

# SPORTS WEEK

Also Community, Religion and Classifieds

MARCH 5, 2015

## Mayo and Bazemore embody what the CIAA is about

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE  
BY HBCU GAMEDAY WEBSITES

The moment that everybody should have been talking about at the CIAA Tournament went largely unnoticed.

Shortly after the buzzer of championship game, Livingstone's Eric Mayo and Winston-Salem State's WyKevin Bazemore met near mid-court and embraced each other. This wasn't just the customary half-hug that African-American men give each other or that the sports world has adopted. It was deeper than that.

See, despite wearing different colors, Bazemore and Mayo are both cut from the same cloth. Two small-town North Carolina guys -- Bazemore from the coast and Mayo from outside of Charlotte -- who were overlooked by Division I schools, more so because of their size than skill. Both players came to Winston-Salem State to play for Bobby Collins.

Bazemore eventually became a star at WSSU, winning Rookie of The Year and All-Conference honors in 2011-2012 as the Rams went on to win their 11th CIAA Tournament title in school history. He would go on to win them all four years, something that only three other players (Charles Oakley, Ralph Talley and Antwain Smith) had done in the history of the 103-year-old league.

Mayo would find stardom in the CIAA, but it would-



Teammates-turned-rivals WyKevin Bazemore and Eric Mayo embrace after the CIAA Championship Game.

not be at WSSU and it wouldn't be immediate. After two years, Mayo left WSSU, traveling half an hour south on Highway 52 to play for Livingstone, a school that had never won a CIAA title.

The Blue Bears and Mayo finally broke through in

See CIAA on B2



Kerry Campbell of WSSU (in white) pressures the opposing ball-handler.

## WSSU loses CIAA basketball crown

Livingstone outraces WSSU for second straight CIAA men's basketball crown

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE  
FOR THE CHRONICLE

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- Livingstone displayed its balance in winning a second consecutive CIAA Men's Basketball Title on Saturday, Feb. 28.

Guard Daryl Traynham scored 23 points and forward Eric Mayo added 22 points, respectively, for the Blue Bears, who upended Winston-Salem State 106-91 in the CIAA Tournament finals at Time Warner Cable Arena.

See WSSU on B4

## East Forsyth undefeated in conference play

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE  
FOR THE CHRONICLE

This is the second of a two-part series on junior varsity basketball in Forsyth County. Last week's article featured schools in Classes 1-A, 2-A and 3-A. This week's season wrap-up story focuses on the Class 4-A schools.

East Forsyth went 12-deep this season with a roster full of mobile athletes who play at full speed from opening tip-off to final buzzer.

That's one reason why the Eagles are just one of two county teams to go undefeated in conference play this season. Winston-Salem Prep is the other. East closed the season with a rush, winning 13 of its last 14 games.

"We hit some bumps early in the season," said Coach Rodney Minor, whose team finished the season at 18-5 and 10-0 in the Piedmont Triad Conference. "But we kept grinding it out, day-by-day and game-by-game. I'm so proud of how our guys fought night-in and night-out."

The Eagles never had to rely on one player to carry the scoring load in every game. With its quality of depth, East Forsyth always had someone to deliver when it was needed most. Connor Sparrow, Sherrod Wells, Brandon Tate, Devin Higgins, Darius Goolsby and Curtis Coleman took turns leading the way offensively.

The development of Sparrow, a freshman post player who averaged 14 points and 8 rebounds, was crucial. With Sparrow operating inside, defenses were forced to collapse, making it easier for teammates to drive to the basket for lay-ups or make kick-out passes for uncontested 3-pointers.

### Mount Tabor

Board work, pesky defense and quick-strike offense propelled Mount Tabor (16-4, 11-1 conference) to the top spot in the Central Piedmont Conference.

The Spartans limited opponents to one shot and generated their share of points courtesy of offensive put-backs. Opposing teams had trouble matching Mount Tabor's intensity on the glass.

Mount Tabor lost two of its best JV players (Jake Rutter and Karron Jeter) in the closing weeks of the regular season to the varsity. The Spartans kept rolling.

Bond Craver, Kai Leslie, Isaiah Wilkins, Jaylen Peoples, T.J. Stevens, Teddy Christakos and Tyrek McNeil elevated their games to ensure that the Spartans would secure the league's regular-season title.

### Reagan

There weren't many teams better than Reagan (19-4, 10-2 CPC) this season. The Raiders prevailed over all challengers except Winston-Salem Prep, East Forsyth and conference rival Mount Tabor.

The ability to play at any tempo was a big plus for this group. Malik Miles, Maverick LaRue and Dylond Lindell were the key players. Yet, there were times when Reagan struggled due to its lack of size at the low post positions.

"We had problems with teams that had some size," said Coach Jeff Noe. "The lack of rebounding was our



Connor Sparrow's presence in the low post was key factor in East Forsyth's success.

crutch. But I'm proud of what this team accomplished. Basketball is a game of highs and lows. In our case, we were fortunate to have a lot more highs than we had lows."

### Reynolds

Being consistently inconsistent put Reynolds (12-9, 5-7 CPC) in a bind. While the Demons had sufficient talent to more than hold their own, their erratic play proved to be too much to overcome.

"This team was much better than its record," said Coach Mike Coker. "We just didn't play up to our potential. With the players we have coming back for next year, we'll work on shooting, decision-making and improving basketball I.Q. during the off-season."

Combo guard Xavier Coles provided a spark at both ends of the court for the Demons. During the month of

See JV on B2

## Top 24 Rising Stars Basketball Combine offers opportunity

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE  
FOR THE CHRONICLE

The high school basketball playoffs are in full swing. Folks are spell-bound and excited about the state championship possibilities for the teams they follow.

But, it's also that time of year when the aspiring playmaker-to-be begins to work on all parts of his game to get ready for the next season. It's no secret that off-season diligence lays the foundation for up-and-coming athletes to grow and excel in their sport of choice.

The first annual Top 24 Rising Stars Basketball Combine provides an avenue for many of the area's top non-varsity freshmen and sophomores to further refine their on-court skills. High school underclassmen received invitations to take part in the combine

quality of instruction they receive, it gives the youngsters additional motivation to keep working hard, which will enable them to get the most out of their talents and skills. By taking part in this combine, players get a much better grasp of the specific areas they need to work on to improve."

The combine will open with a skill development workout. Participants will take part in a variety of drills, which are designed

### Player List - Top 24 Combine

- Quinn Baker, Carver
- Mason Matrey, West Forsyth
- Josh Jenkins, Glenn
- Kai Leslie, Mount Tabor
- Caleb Burgess, Winston-Salem Prep
- Malik Miles, Reagan
- Kobe Young, Parkland
- Xavier Coles, Reynolds
- Curtis Coleman, Jr., East Forsyth
- Russell Bradley, Carver
- Denard Williams, Atkins
- Ted Christakos, Mount Tabor
- De'Sean Harrell, West Forsyth
- Maverick LaRue, Reagan
- Sherrod Wells, East Forsyth
- Ian Henderson, Reynolds
- James Etter, Atkins
- Casey Wilkins, Parkland
- Connor Sparrow, East Forsyth
- Nigel Payne, Reagan
- Brandon Palmer, Winston-Salem Prep
- Marcus Harris, Glenn
- Justin Carter, Winston-Salem Prep
- T.J. Stevens, Mount Tabor

based on the recommendations of area coaches.

This year's combine is set for March 13 at 6 p.m. at Woodland Gym, better known as the "Eagle's Nest." The gym is located at 200 Frampton St., adjacent to the old Woodland Baptist Church on Patterson Avenue.

"The Top 24 Combine's primary purpose is to help every participant elevate his level of play in every facet of the game," said Jamie Foster, combine director and JV basketball coach at Carver. "With the

to sharpen ball-handling, passing and shooting skills. Following that initial workout, a 90-minute NBA-style combine session will be conducted. Players will be measured for their vertical jump and evaluated for speed, lateral quickness and agility.

The centerpiece activity for the evening is the Top 24 "Showdown" game, which is set to begin around 8 p.m. The players at the combine will be divided into two teams.

See Combine on B2

March 11-13

# WSSU

is the Tom Joyner School of the month

**Give Online Today**

Donations go towards student scholarships

*Foundation*