

SPORTS WEEK

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Sports Columnist

NBA season better than expected

Now that we are more than halfway through the NBA season, things are starting to heat up in both conferences. I knew coming into this season that we would have more parity than we have had in the last 10 years, but I wasn't expecting this.

I will have to admit, during the runs of the Miami Heat and the Golden State Warriors, I did not watch much basketball during the regular season. The main reason was because it seemed to be a foregone conclusion who was going to win, which took a lot of intrigue out of the game for me.

This season, however, has been very enjoyable to watch for several reasons. First, I enjoy the fact that there are several teams that have an opportunity to win the championship. Secondly, I have enjoyed the development of the younger players in the league. This combination has made for a very entertaining product to watch and enjoy.

As I have stated previously, I have never been a big fan of dynasties. Michael Jordan was my favorite basketball player growing up, but even when the Chicago Bulls were dominating the league during the 1990s, I still found myself hoping someone could dethrone them as champions. I know that sounds weird, but I am a person who enjoys seeing the underdog come out of nowhere and win, or just having multiple teams having an equal chance to win.

It would not be a stretch to say that in recent years I have become bored with the NBA. The regular season did not interest me, because I pretty much knew what the outcome would be. The post season was a bore as well. The only reason why I watched the finals was to see if there was a team that could beat the Warriors, or the Heat before them.

This year is much different, thankfully. I have probably watched more regular season games this year than I have in the past five seasons. On any given night, it seems that any team can be beaten, which creates a lot of intrigue. I no longer find myself just following individual players, but I am now invested in team success as well.

Everyone knew that the Western Conference would be stacked. As of March 1, the second and seventh seeded teams are only separated by four games. The Lakers are predictably on top out west, but who knows what will happen over the next couple of months as we head into the playoffs.

The Milwaukee Bucks are dominating the Eastern Conference and have an outside chance of winning 70 games. The Toronto Raptors, the reigning champions, are surprisingly in the second spot in the east, even after losing Kawhi Leonard. With the emergence of Jayson Tatum, the Boston Celtics are looking very formidable as well. I am still not very high on the Philadelphia 76ers because of the players they lost, combined with the lack of team cohesiveness.

See NBA on B5



Photos by Alphonso Abbott Jr.

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

The sport of cheerleading is highly competitive. Last Friday, the varsity cheerleaders

from Parkland High School showed off some of their moves during a competition in Charlotte. Here is a look at the young ladies during one of their routines.

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Young just scratching the surface

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

Christiana Young is only a freshman at Winston-Salem Christian School (WCS) but is already racking up accolades and honors. She was named player of the year in the Central Carolina Conference, scored over 1,000 points, and was four points away from being a state champion.

Young began her career on the varsity team as an 8th grade student and went on to score nearly 800 points last season. This year, with an influx of new talent, she led the Lady Lions to a 31-4 overall record.

"Playing as an 8th grader with the varsity team was a really nice experience, especially playing against older girls," said Young. "I wasn't nervous or anything, because when I step onto the court, I don't care who it is against. I just play my hardest and leave everything on the court."

As the starting point guard, Young's scoring numbers dipped, but that was mostly due to her having more help this season.

"I have more help this year and they are more experienced players than



Photo by Alphonso Abbott Jr.

Christiana Young has scored over 1,000 points as a freshman at Winston-Salem Christian School.

we had last year," she said. "We have a new coach and he gets us in really good shape."

The state championship game was a tough loss for Young. She feels they had a great shot at winning, but lost it in the final minutes.

"It was a good game, we started getting nervous and it really started getting

to us," she said about the championship game. "We started making a lot of turnovers and they were scoring off of our turnovers and we never adjusted. I just learned to continue to play hard to the final whistle and never give up."

As a child, basketball came easy to Young. She was in the third grade playing on a team with eighth

grade girls. Her talent was evident from early on, partly due to her high basketball IQ.

Young's mother, Demetris Jeter Young, says she knew Christiana would be really good on the basketball court as a young child. She admits that she wanted Young to be into dance, but realized that was not her path.

"I wanted to have a little girl so she could do dance and be prissy," said Jeter Young. "She did cheer one year while her brother played football, but she was always trying to knock him over with her cheerleading uniform on."

"When I went to sign her up for dance, she fought me so hard. We wound up leaving the Y with her being signed up for boxing. So, I noticed then that she had a love for sports. She is just competitive at everything that she does."

With Young already eclipsing the 1,000-point barrier, she thinks she has a good shot at scoring 3,000 before her high school career is over.

This is head coach Rocky Brundage's first year at the helm for the Lady Lions. He says it has been a pleasure to coach

Young this season. He says she is a hard worker with limitless potential.

"She is an extremely hard worker and the biggest improvement I've seen in her this year is in the weight room," said Brundage. "We put probably three and a half months of time in here in the pre-season, which has really made a huge difference."

"I think she scored more points last year than she did this year, but it's a different team with a lot more talent than she had before. This is the second time in my career having a player score 1,000 points, but the first time I've seen a freshman accomplish that at such a young age."

Brundage feels the ceiling for Young is very high, because of her work ethic, skill, academics and her positive attitude. Brundage feels when her high school career is completed, she has a good chance to play "mid to high level D-1."

Young's favorite subject in school is math. She has dreams of playing for several schools such as Baylor, Notre Dame, UNC Chapel Hill, Wake Forest or South Carolina. She would like to major in sports medicine while attending college.