

SPORTS WEEK

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Kevin Jordan in action.

Photo by Brian Westerholt/Sports on Film

Jordan improving his game

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Demon Deacon Kevin Jordan, who made international headlines after his coach donated a kidney to him, is still a work in progress.

The good news is that he made a lot of headway in playing his first full season of baseball since 2010. As a redshirt freshman, Jordan was a reliable contributor on a Wake Forest team (33-24) that barely missed making this year's NCAA Playoffs.

"At first, all of us were disappointed that we didn't make it," said Jordan, 6-foot-1, 195 pounds. "We thought we'd make the playoffs. But at the same time, we could see how the losses we had really hurt us. You have to win those games that you're supposed to win. In our case, we have to improve our record in road games."

At times, Jordan struggled at the plate (.224 batting average), but he also delivered with his glove as the Deacons' starting leftfielder. His focus now is to fully recapture the form that made him a prized college prospect after his junior year at Northside High School in Columbus, Ga. (ranked as high as 43rd nationally by one scouting service).

"Things went reasonably well (this season at Wake), but I didn't play as well as I wanted," he said. "I also

expected more of myself than I should have. I was looking to be the hero and I ended up trying to do too much. We already had people who filled those roles. As the season moved along, I learned that having a short memory works to one's advantage. You can't get overly excited or overly down about one game because we play so many games during the season."

In 2010, Jordan's future was up in the air. In January of that year, he learned that he suffered from ANCA vasculitis, a rare medical disorder that can lead to kidney failure. Medication (about 35 pills a day) was supposed to help, but Jordan's health continued to decline. Even though he lost 30 pounds and played sparingly during his senior year of high school, the New York Yankees still made him a 19th round pick in the annual baseball draft.

A few days before starting his freshman year at Wake Forest, doctors informed Jordan that his kidneys operated at only eight percent of their capacity and that he needed a transplant as

soon as possible. Several months passed as his family looked for a suitable donor. None of Jordan's family members could help, so Wake Forest Coach Tom Walter volunteered and donated one of his kidneys to Jordan, bringing a happy ending to one of the top sports stories of 2011.

This summer figures to be pivotal for Jordan, who will continue to hone his skills while playing for the Bourne Braves in the highly-regarded Cape Cod Baseball League in Massachusetts. The CCBL is a proven breeding ground for future Major Leaguers. Over the years, the league has a well-established reputation for attracting the nation's top college players.

"My swing is there, but there are still some areas that need work," Jordan said. "Instead of me paying so much attention to hitting home runs and driving in runs, I'll concentrate a lot more on improving my bat skills, being more patient at the plate, getting on base and scoring runs."

"The competition here is very good, so that's going to help with my confidence. The pitching I'm seeing this summer is as good any that I'll see anywhere else in the country. Getting this kind of high-level experience will help a lot in preparing me to face an ACC schedule for next year."

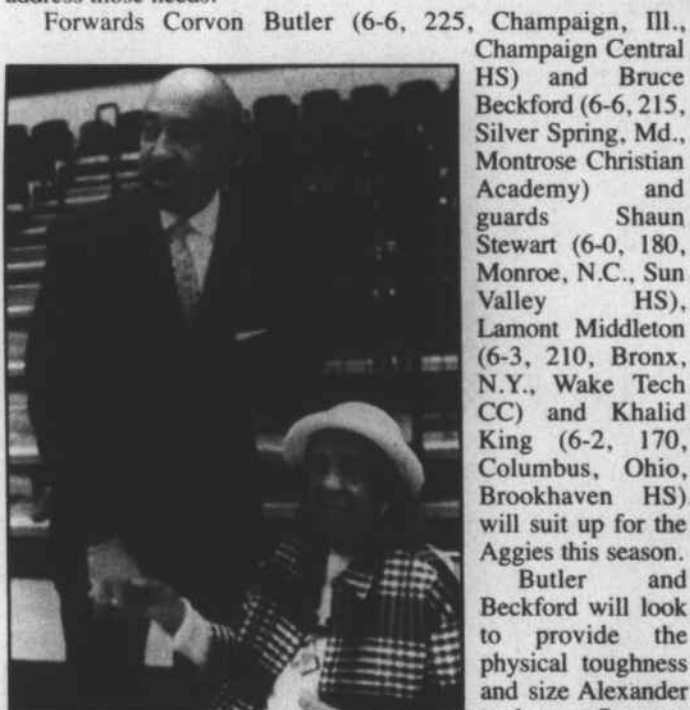


Walter

Signees could return Aggies to b-ball prominence

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

There are several pressing needs new North Carolina A&T Men's Basketball Coach Cy Alexander pinpoints when discussing the 2012-13 season. The five-player 2012 A&T recruiting class will serve as the first few steps in helping Alexander address those needs.



Cy Alexander stands next to his mother after he was announced as the new North Carolina A&T Basketball coach.

A&T Photo

Forwards Corvon Butler (6-6, 225, Champaign, Ill., Champaign Central HS) and Bruce Beckford (6-6, 215, Silver Spring, Md., Montrose Christian Academy) and guards Shaun Stewart (6-0, 180, Monroe, N.C., Sun Valley HS), Lamont Middleton (6-3, 210, Bronx, N.Y., Wake Tech CC) and Khalid King (6-2, 170, Columbus, Ohio, Brookhaven HS) will suit up for the Aggies this season.

Butler and Beckford will look to provide the physical toughness and size Alexander seeks. Stewart, Middleton and King must provide solid guard play by filling the void left by the graduation of guards Marc Hill and Nic Simpson, who ranked among the Aggies top scorers for the past two seasons.

Alexander gave credit to former Aggies Head Coach Jerry Eaves and his coaching staff for signing a trio of solid guards. With the addition of Alexander's two recent signees, the Aggies bolstered their roster despite the coaching transition.

"Overall, for as late as we got started, I felt we got two players with outstanding college bodies in Butler and Beckford," said Alexander. "They will look like Division I basketball players when they walk in the door."

These five signees will be complemented by seven returning seniors on the 2012-13 squad.

Timely Honor



Baylor's Brittney Griner accepts the 2012 Collegiate Women Athlete of the Year Award on Sunday from CWSA President Jean Lenti Ponsetto of DePaul University and Steve Morikawa of American Honda Motor Company. She was presented the honor in Los Angeles at ESPN Studios on the 40th Anniversary of Title IX, which forced schools to put female sports on equal footing with male sports.

PRNewsFoto/Honda Sports Awards

Hampton to be represented at London games

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Former Hampton University track & field standout and NCAA champion Francena McCorory qualified for Team USA in the women's 400-meter dash on Sunday at the U.S. Olympic Trials, which were held at the University of Oregon's Hayward Field.

McCorory, who won three NCAA titles in the 400-meter dash, came in third in Sunday's final after running a 50.43. Sanya Richards-Ross won the event with a 49.28 - which tied the meet record - and Dee Dee Trotter came in second with a 50.02 to make up Team USA's qualifiers.

"I usually don't run like that," McCorory said. "I usually get out very slow, but I wanted to get a good start. I ran until my wheels fell off."

"I wouldn't say I ran the smartest race, but I wanted to make the team."

McCorory joins Kellie Wells as former Hampton track athletes heading to London next month for the 2012 Olympics. Wells qualified Saturday with a second-place effort in the women's 100-meter hurdles.

The Olympic Trials will continue through Monday, then pick up again on June 28-July 1.



McCorory

Seahawks sign former Shaw star

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Former Shaw University offensive lineman Edawn Coughman was signed to the Seattle Seahawks' 90-man roster on Monday.

Coughman (6-4, 305) was a 2009 First Team All-CIAA selection who made the roster after a tryout during the Seahawks' mini-camp last season.

Last season, Coughman moved into a starting slot on the offensive line for the Toronto Argonauts of the Canadian Football League.

"We're proud of him," said Shaw Head Coach Robert Massey. "He did it right. He came here, worked hard, got his degree and is now reaping the benefits. We can now say that Shaw has someone on an NFL roster."



Coughman

Wimbledon event to tout W-S Open

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Open is partnering with a/perture, 311 West Fourth St., to broadcast the Gentlemen's Singles Final of Wimbledon on Sunday, July 8.

Admission is free and open to the public. Doors will open at 8:30 a.m. with the match set to start at 9 a.m. A/perture will offer a number of breakfast items and snacks for purchase during the live broadcast. Fourth Street in front of a/perture will be closed from 9am-noon, and representatives of the Winston-Salem Open will be on hand to provide free tennis games and activities.

"This is a great opportunity to watch Wimbledon on the big screen at a/perture," Winston-Salem Open Director Bill Oakes said. "Seating will be limited, so I encourage tennis fans to arrive

early and start enjoying the fun. A number of downtown restaurants are open on Sunday mornings, and the match probably will last until early afternoon. Watch some tennis, grab brunch, see our Fourth Street activities and come back inside a/perture to see the conclusion of what is likely to be a great Wimbledon match."

The Winston-Salem Open, an ATP World Tour 250 event with a total purse of \$625,000, will take place from Aug. 18-25, 2012, with qualifying set for Aug. 18. The tournament will be the final men's event of the Emirates Airline US Open Series.

Tickets to the Winston-Salem Open are available online at www.winstonsalemopen.com, by calling (336) 758-6409 or in person at the Wake Forest ticket office located at Bridger Field House at BB&T Field.

