

# Beyond Basketball

## CIAA Basketball Tournament had a lot going on beyond the games



People packed the 2015 CIAA Fan Fest presented by Toyota at the Charlotte Convention Center Halls A & B. The event was free and open to the public.



Contestants play Eco Feud at the Toyota Green Initiative booth at the Fan Fest.



The crowd forms in front of the Coca Cola Zero Soundstage at the Fan Fest.



CIAA staff and local volunteers helped to provide over 600 new shoes to elementary school kids at Billingsville Elementary School on Friday, Feb. 27 in partnership with Samaritan's Feet and Coke Zero.

### Combine

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During halftime, there will be a 3-Point Shooting Contest and a Skills and Drills competition (similar to the competition held during NBA All-Star Weekend).

The Top 24 Rising Stars Basketball Combine is presented by Next Level Youth Development, a nonprofit organization based in Winston-Salem.

"Our focus is to help the youth understand their potential," said Dale Guthrie, president of Next Level. "We develop a plan for them to manage their own growth and improvement and give them the coaching and opportunity to advance in the sport that they love. We offer programs for all levels of athletes and have programs for youth who cannot afford to pay for this level of coaching, but have the talent and desire to take their game to the next level."

The combine will have a featured guest speaker, which will be announced next week. Disc jockey Waleed Coyote of 102 JAMZ will provide the music. Admission is \$5. For more information, contact Coach Foster at 336-695-3212.



Photo by Charles E. Leftwich  
West Forsyth's Da'Sean Harrell in action.

# Lady Rams lose in second-round CIAA play

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE FOR THE CHRONICLE

This year's CIAA Tournament produced mixed results for Winston-Salem State's women. The Lady Rams advanced past the first round, but weren't able to stick around long enough to make it to the championship final on Saturday, Feb. 28.

Entering the tournament, Coach A.G. Hall's team had a see-saw kind of experience during the month of February. Winston-Salem State won three of its first four games, but nose-dived and closed out the regular season with back-to-back losses to Johnson C. Smith and Livingstone.

The 60-55 road loss to Livingstone in the season finale was especially painful. Down by eight points at halftime, Winston-Salem State closed the gap to trail 45-44 on Jeri Craine's jumper with 8:04 left to play in the contest.

Dionna Scott of WSSU converted a pair of free throws to cut the deficit to 53-49. Over the

final minutes of the game, however, the Lady Rams weren't able to make any further headway and ended up losing a close game that they felt they could've won.

Entering the tournament's first round, Winston-Salem State

Hall made a personnel move for the tournament and put Kesheria McNeil in the starting lineup. That was a departure from the norm. McNeil started eight games during the regular season, but her usual role was coming off

the bench to provide an offensive spark at shooting guard. McNeil was a model of efficiency vs. Chowan (21 points, 4 assists and 2 steals).

Most impressively, McNeil shot 75 percent from the field (6-of-8) and from the free-throw line (9-of-12). For the tournament, she averaged 15 points per game and was named to the CIAA All-Tournament team.

McNeil was hardly a soloist. Scott, an All-CIAA pick delivered a double-double with 13 points and 10 boards. Jasmine Carter came off the bench to contribute 10 points, all in the second half.

The final 20 minutes of the game belonged to WSSU, which shot 56 percent from the field, 50 percent on 3-pointers and held

Chowan (9-of-26) to 34.6 percent field goal shooting. All-CIAA pick Alisha Mobley finished with 30 points and 8 rebounds and Rachael Gostomski added 13 points for Chowan.

Winston-Salem State applied the finishing touches during a 10-minute stretch in the second half. McNeil and Carter combined to score 16 points during that span which put the game out of reach.

The quality of play of the back-ups was pivotal. With Carter leading the way, the Lady Rams finished with a decisive 29-8 advantage in bench points.

The quarterfinals match-up vs. Shaw proved to be the end of the road. Winston-Salem State fell behind by 20 points at the half (44-24) and things continued

to go downhill in an 88-59 wipe-out. The Lady Rams were winless in three games vs. the Lady Bears this season.

Shaw dominated the lanes as evidenced by its 36-18 margin of points scored in the paint. The Lady Bears controlled the glass (45-38 edge in rebounding) and held WSSU to 33 percent field goal shooting for the game. Micah Brooks (16 points) was the top scorer among five Shaw players who scored in double figures.

The Lady Rams, who finished their season at 11-17, never found an offensive rhythm. Carter scored a team-high 10 points in a back-up capacity. McNeil was limited to 9 points and Scott, who fouled out, finished with 6 points on 3-of-11 field goal shooting.



Photos by Craig T. Greenlee  
Lady Rams point guard Awa Kalmstrom looks for an opening against Livingstone.

had no problem erasing the memory of defeat in the season finale. The Lady Rams played to their strengths and posted a convincing 73-58 victory over Chowan.

The win could be considered a mild upset. The Lady Rams got revenge for a 53-44 home loss they suffered at the hands of the Hawks in early January. WSSU was the Southern Division's No. 5 seed. Chowan was seeded fourth in the Northern Division.

### CIAA

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2014, beating the Rams for the school's first-ever CIAA Championship. Mayo was largely a complimentary player on that team; guards Mark Thomas and Jody Hill were the stars, and he was the "Clean-up" guy, battling down low for any scraps that may have fallen from the basket.

This season, both players served as the heart and souls of their teams. WSSU and Livingstone split their season series at one game each. Both players were named to the All-Conference team and helped them back to the championship game. This was their moment.

Meanwhile, Bazemore and Mayo both fought furiously to try to pick up their second conference titles in their collegiate careers. Bazemore capped his career with a 24-point, eight rebound performance, while Mayo's 22 points and seven rebounds helped Livingstone come away

with a 106-91 win.

When it was all over, the two teammates-turned-rivals embraced each other. For that moment, nothing else mattered.

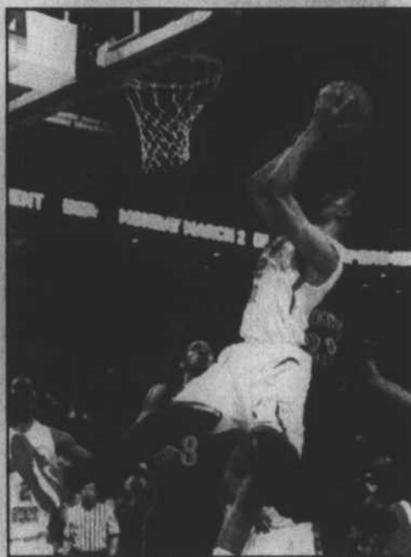
Long after everyone forgets about all of that, these boys-turned-men will have their names inked among legends like (Earl) Monroe, (Charles) Oakley and (Ben) Wallace and dozens of others who have played in this one-of-a-kind conference.

The league doesn't get top-talent anymore -- it hasn't had a player drafted into the NBA in more than a decade. It doesn't have the biggest HBCUs any more (nearly half of the 18 teams that made up the league when the tournament was created in the '40s are gone). But what hasn't changed about the CIAA-- the impact that its institutions are having on the lives of young people.

That, is what the CIAA is all about.



Eric Mayo (left) and WyKevin Bazemore play during the championship game.



Photos by Erin Mizelle

### JV

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February, power forward Lemuel Gaither emerged as a formidable factor in the paint.

#### Parkland

At times, the season was a struggle for Parkland (13-10, 5-7 CPC). As things turned out, the Mustangs saved the best for last and won three of their last four games.

In victories over North Davidson, Glenn and East Forsyth, Parkland helped its cause by minimizing floor mistakes and taking higher percentage shots. "I was very satisfied with our play over the final couple of weeks," said Coach Shawn Smoot. "We had good ball movement and did so much better with our shot selection."



Photo by Charles E. Leftwich  
Connor Sparrow's presence in the low post was key factor in East Forsyth's success.

The top players for the Mustangs were Darryl Williams, Kobe Young and Casey Wilkins. Late in this season, Tahj Daniels came off the bench to provide timely scoring from 3-point range.

#### Glenn

Considering what transpired over the course of the season, Glenn's record (11-9, 5-7 PTC) is misleading. The Bobcats went through a rough stretch in which they suffered eight straight, single-digit losses.

According to Coach Clarence Hosch, wins and losses shouldn't be the sole focus at the JV level. It's more about getting the players ready for the varsity.

"I like winning as much as any other coach," he said. "But the emphasis is skill develop-

ment. I look at where they were when they started and compare that to where they were when they finished. Based on that, it's clear that there was a lot of growth this season, and I'm satisfied with that."

Josh Jenkins and Marcus Harris developed nicely as a backcourt tandem. Jordan Ward, Bryson Bell-St. John and Ryan Bussell continued to improve with each game. Luke Chamberlin proved himself as a viable low-post presence toward the latter part of the season.

#### West Forsyth

This team showed so much promise in late December. As the No. 7 seed, West Forsyth put on a stunning holiday run that put in the Lash-Chronicle Classic finals against eventual champ Winston-Salem Prep. The Titans lost 69-64 and had the look of a legitimate contender in the CPC.

The remainder of the season was a rollercoaster ride for the Titans (10-11, 5-7 conference). In spite of Mason Matrey's stellar all-around play, West Forsyth never delivered any semblance of consistency.

"Things didn't turn out the way we hoped it would, but our kids still played hard and put forth a collective effort," said Coach Jeffrey Williams. "Hopefully, they learned a few things about how to excel."