

SPORTS

Smith tries to stay incredi-Bull

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Johnson C. Smith has a firm grasp on its first winning season in 14 years.

Now, the Golden Bulls are looking to make a statement. Smith, which travels to Virginia Union Saturday, ran its record to 6-3, 4-3 CIAA by beating N.C. Central 7-6 last week in Durham. Not only was it the first Bulls' win in the series since 1987, it was their first road victory in 26 years. In a season that has gone beyond even the most hopeful of expectations, Smith is in position to record seven wins for the first time since 1982

with a win over the Panthers (1-6 CIAA, 2-7).

"Right now, we feel like we're on top," Bulls coach Daryl McNeill said. "We're going to have to be on top of our game."

Smith's defense is on top of its game, limiting Central's CIAA-leading offense to six points last week. Over the last three games, the Bulls have allowed only 19 points, offsetting an offense that has sputtered at times. Although Smith gives up yards, opponents are finding touchdowns difficult to come by. Central, which was No. 17 in Division II, racked up 357 yards to 159 for the Bulls, Smith's defense

and special teams were the difference. Senior cornerback Jay Martin blocked and returned an Eagles field goal attempt to set up Clyde Wilson's 2-yard run to tie the score. Benjamin Smith won it with an extra point.

"It's no big secret. Our defense has done a great job for us all year," McNeill said. "The main cliché in football is defense wins games and offense sells tickets."

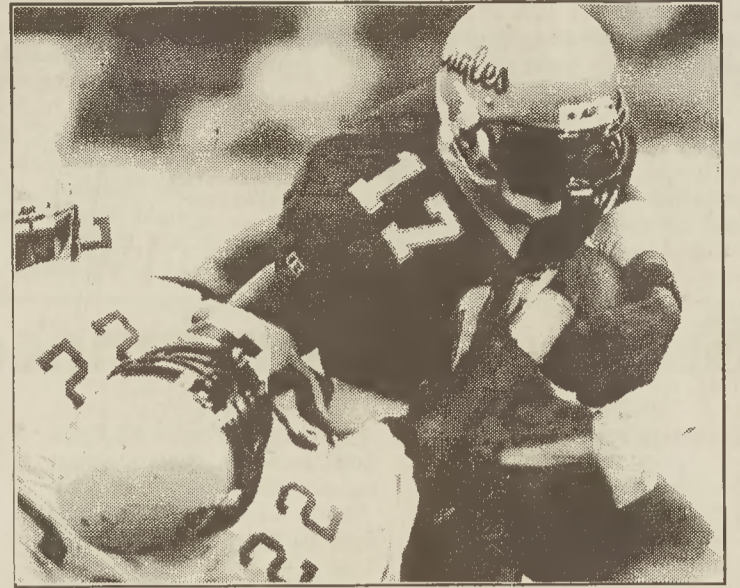
Although the Bulls haven't been lighting up scoreboards recently, with 43 points over the last three games, McNeill isn't panicking. Smith faced two of the CIAA's best defenses

in consecutive games — Winston-Salem State and Central — and points are supposed to be rare. What's important, he says, is that the Bulls, led by quarterback De'Trell Calloway (59-for-131, 722 yards, three touchdowns) and running back Demetrius Campbell (175 carries, 745 yards, seven scores) are doing enough to win.

"We've done our part offensively," McNeill said. "We just haven't done it as far as the scoreboard is concerned."

The Bulls could use more points to reduce pressure on the defense and special teams.

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PHOTO/JASON LAWS

J.C. Smith defender Arturah Givens (22) tries to pull down N.C. Central quarterback Warren Bell in the Bulls' 7-6 win Saturday.

A link to past, future

Curry is an anchor
for new HornetsBy Karl Petraroja
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Dell Curry has seen all of the Charlotte Hornets' highs and lows.

Curry, a 10-year NBA veteran, and Muggsy Bogues are the only original Hornets left, the last links to the franchise's infancy and its glory days.

Charlotte was once dubbed "the team of the '90s," but gone are stars like Alonzo Mourning, Larry Johnson, Kendall Gill and Hersey Hawkins. The Hornets, who went 41-41 last season, are rebuilding and Curry admits it's frustrating to see all his old friends in teal and purple now draped in the colors of opposing teams.

"You wonder why, well you know why but you wonder how it could happen but those things are out of your control, there's nothing you can do," Curry said.

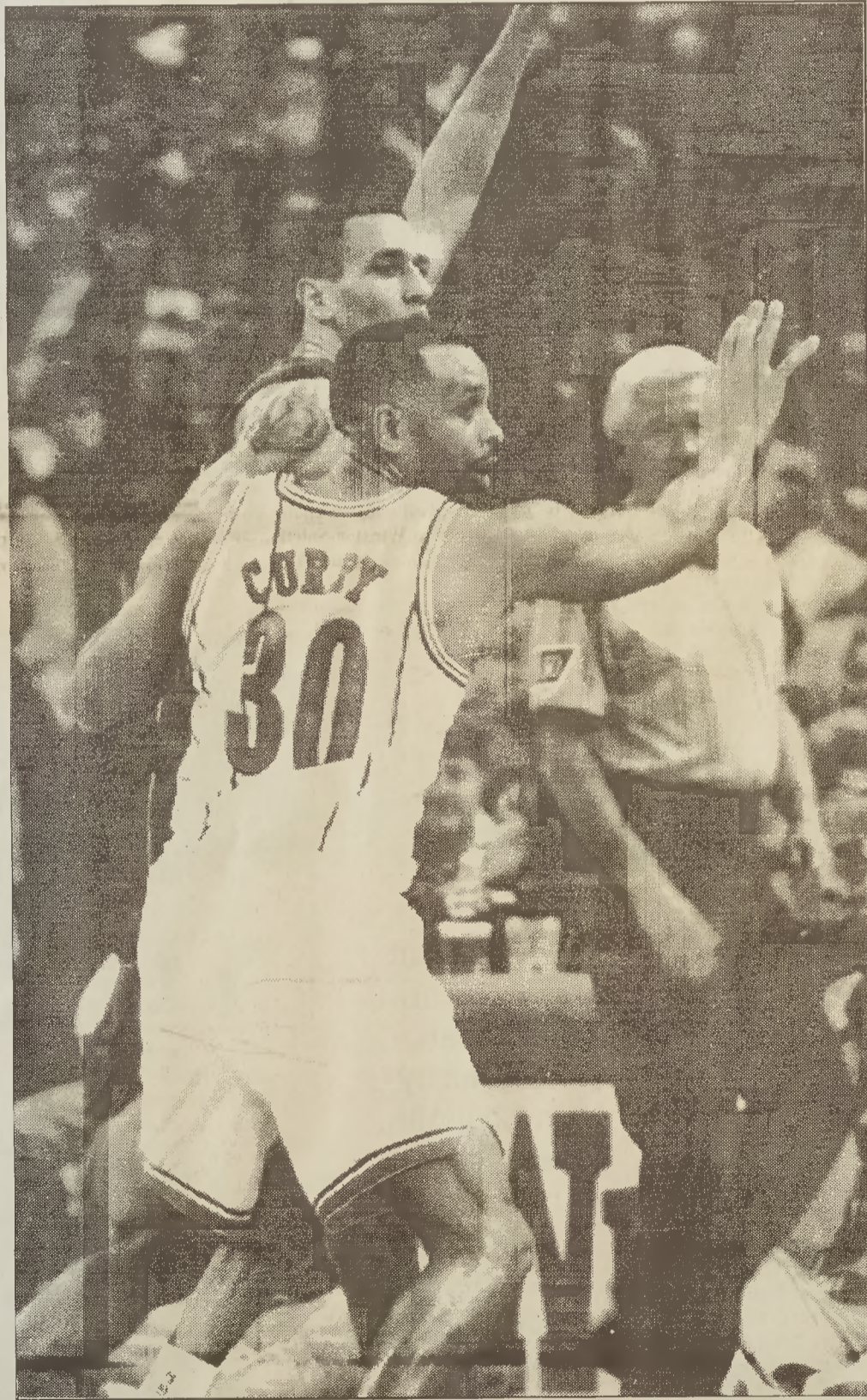
"You just hope that the guys they bring in here, can live up to their fold, their bill and we can still develop and get back to the team that we had."

Curry, who scored a career high 38-points in the season-opening 109-98 victory over Toronto, is optimistic they can. By giving up Mourning and Johnson and replacing them with Vlade Divac and Anthony Mason, Curry feels the Hornets can get back to that level. Adding second year center George Zidek and Matt Geiger, who played well last season, to the mix, Curry sees the Hornets as much bigger and tougher.

"You can't teach big bodies, that's something that you got to bring in," Curry said. "This is definitely the biggest team we've had since I've been here, so it should help us defensively."

"With Mason and Vlade and coach (Dave) Cowens, it will bring some toughness to our

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PHOTO/JASON LAWS

Dell Curry has been a Charlotte Hornet since the team's formation in 1988. He's seen the good and bad, including a slow start to this season.

Robinson takes flight with Central

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Jolie Robinson thought she botched the most important interview of her life.

But to a search committee at North Carolina Central, Robinson was the perfect fit for its women's basketball team.

"I was shocked when they called, very shocked," she said. "After that last interview, I thought they wouldn't want me. I just don't think I did well."

The former Charlotte Catholic standout was named coach of the Eagles this summer.

Robinson inherits a struggling team that finished last in the CIAA, compiling a 6-19 overall with only three wins in the conference.

"We have to concentrate on defense and conditioning," Robinson said. "We have to develop the fundamentals. There are a lot of areas we have to work on."

Conditioning is the key. Last

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PHOTO/N.C. CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

N.C. Central women's basketball coach Jolie Robinson.

Patriots ready
for season's
biggest gameBy Eric Bozeman
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

It will be cold. It will be for serious bragging rights. It will be a war. For coach Rusty Jester and his Independence Patriots, they will enter Memorial Stadium with whips and chairs, trying to tame the Lions of West Charlotte. To even mention the task, the very thought of trying to compete with the West Charlotte powerhouse is frightening enough to make many brave young men quiver in their cleats. Yet Jester and the Patriots welcome the opportunity to face the No. 1 team in the state.

"We're taking one game at a time, and that's how we're taking this," Jester said. "We had a rule this summer that we weren't going to talk about West Charlotte."

Speaking of a team that is not only ranked as the best in the state, but among the best in the country, Independence, 10-0, has a lot of questions that will need to be answered before kickoff Saturday.

West Charlotte, also 10-0, has a mammoth offensive line of outstanding pass protectors such as Jason Washington, Michael Arcenaux, and Louis Patterson. The Lions are led by a quarterbacking duo of Keith Matkins and Haji Kromah. Either of those two signal-callers will have two deep threats to throw to when Steve Shipp and Arjai Jackson line up at wide out. With that package of bona fide stars, it stands to reason that the Lions also boast the state's best offense.

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For Carolina, Giants
game represents a
must-win situationBy Joe Macenka
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Carolina Panthers coach Dom Capers doesn't like to put too much emphasis on individual games in the middle of the season. Four losses in his team's last four road games appear to have changed his stance.

"Every game is critical," Capers said Monday as he assessed the task of the Panthers, whose road woes have dropped them to 5-4 heading into Sunday night's home game against the New York Giants.

Linebacker Carlton Bailey said the Panthers, who are 4-0 at home this season, want to use their latest game in Ericsson Stadium as a positive boost to the stretch run of the season.

"We've got a chance to play on Sunday night, the only show at that time, the only game at that time," Bailey said. "We all know what we need to do from here on out. And if you can't get focused for that, then I don't know when you can."

Fellow linebacker Lamar Lathon, Carolina's sacks leader, said there hasn't been any finger-pointing in the Panthers' locker room so far, and

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PHOTO/JOE DANIELS

Carolina punt returner Winslow Oliver cuts through Atlanta's defense in Carolina's 20-17 loss Sunday.