play ball with them. North has a lot of talent and is well coached. But I thought we didn't play as well as we could have."

Meanwhile, Gene Malloy was happy to get a crack at the championship.

"Val Crowell did a good job for us," said Malloy, the head coach of the Lady Vikings.

"She was a little tense at first, but she settled down and did the job. Our guards were a little off -- they weren't able to get the ball inside like she wanted. Val got a little frustrated, but she still had a good performance."

The Lady Vikings suffered a setback, though, when they lost the services of forward Tina Banner. Banner twisted her knee in the Vikings' first game of the season with Reynolds and reinjured it in the first half.

"This isn't the same team without Tina," said Malloy. "It'll set us back quite a bit."

Malloy was ecstatic about finally getting a holiday tournament for girls in Forsyth County.

"This could turn out to be a big thing," said Malloy. "We're real pleased to get in on it from the beginning. We'd like to see this thing turn into an equivalent of a Frank Spencer Classic for girls."



Melanie Young of Mount Tabor shoots over North's Shannon Bell in the first round of the Tobacco Road Classic (photo by Randy Pettitt).

Lady Deacons defeat N.C. A&T for Tobacco Road title

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Marist in their opening-round contest, but prevailed in the second half.

The Red Foxes from Poughkeepsie, New York, duled head-to-head with the Lady Aggies in the first half, trailing only 36-34.

But A&T head coach Tim Abney has his team turn things up a notch to take advantage of their superior speed.

Led by key baskets from forwards Diedra Cheeks and Karon Williams, the Aggies took advantage of some Marist miscues and went from a 38-38 tie to a 60-45 lead. A&T had quietly outscored the Red Foxes 22-7 during the

lengthy stretch and secured the win despite shooting only 53% of their free throws in the closing minutes.

"The biggest thing was that we responded when we had to," said Abney of his Aggies. "That was the thing I was most pleased with. We did a lot of things wrong, but we were patient and won the game."

"We hadn't played since December 8 and I was concerned we might stumble coming out of the gate. But we didn't and that was important."

"We needed a decent start to keep our confidence level up. Had we not gotten off to a good start, then we might've blamed it on the

layoff and sort of backed off."

The Aggies were led by an 18-point performance from Cheeks, while Williams and teammate Sheila Rivers added 13 each.

Jacalyn O'Neil led Marist with 12 points. She was the only player in double figures for the Red Foxes, who fell to 2-6 with the loss.

But Marist came back to outlast Delaware State, 82-81, in overtime to capture the consolation game and head back to New York with a 3-6 mark.

In the championship game, Wake duked it out with the Aggies early in the game before pulling away. The 10-0 Deacons held a 37-27 lead at the half and came out of the dressing room on fire.

Wake held A&T scoreless for nearly the first three minutes of the second half and stretched their margin to 47-27 with 17 minutes left in

the game.

Despite an 18-point performance from Cheeks, the Aggies could never crawl back into the contest. Williams added 11 in the loss, while teammate Kim Broadnax finished with 10 points.

Meanwhile, the Deacons, paced by 13 points from Neal and Dodd, remained unbeaten. Edwards added 12 points in the win, giving Wake a clean sweep in their only encounter this season with MEAC competition.

"We had respect for both these teams," said Sanchez. "Both of them had some good athletes. I was impressed with the play of Cheeks. She is a good solid player. I also liked their guard (Sheila Rivers) quite a bit too."

"We had a chance to gauge his up-and-coming program. I was looking forward to play-

ing Wake," said Abney. "We will play Delaware State twice in the (MEAC) conference anyway, so I wanted a shot at them."

"We've never played an ACC school before and this was a good gauge to see if we're doing the things that it will take for our program to be successful."

"I thought we showed some enthusiasm during the first half and played them fairly tough. We missed a lot of shots in the second half and made some mistakes we shouldn't have. Still, it was good experience to play an ACC team."

Sanchez said A&T was invited to perhaps develop a friendly rivalry with their nearby neighbor.

"We thought it would be nice to play them since they are in our own back yard," he said. "I thought they had an excellent club. They have a very quick team and we

respected their team speed."

A&T is expected to be among the second echelon of the MEAC this year, but Abney is optimistic.

"You have to look at Howard, South Carolina State and Bethune-Cookman as the favorites," he said. "After those three, who knows?"

"We haven't proven ourselves as one of the top teams yet, but we hope maybe we can sneak in there if we play well."

The Deacons are much in the same boat.

Sanchez lost Wake's all-time leading scorer, Amy Privette, to graduation this season. But a crop of promising recruits paints an optimistic picture over the Deacons campus.

"We are in a tough league," said Sanchez of the Atlantic Coast Conference. "You have Virginia,

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Tina Banner of North Forsyth (in white) goes up to block Traci Clinkscale of Mount Tabor as Amy Cole looks on. Banner reinjured her right knee and left the game at halftime (photo by Randy Pettitt).

Rams-Vikings From Page B1

their fast break a few times, but the Lady Rams pretty much held North's blazing guards -- Angel White and Amy Cole -- in check. White finished with 11 points, while Cole had six.

In the consolation game, Mount Tabor finished off Central Piedmont Conference foe Reynolds, 43-33. The Lady Spar-

tans, now 6-2, are among the favorites to contend for the CPC girls' title.

North Forsyth expects to battle Glenn and East Forsyth for top bragging rights in the Metro Conference.

"It should be an interesting conference this year," said Malloy. "It always is."

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