

CIAA ROUNDBALL

Southern teams are on the rise

For the true CIAA fan, this looks like the year where no specific team is a certain pick to win it all by the time the regular season ends and a tournament champion is crowned in Richmond, Va. late next month.

Around this league, there are several "New Kids On The Block" who have made it known that they are indeed serious contenders for the conference championship. Based on the results from the first half of the season, league followers are boasting that the CIAA has a new parity, which makes for more interesting match-ups as the second half of the season begins.

In the Southern Division, which has been the sole domain of North Carolina Central in recent years, Shaw University, St. Augustine's and Fayetteville State started the first of the season in rocket-like fashion.

The Bears are the top team in the South so far with a 4-1 mark in CIAA play (6-2 overall). Shaw has bolted to the top with a blistering offense that averages a CIAA-high 94.9 ppg, which is anchored by four players ranking among the league's top 20 in scoring — Terry McCoy (25.5 ppg), Sheldon Owens (18.9 ppg,

10.5 rpg), Curtis Reed (16.3 ppg, 10.3 rpg) and Wesley Spencer (15.4 ppg). Spencer and Reed are among the premier marksmen in the conference. Spencer is shooting 71.2 percent from the field (tops in the CIAA) and Reed shoots 70 percent (No. 3 in CIAA field goal percentage).

St. Aug's finished up at 4-2 in conference games and had the division's top overall record at 8-2. Gary Mattison leads the Falcons as the CIAA's top scorer at 30.5 ppg.

In addition, the Falcons are doing some solid work on the glass with the help of Lantham Alleyne (11 rpg) and Mike Dearman (9.8 rpg).

Fayetteville State (6-3 overall) is the major surprise after the first half with a 5-0 league slate. First-year head coach Jeff Capel has the Broncos bucking the odds in a big way with a high-powered offensive group that scores 83.4 ppg. Sherman Pride is the Broncos top gun with 17 ppg.

In the Northern Division, the tendency is more towards defense, with the exception of offensive-minded Virginia Union (4-0 CIAA, 7-2 overall), the division's No. 1 team at the break.

Hampton University, however, looms as the team to watch going down the stretch because of their ability to shut people down. The Pirates (6-2 in the conference, 8-2 overall) have been very unyielding because of pivotman Marvin Childs, the league leader in rebounds (13 a game) and blocked shots (48 in 10 games). Childs also contributes 14.9 ppg and shoots 57.1 percent from the field.

Childs' presence is largely responsible for opponents' inability to score many points against the Pirates. Coming into this month, Hampton was No. 2 in scoring defense (allowing 64.4 ppg). But more importantly, they have made life miserable for opposing shooters. Hampton opponents are shooting just 37.6 percent from the field, which is far and away the best of any other league team in that category.

Norfolk State (3-2 conference games, 6-3 overall) is still getting acclimated to new coach Ike Moorehead. But the sentiment around the CIAA is that the Spartans will be right in the thick of the hunt when it matters most.

- Lawrence Curry



Photo by Max Dunhill
Troy Phillips' play inside the paint is a prime reason why Union remains as one of the league's legitimate title contenders.

Bayou Classic Awards

When Grambling downed Southern University 25-13 to win the latest Bayou Classic, the G-Men won more than just the game. Below, GSU quarterback Shawn Burras receives the game's MVP trophy from Coca-Cola USA Vice-President Chuck Morrison (left) and Eugene McCullers, Manager of Community Affairs. At right, Tigers coach Eddie Robinson accepts the classic's winner's trophy.

Photos by Harold Baquet

