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49ers Fall To Huskies

Connecticut Wins First Round NIT Game 67-62

By HERB WHITE
Post Sports Editor

UNC Charlotte's basketball season came to an end Wednesday night in a 67-62 loss to Connecticut in the first round of the National Invitational Tournament Wednesday at the Charlotte Coliseum. The 49ers gave the Huskies a battle, but Connecticut's inside power was the difference.

"They were a very physical team," said UNCC freshman guard Henry Williams, who led the 49ers (17-12) with a game-high 26 points. "They're the most physical team we've played this year."

Connecticut (17-12), the defending NIT champion, used its pressure defense and the inside dominance of forward Cliff Robinson to turn back UNCC. The Huskies, who finished seventh in the Big East Conference, are now 25-2 against non-league opponents in the past two years.

Robinson, who is seen by some observers as a first-round pick in the June NBA draft, hit 11 of 18 shots from the floor to finish with 23 points. The 49ers knew about Robinson's reputation, but didn't know how good he really was, Williams said.

"Robinson seemed to be a real good athlete," he said. "Better than we expected."

The Huskies threatened to put UNCC out of contention early, rolling to a 9-0 lead. Connecticut's full-court zone press choked off the 49ers offense, causing UNCC to go nearly five minutes before scoring. Williams got the 49ers on the scoreboard with a three-point shot with 15 minutes six seconds left in the first half to cut the deficit to 9-3.

Once Connecticut relaxed its press, the 49ers warmed up. Williams scored 14 points in the half and senior guard Jeff West came off the bench to give UNCC a lift defensively. Two steals by West on consecutive Huskies possessions led to Williams baskets, pulling the 49ers to within 13-11. UNCC had finally found its touch on offense and Williams was leading the charge.

"I took it upon myself as a challenge playing a Big East team," he said. "I felt that I was on at the beginning."

Robinson had only eight points in the first 20 minutes, but he constantly beat the 49ers' big men, Sam Robson and Cedric Ball, to the choice spots in the low post. Connecticut took advantage in the second half, getting the ball inside to score at will.

Trailing 29-24 at the start of the second half, UNCC got as close as three, but couldn't overtake the Huskies. With Connecticut running wild in the lane, the 49ers went to its three-guard setup of Williams, West and By-

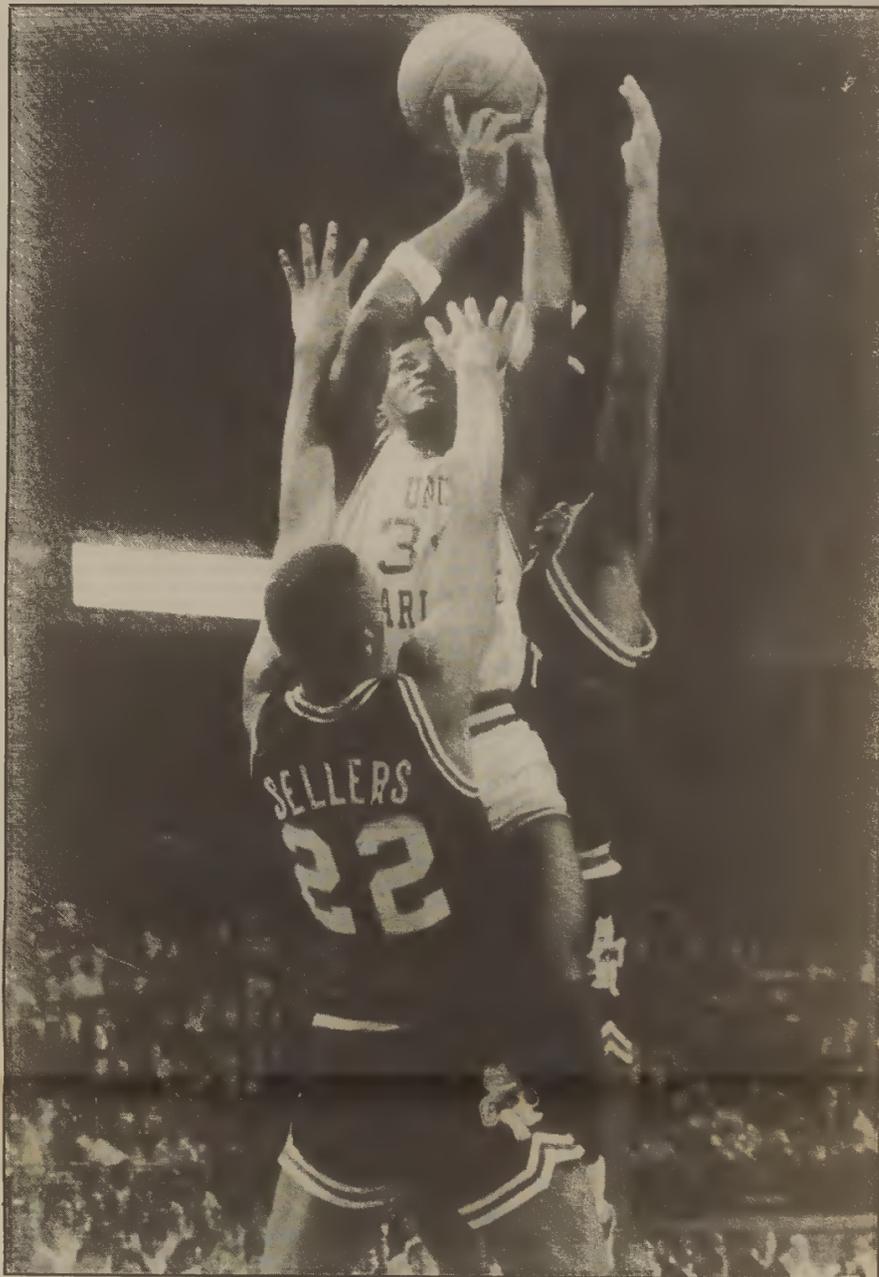


Photo:FRANK WILLIAMS

UNC Charlotte guard Henry Williams (34) loses the ball between Connecticut's Rod Sellers (22) and an unidentified teammate in the Huskies' 67-62 win in the first round of the National In-

national Tournament Wednesday at the Charlotte Coliseum. The 49ers finished the season 17-12.

ron Dinkins to get better perimeter shooting.

After being held to two first-half points, Dinkins erupted for 15 in the second to finish with 17 in his last college game.

UNCC hit five of 13 three-point shots in the second half, but just couldn't get them to drop in the final minutes. The 49ers shot 54

percent from the floor in the second half and 50 for the game, compared to a blistering 57 percent for Connecticut. The Huskies shot 51 percent for the game.

Connecticut gave UNCC several openings in the final two minutes, missing the front end of four one-and-one situations.

Despite making only three free throws in 12 attempts, the Huskies managed to hold on. Williams said the 49ers' missed too many opportunities down the stretch to win.

"I think we could, but we just didn't get the breaks at the end," he said.

Shooting Advice From Hornets Veteran Reid

Versatile Robert Reid of the Charlotte Hornets has some advice for those connoisseurs of his shooting ability.

"Practice. You should have to practice and practice to develop the kind of motion that will result in good shooting form," he said. "Don't try to copy anyone else's shot. Work on the type of shot that is best for you."

Happy to be with the Hornets, for those aspiring NBA stars in high school and college, Reid said that you have to have talent, you have to respect the guys who you play with, and you have to be at the right place at the right time.

"You can be an All American in college, but you have to realize there is always someone better than you. You have to run fast and play good defense and hope that you are selected by a team that can use your talents and give you playing time."

In offering his assessment of good shooters, Reid said that Rex Chapman's performance in the loss to Sacramento was a stellar performance.

"Rex played a tremendous game," he said.

Dell Curry swished in one of the prettiest jump bank shots that I have ever seen during the Charlotte Hornets game with the Denver Nuggets. It was definitely one of the highlights of the game. Curry has the best form in the NBA.

A little about Curry... Although he has not played much this season for the Hornets, first facing an injury and then being sidelined for several games on a coach's decision, he is definitely one of the favorites on press row. He was the first player chosen in the expansion draft by the Hornets and several Hornet fans hope that eventually he gets into the rotation because his ability is highly evident, especially on the offensive front, an area in which the Hornets are hurting.

His season high was in New York in February when he scored 19 points and had three assists in 22 minutes of play. A little more playing time might produce even more results.

Here's hoping that the Hornets do not trade Curry and decide to use him in the future. He's got some of the best shooting form in pro basketball.

Curry, born in Harrisonburg, Virginia, is a 6-2, 195-pound shooting guard from Virginia Tech.

His career high was last season with Cleveland when he scored 27 points against Golden State while going 11 of 16 from the field, one of one from three point range and four for four from the line.

We believe that given more playing time, Curry can produce those results for the Hornets.

Congratulations are in order for UNCC's Henry Williams. He was voted the Sun Belt Conference's Freshman of the Year. The 6-2, 170-pound guard averaged 17.1 points per game. He is a tantalizing, exciting player to watch with a wide repertoire of dunks and amazing moves that leaves opponents befuddled.

ALL CISAA team members were Jay Thomas, Matt McDonald, and Chris Berger from Charlotte Latin; Lane Jones, John Martin and Lamar Drye from Charlotte Christian; Keith O'Connell and Cory Eford from Providence Day and McCord Moody and Greg Sweet from Country Day.

ALL STATE NCISAA choices for the girls were Anna Litaker, Charlotte Latin; Jenny Edwards, Charlotte Latin; Eileen Mallett, Winston-Salem Bishop McGuiness; Tracy Hardaker, Durham Academy; Melinda Nichols, Charlotte Country Day; Jenny Deckleman, Country Day; Heather McKaig, Providence Day; Jen Ryan, Raleigh Cardinal Gibbons and Jennifer Melneke, Cardinal Gibbons.

ALL STATE NCISAA choices for the boys were Thomas Roberts, Greensboro Day; Joel Faircloth, Forsyth Country Day; Chris Berger, Charlotte Latin; Keith O'Connell, Providence Day; Bryan Brading, Forsyth Country Day; John Martin, Charlotte Christian; Bryan Drum, Durham Academy; Randy Smith, Asheville School and Marshall Fall, Asheville Carolina Day.

Smith's Beard Wins CIAA's Academic Award

Sharrion Beard, a senior psychology major at Johnson C. Smith University, has been named the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association's (CIAA) "Most Outstanding Female Academic Athlete." She is 22 years old and hails from Anderson, Indiana.

Sharrion played on the Lady Golden Bulls basketball team for four years, women's volleyball for three and the softball squad for three years. She has been president of the Duke Hall Council, is a member of the Psi Chi Honors Society, Psychology Club, Social Science Club and is a student representative on the JCSU Athletic Committee.

Sharrion received the Mechanics and Farmers Bank Award (given annually to a top senior athlete with a high scholastic average), the Leroy Sargent Award (Psychology) and is a MARC Scholar in Science.

Sharrion's cumulative grade point average as of last semester was 3.36. She will graduate this year and has narrowed her top three choices for graduate

school to the University of North Carolina, Indiana University and Ohio State. She plans to continue her psychology training with an emphasis on physiological psychology. After completing medical school, she hopes to become a private practicing psychiatrist.

Athletic Director Horace Small called Sharrion "a leader in the university community and an outstanding athlete." She was captain for two different JCSU teams. Student Affairs Vice President Dr. Francine Madrey says Sharrion "has maintained high scholarship, is a positive role model and is a student of whom we are all proud, not only in terms of her athletic performance but in scholarship, conduct and responsibility."

In 1987, Sharrion was named Besida All-American, All-CIAA and was selected to the All-CIAA Tournament team. She is the daughter of Lennett Beard of Anderson, Indiana.

Hornets Woes: Bad Starts, Defense

Charlotte Loss Streak Goes To 8

By HERB WHITE
Post Sports Editor

The Charlotte Hornets, owners of a franchise record eight-game losing streak, don't have many answers to why they are in a slump. But, to a man, they realize something is very wrong.

Loss No. 6 came at the hands of NBA champion Los Angeles, which wasn't a big surprise, but the next, to lowly Sacramento, was a golden opportunity to break the streak. But poor shooting in the first half doomed the Hornets to playing catch-up in a 114-105 loss.

"We didn't play well in the first half," said Kelly Tripucka. "We needed it as bad as they did."

Robert Reid, who has been coming off the bench earlier in recent games to try lighting the offense, said Charlotte's problems are varied, but they stem from inconsistency. Despite the poor first half, the Hornets got to within two points in the fourth quarter, only to see the Kings pull away.

"We made the bonehead plays when we cut it to two," he said. "When you've busted your behind to get that close you're supposed to get over the hump."

The obstacle in many cases, Reid said, is defense. The Hor-

nets, who used it to fuel its transition game earlier this season, have come up dry. Opponents have taken advantage of Charlotte's lapses to build and maintain big leads.

"The only thing you can pinpoint is defense," he said. "We're just not playing defense. We haven't been playing defense at all for the last few games."

The Hornets' second major West coast swing, which started Tuesday at Denver and finishes Monday at Sacramento, should be a major test of Charlotte's willingness to break its skid. Denver, Seattle and Golden State are in the hunt for playoff spots, but there is opportunity for wins at Los Angeles (Clippers) and Sacramento.

"Now we're going to find out what it's like to go on the road to the West Coast," Reid said. "We're playing three teams that are fighting for playoff spots," Reid said. "It's essential that they don't lose at home."

Despite the losing, Tripucka said the Hornets have to regain the hunger they displayed earlier in the season.

"You can't give up," he said. "You have to keep going. It's going to be tough going on the road."

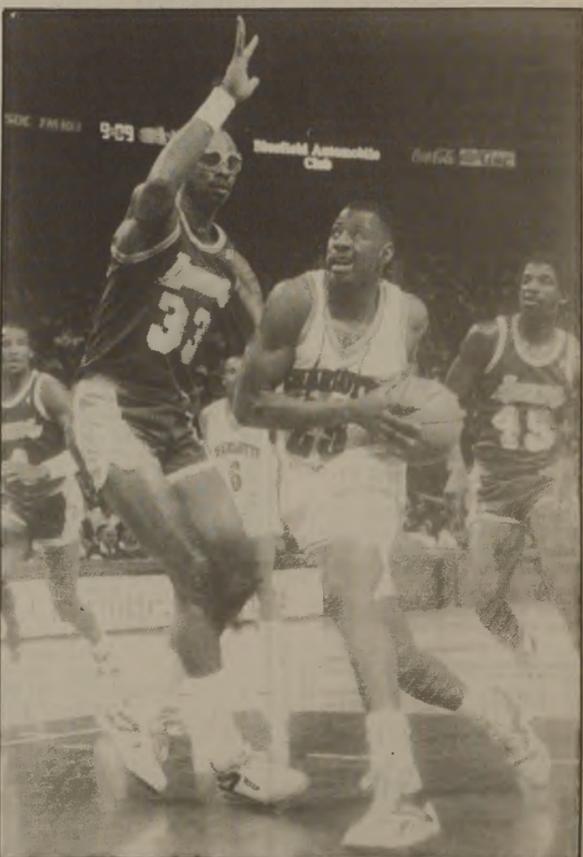


Photo:CALVIN FERGUSON

Charlotte's Earl Cureton (25) drives against Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.