



SPORTS WEEK



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TRACK

Indoor track could serve as prelude for spring

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE FOR THE CHRONICLE

This year's state indoor track and field championships are history. So, now is a good time to take a retrospective look at what transpired. In doing so, we can get some insight on what might be in store for the upcoming outdoor season.

McKinley McNeill of Parkland is a good starting point. The newly-crowned state indoor champ at 500 meters is poised to launch an assault on the state record in the open 400.

Keep in mind that not only is McNeill the defending state 400 champ, but she's just .25 seconds shy of erasing the current mark of 54.07 seconds set by Sanura Eley-O'Reilly of Fayetteville Britt in 2009.

Setting a new record is a reachable goal for McNeill, who ran a personal best of 53.40 in the New Balance Outdoor Nationals last June. But in order to own a new state record, McNeill must eclipse Eley-O'Reilly's time at the state champi-

onships in May.

McNeill, who has signed with North Carolina, got off to a late start with her training this season. She delayed the start of training in order to make multiple recruiting visits to several schools that were eager to sign her. Once she's completely fit, it seems that only injury or complacency would prevent her from entering the record books.

Parkland girls:

As for the Mustangs as a team, they aren't likely to win a third straight team title. But they are deep enough and skilled enough to score enough points to finish among the top three. At the indoor championships, they fell short of that goal, and ended up fourth in the final team standings.

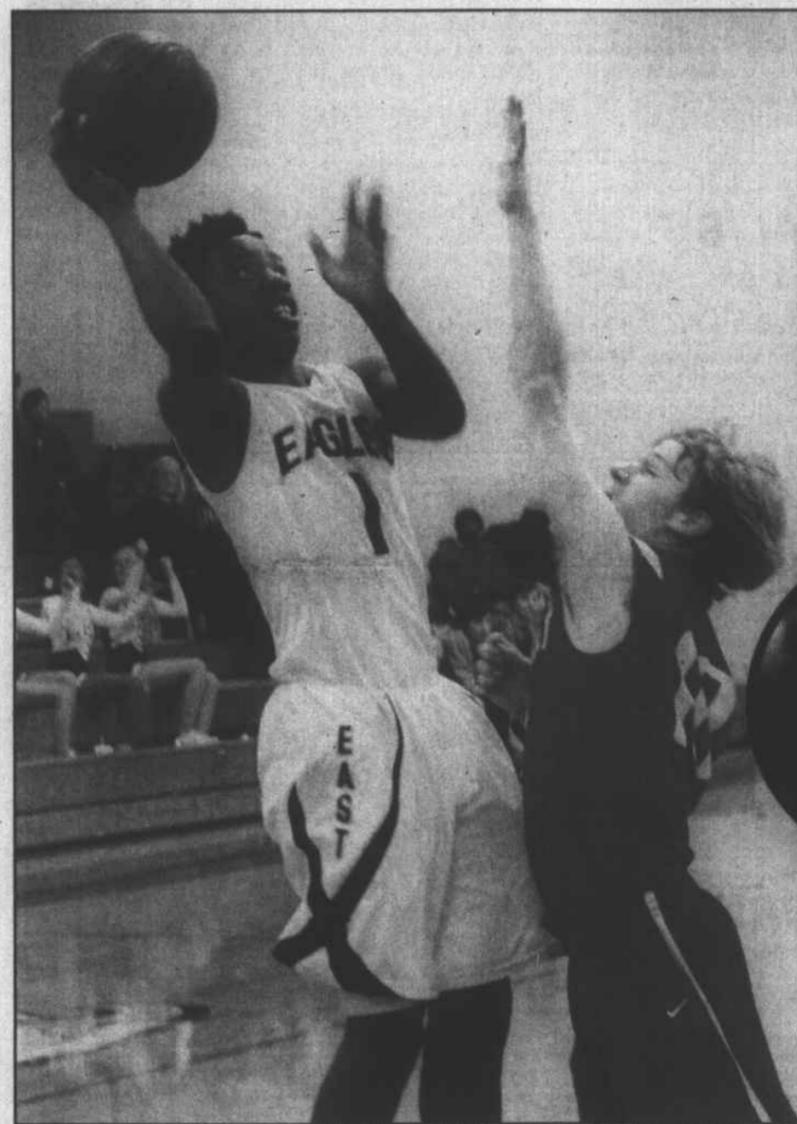
The sprint relays are key events for Parkland and this spring will be no different. The foursome of Jahnae Bowman, Shanone Cannon, Kimani Davis and Zjinaiya Francis barely missed out on a

See Spring on B2



Photo by Craig T. Greenlee
Parkland quarter-miler Lorenzo Graise expects to contend for a state title in the 400 this spring.

JV BASKETBALL



No doubt, East Forsyth is the clear-cut

No. 1

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE FOR THE CHRONICLE

East Forsyth needed every bit of resolve it could muster in beating Northwest Guilford in its JV basketball season finale two weeks ago. The Eagles found a way to hold steady in the closing seconds to take a 67-66 victory. With the win, they claimed sole possession of first place in the Piedmont Triad 4-A Conference.

That wasn't the only bonus, though. East Forsyth finished up with a 19-2 record overall, which is the best among their JV counterparts in Forsyth County.

In other words, the soaring Eagles are the undisputed kings in the county for this season.

Aside from orchestrating an inspired run in winning the Lash-Chronicle JV tournament in December, East Forsyth (9-1 in the PTC) dominated all year. The only other county school that could've challenged the Eagles was Mount Tabor, which ended its season at 18-3. This is the second year in a row that East Forsyth has finished first in its conference.

At the junior varsity level, there are no officially-recognized conference champions. In this case, it's a mythical championship for the first-place finishers.

See No.1 on B2



Coach Rodney Minor

Photos by Craig T. Greenlee
Tanis Samuels delivered timely shooting in the Eagles' season-ending victory over Northwest Guilford.

New faces making big contributions for Rams women's track

BY CRAIG T. GREENLEE FOR THE CHRONICLE

Winning back-to-back conference titles is never easy, regardless of how much experience is on a team's roster. In those situations where championships are won with a lot of new faces, the degree of difficulty to achieve victory is multiplied.

That's the case for Winston-Salem State's women's track program, which claimed another team title at the CIAA Indoor Track and Field Championships last week. Yes, there were key returnees on hand to help lead the way. Domtilla Kiplagat, voted CIAA women's MVP for the meet, set the tone by winning the mile plus the 3,000-meter run and she

anchored WSSU's victorious Distance Medley Relay.

Even so, the contributions of five freshmen made a huge difference as the champion Rams edged second-place Johnson C. Smith 120-110 in the points race for the trophy.



"Obviously the team did extremely well, and it happened with a lot of help from our freshman," said Turner. "It was such a blessing for this team to pull themselves through to win this

championship. It wasn't an easy one (to win)."

Entering the indoor season, it wasn't clear how Turner might find a way to replace the talent and leadership of nine seniors who graduated. In most cases, getting a handle on how freshmen will handle college-level competition can be tricky. Other than putting them to the competitive test, there's no way to know for sure.

In this instance, the college rookies - Sh'Naiya Chapman, Jenele Terry, Halvandra McNeill and Aaliyah Craft (Walkertown graduate) - made their presence felt.

"I've won seven championships here and this one is very special," said

See New Faces on B2



Craft



Terry

THE CLARENCE E. "BIG HOUSE" GAINES ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

The WSSU Department of Athletics is now accepting applications. Nomination must be submitted by Friday, April 1, 2016.

For more information contact the WSSU Department of Athletics (336) 750-2141