

SPORTS WEEK



Photo by Bruce Chapman
Omar Byrom's inside power was too much for Glenn in a semifinal win.

Chemistry keys Demons to third consecutive title

BY SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Reynolds might not have had the big guns it did the previous two seasons, but the Demons had enough firepower to capture their third consecutive Lash/Chronicle Junior Varsity Basketball Tournament.

Corey Baker scored 16 points to lead four players in double figures as the Demons defeated North Forsyth 83-55 in the title game. Omar Byrom and Whit Holcomb-Faye scored 15 points each and Justin Wozeah added 12 as the Demons won going away.

Reynolds used a solid performance by its starters and relentless defensive pressure to march through the field and capture its fourth championship in five seasons. The Demons were pushed in the semifinals and early in the championship game, but kept their poise down the stretch in both to hold on for victories.

The Demons, under first-year coach Jeff Overby, had lost two

games in a row, after going through the entire 1998-99 season without a loss. However, they never showed any ill effects in the tournament.

"We had some concerns going into the tournament," Overby said. "We weren't practicing well and it didn't seem like we were really focused."

The Demons knocked the cobwebs off their game by taking a win over Parkland in their opener. RJR then dispatched Glenn in the second round to set up their championship match with North Forsyth.

"The kids came out and responded very well," Overby said. "I have to give them credit for executing our game plan and making the things in our system work."

"The kids got after it and played hard," Overby added. "They pushed the tempo. Our defense was the biggest key. Our defense created offense. Having a deep bench helped."

Overby said the biggest pres-

sure he felt going into the tournament was that of replacing Kevin King, who headed the Demons' program the past four seasons.

"I'm real thankful for having coached under him," Overby said. "I learned so much from him and from coach (Howard) West. Coach West's system is one that you have to buy into and believe in once you've had a chance to be a part of it."

Byrom's steady play in all three games headed the Demons' effort.

"Omar had struggled in our two losses with foul trouble," Overby said. "I told him to play hard, but play smart. When he gets on the boards he has a nose for the ball."

Holcomb-Faye turned in three outstanding games as well.

"The biggest thing that I've noticed is his maturity," Overby said. "He has really matured in the first part of the season. The guys are now looking up to him and he's taken more of a leadership



Photo by Bruce Chapman
Corey Baker erupted for 16 points in the championship game to boost Reynolds.

See Demons on B2

Hardy, Pleban lead Spartan freshmen to tournament title

BY THERESA DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Mount Tabor's freshman basketball team found out quickly why it's not always a good idea to be the favorite in a tournament.

The Spartans took an 18-point lead in their opener against LIFT Academy, but had to hold off the Jaguars in overtime to earn a berth in the championship game.

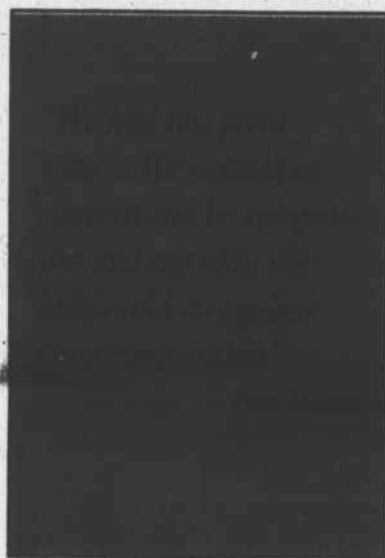
In the championship game, Mount Tabor fell behind by 17 points before rallying to take a 60-59 victory over Reynolds.

Coach Trey Massie of Mount Tabor said his team got much out of its participation in the tournament other than just its championship trophy.

"We had two great wins," Massie said. "We wanted to come in and be competitive and see what our kids could do against good competition."

"We felt coming into the tournament that this would be a great opportunity for us," Massie said.

"Early on, it looked like the Spartans would just have their way against LIFT. The Spartans used their deep bench to take a 10-point halftime lead and then increased it to 18 midway through the third quarter. LIFT then pressured the Spartans and they turned the ball over consistently down the stretch. "They hit us with it so fast, I



don't think our kids knew what hit them," Massie said. "But the big thing is we recovered and were able to hold on to get a win."

The Spartans regained their composure in overtime as they outscored LIFT 15-7.

In the championship game, Mount Tabor had to reverse the tables against Reynolds. The Demons led 19-12 at the end of the first quarter, 33-26 at half and 46-35 through three quarters. RJR increased its advantage to 17 early in the final quarter before Massie went to a man-to-man defense.

See Freshmen on B2

Byrom's powerful inside play keyed RJR to title

BY SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Omar Byrom gave Reynolds the one thing it needed for him to do most and that was enough to help the Demons take the championship of the Lash/Chronicle Junior Varsity Basketball Tournament with an 83-55 win over North Forsyth.

Byrom, a 6-2 sophomore, had his third double-double of the tournament, scoring 15 points and grabbing 12 rebounds in the championship game. Byrom also played a key role in getting the Demons to the championship game.

With Byrom leading the way, the Demons took a victory over Parkland in the opener and dispatched Glenn in the semifinals to earn a date in the title game.

Byrom, who played on the Demons' tournament championship team last year, said he knew his team would need a big effort from him to capture its third consecutive Lash/Chronicle title.

"I think my role on this team is pretty well-defined," he said. "I know I have to go to the boards

hard and score."

Even when he wasn't scoring, Byrom kept the ball alive with his offensive rebounding. He also played a key role on the defensive backboards, preventing the Demons' opponents from getting second and third chances.

Coach Jeff Overby said Byrom's effort was crucial to his team.

"He gave us the kind of leadership that we really needed," Overby said. "He's been in a lot of games for us and he really stepped up this year."

Last season, Byrom played a complementary role as the Demons compiled a 22-0 record, which included a second consecutive LCJVBT championship.

"Last year, all they needed me to do was come in and get a rebound here and there and play good defense," Byrom said. "They didn't really need me to score that much because we had a lot of players who could really score points."

"This year it's a little differ-



Photo by Bruce Chapman
Omar Byrom powered to 15 points and 12 rebounds in the championship game.



Omar Byrom accepts his MVP trophy from Gary Kellog of Coca-Cola and Bertha Carter of American Express.

See Byrom on B2

Yellowjackets stumble in semis, consolation game

BY SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Coach Greg Scales was disappointed with Carver's finish in the Lash/Chronicle Junior Varsity Basketball Tournament. The Yellowjackets, playing on their home court, played well enough in their opening game against East Forsyth to earn a berth in the semifinal round. However, it was all downhill from there, according to Scales.

Carver struggled in the opening half of its battle with East, but settled down in the second half to earn a berth in the semifinals against North Forsyth. Against North, the Yellowjackets got themselves in sync and were dealt a double-figure defeat. The same thing happened in the consolation game against Glenn, where the Yellowjackets fell behind early and were dealt a 58-45 defeat by the Bobcats.

"It was very disappointing," Scales said. "Going into the tournament, I really thought we had a chance to win. But the kids didn't really do the things that we expected them to do."

The Yellowjackets did, however, get big games by Antonio Byrd. Byrd, who scored 56 points in a loss to North Forsyth a week before the tournament, continued to put up big offensive numbers but it wasn't enough to get Carver into the championship game. He reached the 20-point plateau for the third consecutive game as he led the Yellowjackets with 20 points.

"Byrd has been playing very well offensively," Scales said. "Whenever the ball is in his hands he has a chance to score. He is playing as well as anybody on any team right now."

By the same token, Scales said his teammates aren't playing up to the



Photo by Bruce Chapman
C.T. Hoskins of East Forsyth drives past several Carver defenders.

See Yellowjackets on B3

Jaguar freshmen take third place in Lash/Chronicle Tournament

BY THERESA DAVIS
FOR THE CHRONICLE

It took LIFT Academy awhile to get past its stage fright in the Lash/Chronicle Tournament, but once the Jaguars settled down, they proved that they are an up-and-coming athletic program.

LIFT opened up its first-ever play in the ninth-grade bracket of the tournament with a 69-61 overtime loss to Mount Tabor but rebounded in the consolation game to take a victory over Parkland.

"It took us awhile to figure out what our roles are," said coach Sam Davis. "We had some problems because we were not together early in the season. This was our first time playing as a freshman team."

Still, the Jaguars showed a lot of character in their opening game in the tournament. The Jaguars scored the first four points of the game but went into a holding pattern and Mount Tabor went on a 14-point run. LIFT settled down and went into the half trailing by 10 points, 28-18.

It got worse before it got better for LIFT. The Jaguars found themselves down by 18 during the second half. But LIFT's full-court pressure defense caused Mount Tabor all kinds of problems and the Jaguars rallied to take a one-point lead late in the game. How-

ever, foul trouble forced the Jaguars to lose all three members of their starting front line, Malcolm Davis, Phillip Ingram and Claude Sales, to fouls.

Forced to use three reserves and facing a two-point deficit, Davis decided to hold the ball for the final shot.

"You always second-guess yourself when you don't win, but I think I gave my kids their best chance by holding the ball," Davis said. "I thought that strategy would allow us to at least have a chance to win."

The Jaguars, who had only eight players available for the game, held the ball for nearly three minutes before calling timeout with 12 seconds left.

"Coach 'Tree' Fells set up the perfect play," Davis said. "We got the basketball to William Conrad for a three-pointer, he forced contact and we didn't get the call."

Conrad, who had made three fourth-period three-pointers, was knocked to the floor on the play. Mount Tabor got the rebound and was immediately fouled. The Spartans made one of two free throws and the Jaguars rebounded with four seconds left. LIFT got the ball to Conrad, who took two steps past the half-court line and launched a shot at the buzzer. The ball went through the hoop, tying

See LIFT on B2

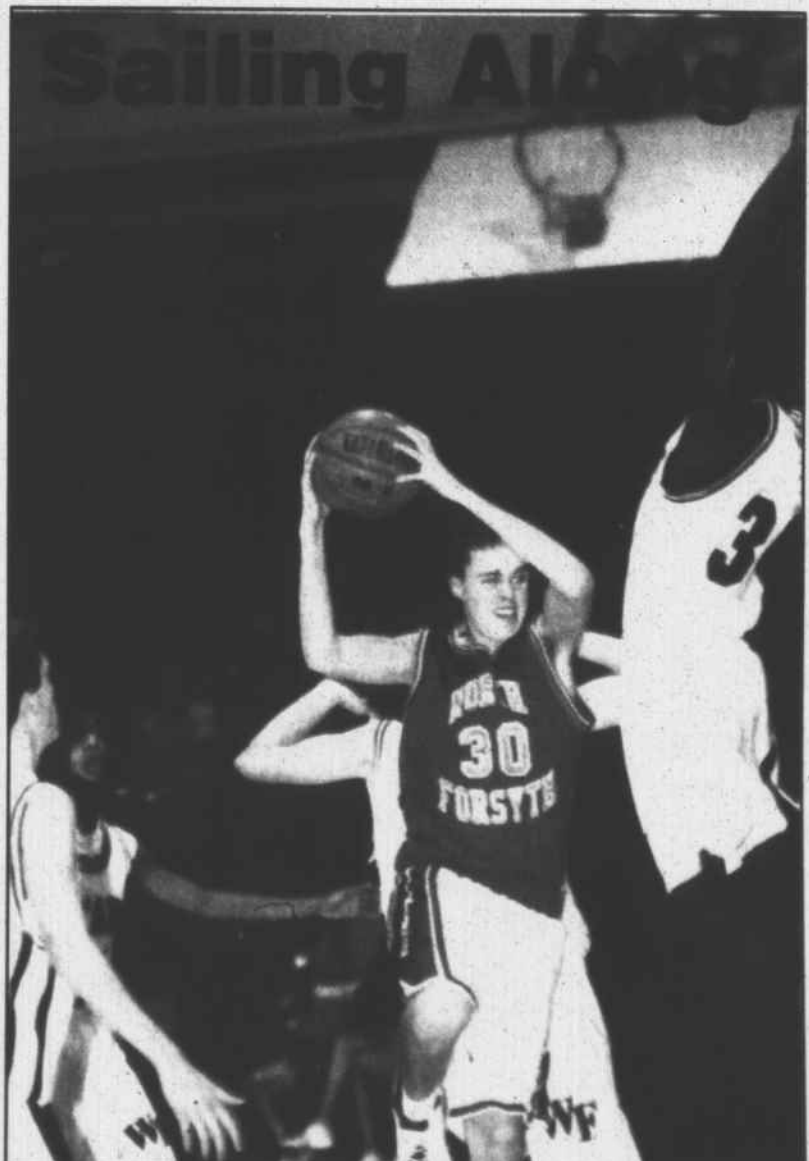


Photo by Bruce Chapman
Gib Hopson's inside play carried North to wins over West Forsyth and Carver before falling to Reynolds in the championship game.