

# Defense leads way as Vikings girls capture Sectional basketball title

## ▲ North Forsyth earns berth in Western 4-A Regional with win

By SAM DAVIS  
Chronicle Sports Editor

The success that North Forsyth's girls has experienced in recent weeks is no surprise to Coach Mike Muse.

The Vikings captured the championship of the Western 4-A Sectional 1 last Saturday night by defeating Eden Morehead 34-30. That victory landed the Vikings a berth in the Western 4-A Regional at Hickory High School, where they took on East Mecklenburg, which brought a 23-4 record into the game.

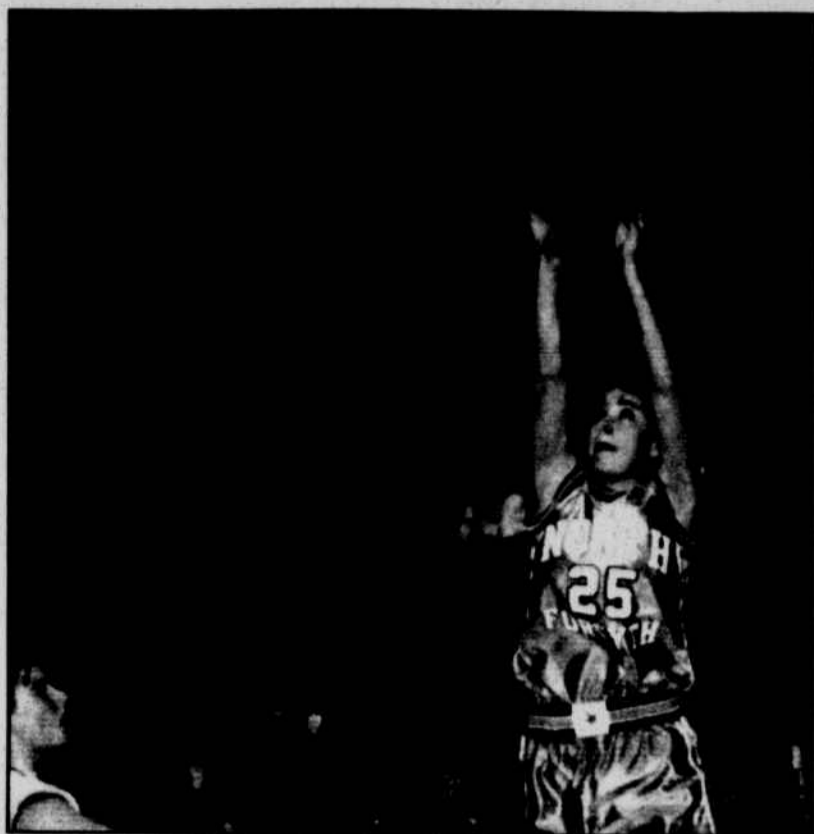
Getting to where they have has taken a lot of hard work and one thing that Muse said has helped the Vikings is attitude.

"They all understand that we're better as a group than we are as a bunch of individuals," Muse said.

That has made all the difference in the world. The Vikings were struggling along early in the season before they began conference play. The biggest reason for their late start was a rash of illness and injury. But since all 16 members of the team finally came out together in January the Vikings have been on a roll. Their victory over Morehead brought their winning streak to nine games and 23-6 on the season. North has won 11 of their last 12 games.

"We're peaking at the right time," Muse said. "Really, we've been playing well since we got all 16 players in practice at one time. Since that time we've been playing well."

While North hasn't been a one-dimensional team, it has gotten outstanding play from Charette Guthrie in recent games and throughout the season. Guthrie is averaging 17 points and seven assists per



Nicole Soots, shown shooting in earlier action, has given North Forsyth depth and scoring off the bench.

game. "She's leading the way, but she isn't doing it by herself," Muse said. "When you look at the number of assists she's handing out every game and the fact that she's only been averaging about two turnovers a game you can see why we've been so successful."

Sunnie Miley has also stepped up for the Vikings in post-season play. North captured the Metro 4-A Conference Tournament before capturing the Sectional title.

"Sunnie has taken her game up another level," Muse said. "She averaged about seven points during the conference season, but she's up to about 12 during the playoffs."

Another key has been the play of Jasmine Corley. Corley sustained a knee injury before

the start of the season and didn't see any action until the Vikings began the conference schedule. Corley has been able to take some of the ball-handling chores from Guthrie.

Nicole Soots and Carmen Griffin have also provided depth at the guard slots. Toya Davis, another senior, who missed all of last season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament, is giving the Vikings quality minutes off the bench. Although she hasn't figured much in the scoring column,

her defense and rebounding have played a part in the team's recent surge.

The biggest difference in the team since its early start has been defense.

"We're playing very well on defense right now," Muse said. "We really came through in the sectional. We held Chapel Hill to 27 points, Mount Tabor to 31 and Morehead to 30. Usually, if you can hold a team to under 45 you're going to have a chance

to win on most nights."

Another factor has been the team's experience and its desire to give everything they have. There are eight senior members of the Vikings' team who went to the Regional championship two years ago before losing to Morganton Freedom, the eventual state champion.

"They've all been there before," Muse said. "When you have a bunch of seniors who don't want to lose and end their

season that puts you in a real good situation in the playoffs. They all are playing their roles. We have good team chemistry and they are playing unselfishly. They're more concerned with team goals than personal goals.

"We're playing with confidence," Muse added. "They believe in themselves. They're putting others on the team first. It's not a me team and that's a big plus."



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### Hanes Hosiery Basketball League

#### Smith leads Wolfpack past Deacons 18-16

##### 7-12 Division Championship Game

Wolfpack 18  
Deacons 16

The Wolfpack under coach "Hurk" Shaw won the 1997 Hanes Hosiery 7-12 Basketball Championship over the Deacons in a tight defensive game that ended in a two win for the Pack.

Both teams came out in the first half with numerous turnovers. Due in large part to the tough defensive pressure applied by both squads.

The Wolfpack was led by David Smith who finished with 8 points, Joey Leake had 6, Julian Mickle and Third Watts had 2 each.

The Deacons under coach Derrick Byers, who played outstanding all year, were led by Duke Quick with 6, Devin Delozier with 5, William Terry with 3, and William Tatum, Orlando Hickman with 2 apiece.

##### 12-15 Division Semi-Final Games

Bulls 52  
Knicks 39

The Bulls continued their impressive winning streak pushing their record to 8-0 with a 52-39 win over the Knicks in the semi-finals of the Hanes Hosiery 12-15 Division

The Bulls jumped out to a big lead behind the scoring of C.J. Johnson, Derrick Etheridge and Johnny Barnes.

The Knicks made a strong run in the second half behind the 3 point shooting of John Harris who had 15 points and Anthony Scott who finished

with 13 points.

But the Bulls under coach Ann Chance put on a full-court press and scored on several Knick turnovers to wrap up the win.

Johnson led the Bulls with 19, Etheridge had 12, and Johnny Barnes had 10. The bulls also got a lift from Lamont Surles, Mike Blackwell, and Brandon Barnes.

Scott lead the rebounding for the Knicks with 11 boards, While Johnson and Etheridge had 9 rebounds apiece for the Bulls.

Hawks 49  
Celtics 38

In the second 12-15 Division Semi-Final Game. The Hawks and Celtics clashed in a battle to met the undefeated Bulls in the final. The Hawks behind the strong inside play of Larry Wharton, who had 22 points and 13 rebounds, defeated the Celtics 49-38 to advance to the March 18th Championship.

The Celtics, playing without 2 starters, Jason Samuels and Keyuan West hung tough with the Hawks until the cast 2 minutes of the game, when turnovers hurt their chances for an upset. The Celtics got good games from Jason Fische, who ad 14 points, Justin Thomas with 10, Chris Thomas 6 and Daniel Dockery, who finished with 4 points and 3 steals.

Wharton who had been a force all year, got help from point guard Leon Taylor, who played his best game of the year, with 10 points and 5 assists, Lamont Jackson with 6 points, 4 rebounds, Derrick Moore and Monte O'Neal, who both finished with 3 points.

Coach Moore was very pleased with his team's all-around play.

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