

# SPORTS WEEK

From The Press Box

Sam Davis

## New challenges await CIAA as it moves on to Raleigh

The CIAA's stay in Winston-Salem has been great for the conference, but Commissioner Leon Kerry says its time now to move on.

Winston-Salem, which has hosted the tournament for the previous five seasons, lost its bid for the years 2000-2002. When his year's tournament shuts down after the men's championship game on Saturday night, Winston-Salem will have seen the last of the tournament for awhile.

The 55th edition of the tournament will be played in Raleigh, where Kerry says new challenges await the conference.

According to the commissioner, the appeal of the conference is at an all-time high and his job is to take advantage of that. Last year the conference signed a record-breaking \$2 million contract with Coca-Cola. Since then, the league has renewed its contract with Reebok and Nation's Bank has also come to terms on a lucrative pact with the league. Several other deals are in the works, including one with a major national rental car company and another with a telephone company.

Having a good corporate image is important to the conference, Kerry says. Especially now that the conference is moving from the 14,500 seat Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum to Raleigh's new arena, a 23,000 seat facility, which has yet to be named.

Kerry said the league has learned some lessons from its experiences over the past few years. One is making sure that it ties into the corporate world, while maintaining its ties to the fans.

"We've never had to market the tournament," Kerry says. "But this is a competitive world that is changing and wherever we go we have to realize that."

"The CIAA is still evolving," he adds. "But we're still the one to beat. Right now we're the third largest basketball tournament in the country."

Kerry says the conference must continue to woo sponsors and fans to maintain its piece of the pie.

"Everybody needs corporate America," he says. "They pay the bills. They help give us the part that we don't have. They put millions of dollars back into our schools."

I can say a lot of good things about them because they are helping us to get our message out in the community. Most of them buy blocks of tickets, but they give them out to people. What that does for us is help keep our name and spread our message out in the community."

Among historically black college tournaments, the CIAA far exceeds all others. That is because of the league's unique mix of loyal fans and supporters.

"I think we have three different groups of fans," Kerry says. "We have students, we have alumni, we have people who support programs but have no ties to the schools and then we have people in the cities where the tournament is hosted. We have to make sure that we continue to offer something for all of them."

See Press Box, on B4

## Well-rested Rams eager to get started in CIAA Tournament

By SAM DAVIS  
THE CHRONICLE

Photo by Bruce Chapman

Rebounding is key for WSSU's chances.

A week of rest is just what the doctor ordered for Winston-Salem State as it opens play in the CIAA Men's Basketball Tournament today at Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

The Rams, who come into the tournament as the No. 2 seed from the Western Division is scheduled to play against the winner of Wednesday's opening-round game between Livingstone and Bowie State.

WSSU finished in a tie with North Carolina Central and Johnson C. Smith for first place in the division, but was awarded

the No. 2 seed and the accompanying bye by virtue of its 2-2 record against NCCU and JCSU.

Coach Rick Duckett of WSSU said his team has taken advantage of its time off. The Rams concluded their regular season last Thursday night when they defeated Columbia Union.

"Our spirits are fine, but we're banged up a little," Duckett said. "We have a couple of guys who are trying to get over little nagging injuries."

The injuries that concern Duckett the most are the bruised knee and shin splints that point guard Tyrone Thomas is suffering through. Windell Owens is encountering problems with his wrist and doctors aren't sure if it

is a sprain or slight fracture. In addition, Marcus Best, who was recently voted CIAA Rookie of the Year, has a touch of the flu.

Regardless of how the Rams finish, Duckett said the team has already exceeded his expectations. No one gave the team much of a chance to be a factor in the league standings. WSSU was picked to finish last in the conference by the coaches.

"This team has been a bunch of over-achievers all year," Duckett said. "From being picked to finish last and then tying for first, that's a huge accomplishment. In this conference, that's not been done very

See Rams, on B2

## Posting Up!!



## West sparks Lady Rams to victory in opening round of CIAA Tourney

By SAM DAVIS  
THE CHRONICLE

Christa West came off the bench and scored a career-high 22 points to spark Winston-Salem to a n 81-65 victory over Virginia State in the opening round of the CIAA Women's Basketball Tournament on Monday.

West, a starter as a freshman last season and most of this season, broke out of a long slump. She did most of her damage with slashing drives to the basket and was either convert them or get to the free throw line after being fouled.

West jump started the Rams' offense when she came into the game midway through the first half with WSSU trailing. Her inside presence helped the Rams make up for their sub-par outside shooting.

West was four of nine from the field, but made 13 of 16 free throws in route to her career-high. West, who came into the game averaging only 8.2 points, also handed out two assists and grabbed three rebounds.

Coach Debra Clark of WSSU said West's play helped her team shake off some early cobwebs.

"We came out a little slow," Clark said. "That's okay because sometimes we come out fast and can't sustain it. But we came out slow and picked up gradually. It was great for (West) because she had been really struggling."

Renee' Cameron and LaToya Cobb also played well for the Rams. Cameron was a surprise starter and played a key role during a stretch midway through the first half when the Rams came back from a slight deficit to take the lead for good.

"With (Cameron) in the game it gives you more of an up-tempo game," Clark said. "Her intensity and speed gave us a big boost."

Cobb came off the bench to back West with 13 points. They were the only two Ram players to reach double figures. Erica Leggett, the Lady Rams' leading scorer, with a 13.2 average, struggled to a two-for-12 shooting performance and scored only seven points. But the Rams were able to pound the ball inside and get to the free throw line. WSSU went to the free throw line 48 times and made 33 of them.

"We knew they played pretty tight

See Lady Rams, on B2

## St. Paul's Toya Davis trying to carve her niche

By DAMON FORD  
THE CHRONICLE

Toya Davis loves to watch basketball. But if she could have her way she would be a participant instead of a spectator at one of Friday's semi-final games during the 25th Annual Women's CIAA Tournament.

Her St. Paul's College team went down to the hands of a young feisty Fayetteville State University squad 77-55 in the opening round of the tournament on Monday afternoon.

The 5-10 sophomore from Winston-Salem saw 20 minutes of action off the bench for the Lady Tigers. Davis scored four points and grabbed three rebounds in a

losing effort.

The loss not only ended a season full of disappointing losses but it also closed the door on any chance of the soft spoken 19-year-old winning a CIAA Championship in front of her home crowd.

Next year the tournament moves to Raleigh's yet to be built state of the art coliseum.

Now the only thing she can do is dream of what winning the tournament in Winston-Salem would be like.

"I wish we could have made the championship game last year and this year," Davis said. "I wish (the tournament) could be here for my last two years."

"I love playing in Winston-Salem. I just love coming back



Toya Davis

home to play."

Technically, Davis always plays before a home crowd since her parents attend every game she plays no matter how far away it is.

"When we go to Bowie State (in Maryland) they're there," she said.

Davis' father, Harrison, should

See Davis, on B4

## Excitement in the air at CIAA

By DAMON FORD  
THE CHRONICLE

Excitement ran high as the 25th annual CIAA Basketball Tournament got under way with four games on Monday night.

The afternoon session featured two games pitting the Lady Falcons of St. Augustines and against the Lady Panthers of Virginia Union.

Both teams struggled from the field in the first half but the Lady Panthers 32 percent shooting was good enough to give them a nine point lead (30-21) at the half.

All-CIAA pick Norfortiria Grant and Erica Barnett led VU with nine points a piece.

St. Augustines was paced by Anastasia Sands' six points and five rebounds.

In the second half the six-



J.C. Smith knocked off Shaw in the opening round.

foot Sands took her game to another level in the scoring and rebounding departments, finishing the game with a double-double (12 points, 15 rebounds) along with three blocks and four steals but the senior remained as

the only bright spot for her team as the Lady Falcons finished the game shooting 25 percent from the field.

Virginia Union improved its shooting from 32-39 percent and ran away with a 64-43 victory behind the scoring of Grant and Barnett (15 and 13). Shelly Singleton joined them in double figures with 12 points.

St. Augustine finished their season at 9-18 while Virginia Union moved on to the quarterfinals with a 16-11 record.

The second game of the afternoon featured St. Paul's, a team that had won just six games the whole season against upstart Fayetteville State University.

Within four minutes after the jump ball the Lady Broncos had taken control of the game using

See Roundup, on B5