

Sean Bell finished with 23 points. King is the SP's leading scorer at 16.1 ppg, while Bell is the league's best in assists (7.5 apg) and steals (3.3).

Elizabeth City State — Darryl Riddick (15.4 ppg) has been one of the circuit's leading three-point shooters this season. But what he did against Norfolk State left spectators breathless. Riddick hit 11, three-pointers to set a new conference record for threes made in a single game. Riddick finished the night with 41 points and was only three, tres shy of tying the NCAA mark of 14 in a game.

John McNeil is also a capable scorer at 15.6 ppg, while James Eaton (3.1 steals) and Ron Cousar (35 blocks in 19 games) excel at the defensive end.

SOUTHERN DIVISION

Johnson C. Smith — The Golden Bulls possess a blend of gifted offensive players combined with role players who play within their capabilities.

Smith's attack is based on a two-man game with Mark Sherrill and Chris Parker, arguably the league's best inside-outside tandem. Sherrill (25.9 ppg), a bulky specimen with a linebacker's physique, is an

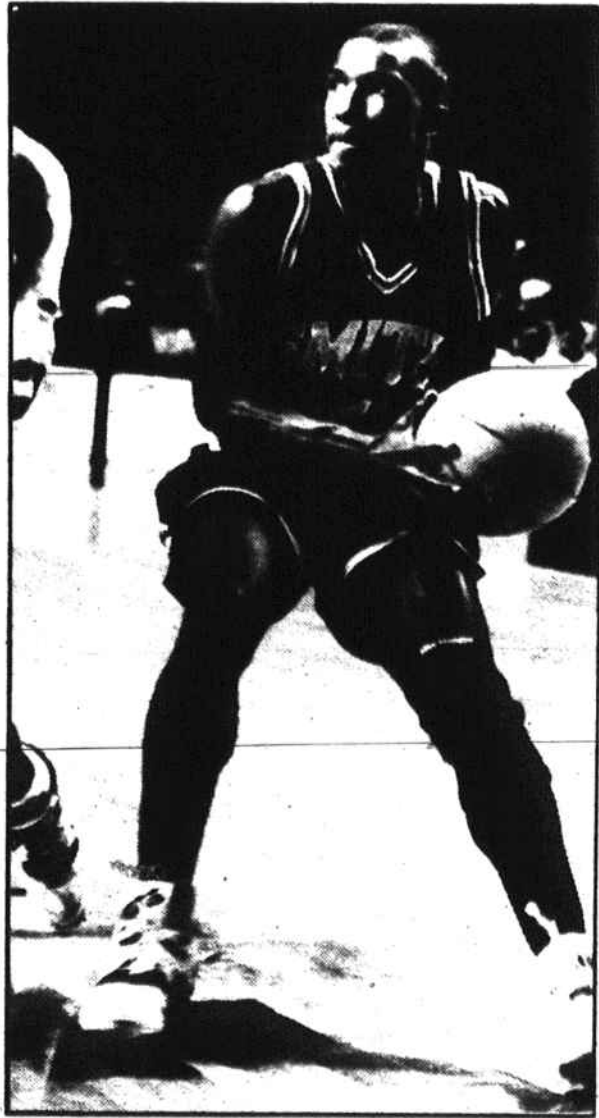


Photo by Max Dunhill

Chris Parker's outside shooting makes Johnson C. Smith a team to watch in this year's tournament.

inside slasher with a soft touch from the outside. Parker (24.1 ppg, 3.1 three-pointers made per game) can explode at anytime during a game. He scores points in a hurry.

Sherrill and Parker are but just one part of the JCS cog. Ron Boyd (5.8 apg) makes sure that the teams gets some even distribution in the way the offense is run, while Kevin Reid has dedicated himself to hitting the boards (10.9 rpg) so the Smith aces can inflict their damage. Gerald Garvin takes the same kind of pride defensively as a top-rated shot blocker.

Shaw University — Offensively, the Bears are the creme de la creme of the league at 94.6 ppg. But at the same time, they give up more points any one else at 87.5 ppg. Shaw has to be able to score to be effec-



Photo by Doug Sang

Fayetteville State's Darrell Armstrong has led the Broncos to one of their best starts in recent years.

tive. How well they fare in a moderately paced game is open to discussion.

Still, Shaw's offense makes them a team to watch. As a unit, they shoot 50.1 percent from the field, second-best among conference teams. Terry McCoy and Sheldon Owens are the main trigger men. McCoy (25.2 ppg) has a habit of destroying defenses from the outside (4.2 three-pointers a game), while Owens is arguably the CIAA's most complete player.

Owens' value is immeasurable by all counts. He put points on the books (20.1 ppg) and rebounds well (leads conference at 12.2 rpg). But he's also skilled enough as a ballhandler (6.6 apg) that he will often run the offense as Shaw's version of the point forward position. On top of that he has 36 blocks in 21 games.

The Bears are accustomed to fast paces and tight finishes. They've split a pair vs. division rival St. Augustine's, the game they won being a 114-113 decision in three overtimes. Derrick McCarter hit two free throws to seal the win. McKoy finished that game with 38 points.

St. Augustine's — The Falcons have soared and succeeded thanks to the machine gun artistry of Gary Mattison, who is the conference's top scorer at 30.2 ppg. When teams visit St. Aug's they find themselves visiting Mr. Mattison's neighborhood and in most instances, they are more than happy to leave. Mattison has performed his skills almost at will against everyone. In the Falcons' 105-91 win over Shaw, he had 26 points, in the triple OT loss, he tossed in 47, and against Smith (a 112-109 win), he finished with 46.

But there's more to this team than Mattison. Mike Dearman is a capable scorer at 15.6 ppg, but he also pulls down 10.6 rpg. Ianthan Alleyne provides additional assistance on the boards (9.3 rpg) which enables Mattison to concentrate on what he does best.

Fayetteville State — Up until mid-January, Fayetteville State had taken everybody by storm, ranking as high as No. 9 in the national polls with their best start in 15 years.

All of that changed when they lost three of five

starters to injuries, which left them vulnerable because of an inexperienced bench. As a result they nosedived from the top the division standings to mid-level.

The absence of guards Darrell Armstrong and Emmanuel Calloway plus leading rebounder Sherman Pride (8.5 rpg) took its toll. Armstrong, the defending CIAA slam dunk champion, had spearheaded the Broncos revival. Armstrong provided 17.2 points and three steals a game. Calloway added stability at point guard, which gave FSU the kind of continuity needed to contend.

Those three were expected to be back in action by tournament time. Yes indeed, the Broncos are a much different team when that trio is on the floor. FSU rediscovers the groove it had before those key injuries, look for the Broncos to do a lot more than ride off into the sunset after the tournament's first round.

Winston-Salem State — How do you figure the Rams out? They've suffered just one true blow-out in 20 games and they've been in position to win enough games to put them in first place in the division. For more on this subject, see article on Bighouse Games on page 10.

Jon Hardin (19.9 ppg, 9.1 rpg, 53.8 FG percentage) is the ringleader for the Rams offensively. Charles Bennett compliments Hardin on the inside at 15.2 ppg. But what has hurt this team is inconsistency, especially in terms of perimeter shooting.

North Carolina Central — Perhaps the Eagles best game of the year came against Fayetteville State when they pulled off a 92-83 upset. True enough, FSU

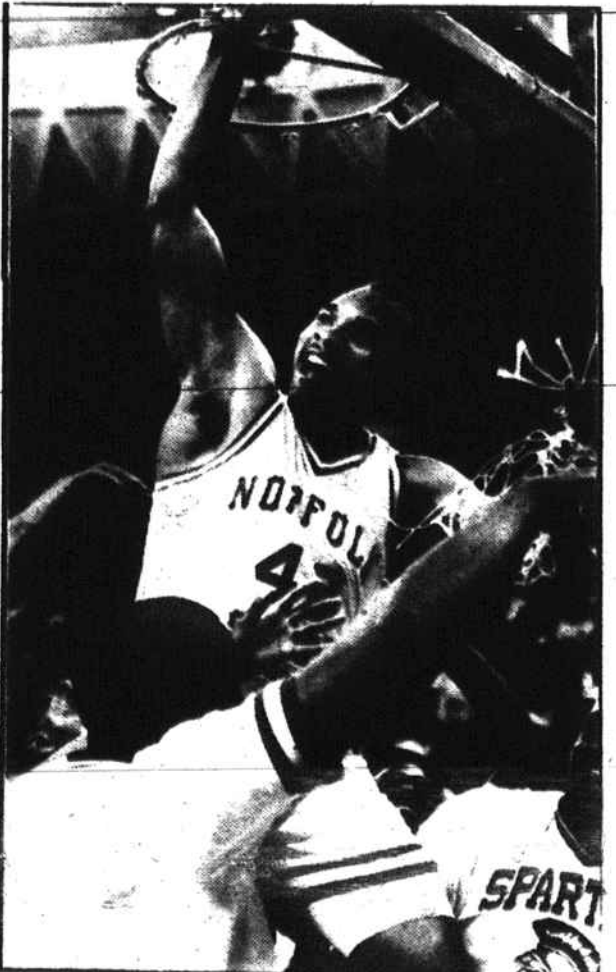


Photo by T-Lee

Jerome Coles is hopeful that Norfolk State will be involved in another CIAA net cutting ceremony.

didn't show up with their normal team, but Central did what they had to do. Sean Kearney and Taro Knight led the way, scoring 27 and 26 points respectively.

Livingstone — The basketball world hasn't been very kind to the Bears. However, they did gain some measure of respect when they downed Elizabeth City State, 81-79. Mike Widener was ranked among the conference leaders in field goal percentage (.731).

-Shawn Ricks