

## Sports

B1

## Men's &amp; Women's Division II Regional B'ball Championships

## Union, J.C. Smith, Norfolk St., Albany St. to duel at regionals

By CRAIG T. GREENLEE  
Chronicle Sports Editor

Thanks to this year's playoff pairings, you can be assured that a black college team will get a legitimate shot to play for the men's Division II title. That's because the four schools who were chosen to play in the South Atlantic Regional Championships are predominantly black — three from the CIAA, the other from the SIAC.

Virginia Union, Johnson C. Smith, Norfolk State and Albany State are the combatants who will decide who keeps playing and who goes home to wait for another season to begin.

The regionals will be played tomorrow and Saturday at the Cumberland County Civic Center in Fayetteville. The winner advances to the Elite Eight in Springfield, Mass. on March 26-28. The Elite Eight concept is the

Division II answer to the Final Four in Division I. Tip-off times for this weekend's games were not available at presstime.

On opening night, Smith (24-6) squares off against Norfolk (22-8) in one game. Virginia Union (25-3) faces Albany State (19-8) in the other.

The Smith/Norfolk matchup is a replay of the CIAA tournament semi-finals two weeks ago. The Golden Bulls won that round 57-52.

The Spartans, however, are itching to get even for that tournament loss. They do have a size advantage over Smith, but they are also minus their ace player, Marc Whitfield (20.3 ppg, 3.4 apg, 2.8 steals a game) is out for the season because of a partially torn knee ligament.

As a result, Norfolk will go to a slow tempo and place more emphasis on its inside game

which features Fred Benjamin and Larry McCloud, a pair of 7-footers who can make things very tough in the paint. For the Spar-

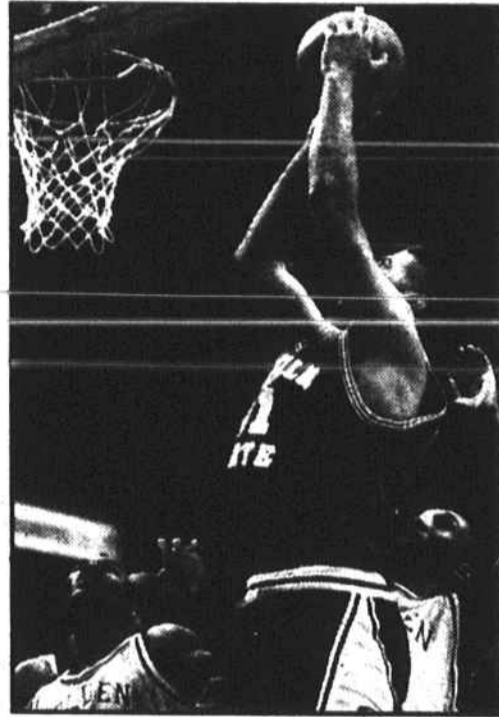


Photo courtesy of Norfolk State  
Fred Benjamin could make all the difference in the world for Norfolk State in the regionals.

tans to win, Benjamin and McCloud must stay focused, particularly during crunch time.

Guard David Donelson, Norfolk's prime scorer in Whitfield's absence, can't do it all by himself. If he has to become a solo act, Norfolk's season will end tomorrow night.

The Golden Bulls, on the other hand, will continue to do the things that helped them reach the CIAA finals. JCS will extend defensive pressure to create turnovers, and push the ball up the floor to get easy scoring opportunities. Mark Sherrill and Columbus Parker, must have decent shooting performances in order to reach the regional finals.

Union, the CIAA tournament champion, has to be the favorite to win against Albany State, the SIAC tournament champs. The Panthers tend to wear people

Please see Page B2

## Bulls are Junior Hornets 6-9s tourney champs



Photo by Chronicle Staff  
Kenneth Allison of the Bulls takes a huge stride to the basket during last Sunday's championship game.

By Chronicle Staff

Youngsters who play in the 6-9s Junior Hornets League at the Carl Russell Recreation know how to provide excitement and thrills for spectators. That's somewhat surprising since most of these youngsters are just beginning to learn how to play organized basketball.

That was the case last Sunday when the Bulls edged the Pistons 27-24 to win the Junior Hornets tournament championship.

This game was a true, back and forth affair that saw several ties and lead changes. But in the end, it was the

Please see Page B3

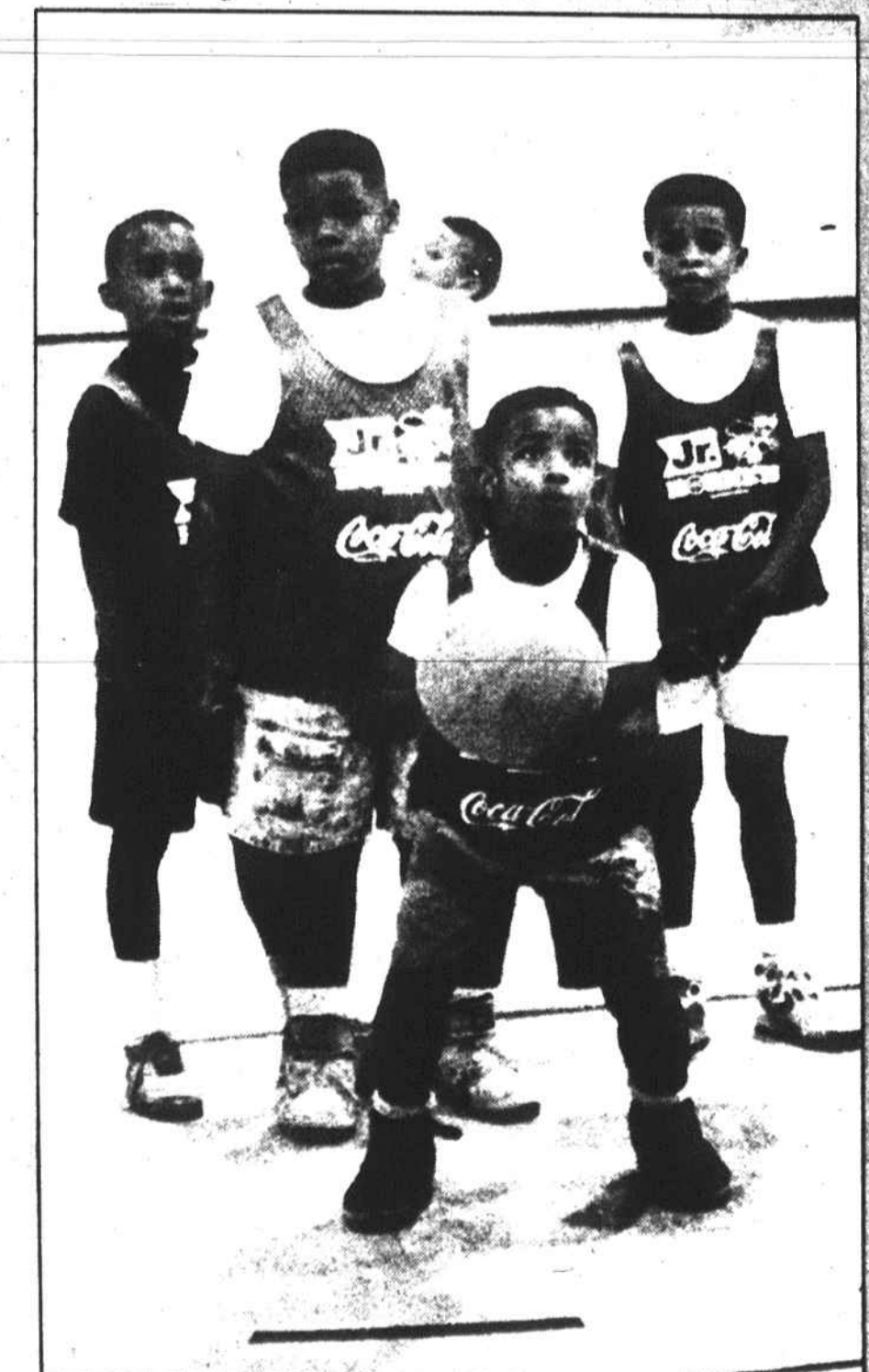


Photo by Chronicle Staff  
The Pistons Kenny Harris takes aim at the free throw line. Kenny Faulkner, Brandon Steward and Gregory Dalton await their turn to shoot.

## Norfolk State looking to land a spot in the national championship game

By CRAIG T. GREENLEE  
Chronicle Sports Editor

Black college women's team aren't taking a back seat to the men when it concerns this year's Division II playoffs as four teams prepare to battle for regional trophies starting tomorrow.

Game times were not available at presstime.

Norfolk State and Johnson C. Smith were placed in the South Atlantic Region which will be played in Norfolk, Va. on the NSU campus.

St. Augustine's, the team that ended the Spartanettes' 40-game, conference winning streak, is in the New England Region which is being held at Bentley College in Massachusetts. Fort Valley State, the SIAC tournament winner, starts post-season play in the South Region at Carrollton, Ga.

First round winners move on to the quarterfinals on March 20 and 21. The semi-finals will be held March 27 and the finals will be played on March 28. Game times and sites had not been determined at presstime.

The Spartanettes (24-6) are

pitted against conference rival Smith (22-8) in the first round.

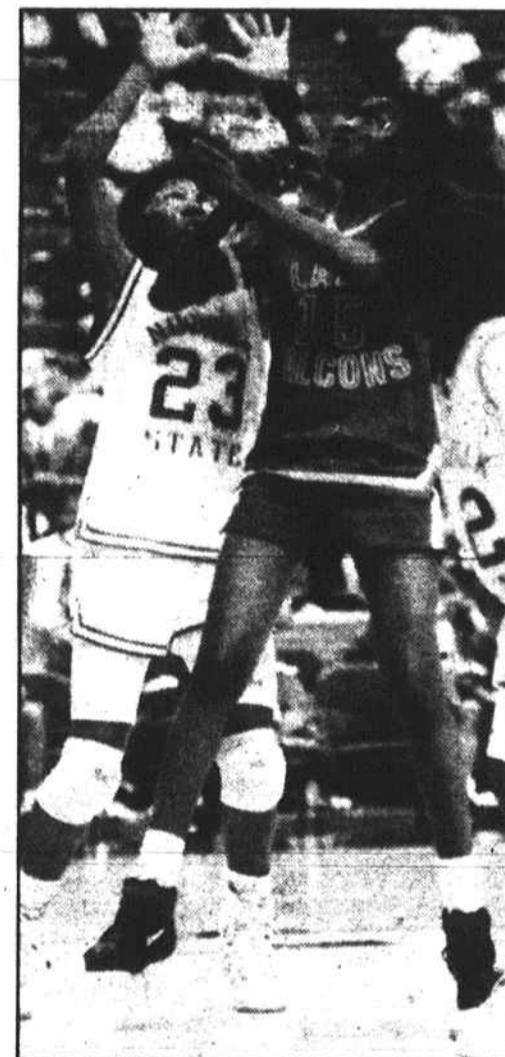


Photo courtesy of Norfolk State  
Natasha Miller takes care of the board work for St. Aug's Lady Falcons.

NSU stomped the Lady Golden Bulls 87-70 in the conference tournament semi-finals.

If the defense stays consistent, Norfolk should advance to the regional final. But if they let up, like they did in a 102-98 regular season loss to St. Augustine's, they'll wind up fighting it out for the regional consolation trophy on Saturday night.

Jennine Tanks and Cassandra Hall are the prime offensive weapons for NSU. But the one to watch is freshman Lisa Rice, CIAA tournament MVP.

Smith's best chance for a win would be to employ more of a half-court set to keep Norfolk from quickening the game's tempo. By doing that and handling the Spartanettes' defensive pressure, JCS puts itself in a good position to manufacture an upset. Inca Harvey and Shani Baraka are Smith's prime performers.

The NSU/JCS winner will take on the winner of the North Dakota vs. Bloomsburg (Pa.) on Saturday.

St. Augustine's (23-2) opens regional play against 25-4 Stonehill College. The Lady Falcons

are armed with a very explosive offense (93.4 ppg), with much of the ammunition being provided by CIAA Player Of The Year Carolyn Brown (22.7 ppg, 40.9% three-point shooting). SAC isn't just a run and shoot operation.

Board work is a prime part of the philosophy. Natasha Miller grabbed 11.7 rpg and is one reason why SAC outrebounded opponents by a +11.3.

The St. Aug's/Stonehill victor plays the winner of the Franklin Pierce/Bentley contest for the regional title.

Down south, Fort Valley State (21-8) is primed to tackle West Georgia (25-4) in the first round. The Lady Wildcats got the playoff bid after stopping Alabama A&M 84-81 in the SIAC tournament finals last week.

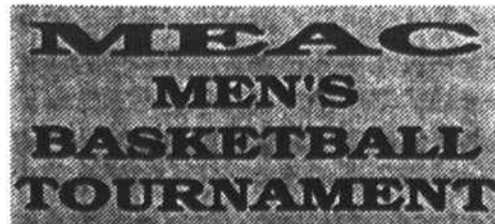
Valley is spearheaded by Debbie Ray, SIAC tournament MVP. Ray ranked among the SIAC's best in scoring (18.2 ppg), rebounding (10.3 a game), field goal percentage (.518) and blocked shots (24 rejections in 24 games).

The Valley/West Georgia winner faces the Delta State/Florida Tech winner.

## Free throw shooting gives Bison 67-65 comeback victory over Florida A&amp;M

By Chronicle Staff

Howard University's Howard Holley played roughly half the game, but when he was on the floor he made it count. Holley hit three of four foul shots over the last 1:30 to lift the



Bison to a 67-65 win over Florida A&M in the MEAC men's basketball finals last Saturday at Norfolk, Va.

As tournament champion, the Bison get an automatic bid to the NCAA Division I playoffs. Howard's record is now

17-13.

For Florida A&M, this was a case of having caught the big fish, but letting it escape at the final moment of capture. The Rattlers held a commanding 18-point lead (46-27) with about 16 minutes left to play in the second half. At the half, FAMU led 37-22.

But Howard staged a relentless comeback by canning some three-pointers. The Bison outscored A&M 45-28 in the second half.

With under two minutes to go, Julius McNeil hit a three to tie the game at 62-62. Holley gave Howard a one-point lead at 64-63 when he converted both ends of a one-and-one free throw situation.

Art Crowder added a pair of

free throws for HU then DeLon Turner fired in a three for A&M to cut the Bison's lead to 66-65 with 26 seconds left on the clock. Holley was intentionally fouled and hit one of two to provide the final margin of victory.

A&M had one final opportunity to force an overtime period. But Reginald Finney's putback attempt rimmed out at the buzzer.

Howard didn't get spectacular individual scoring. But collectively, the Bison got ample balance. Milan Brown led the way with 13 points, Crowder finished with 12 and McNeil chipped in with 11. Charles Solomon rounded out the double digits scoring with 10 points. MEAC Rookie Of The Year Tommy Brown handed out eight

assists.

Turner, this year's MEAC Player Of The Year, was the top guy for the Rattlers with 18 points and 16 rebounds. Joey McGear added 16 points and nine boards, while Finney tallied 11 points and 10 rebounds. Kevin Colson contributed 10 points in the loss.

In the final analysis, turnovers proved to be costly for the Rattlers. So costly, that the miscues nullified their huge 46-26 rebounding advantage over the Bison. By game's end, FAMU had committed 19 turnovers to Howard's seven.

The Bison helped their cause by shooting better in the last 20 minutes of the game (57.1 percent compared to 27.3 percent in the first half).