

# SPORTS

## Davis hopes to keep JCSU football rolling

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Bill Davis wants to build on a good thing at Johnson C. Smith. Davis, who was named head football coach last week, said the philosophy that his predecessor, Daryl McNeill, used to turn the Golden Bulls around last year will stay in place. And why not? McNeill spent nine seasons as Davis' offensive coordinator at Savannah State and S.C. State. "Our philosophy is not going to change," Davis said. "The only thing that's going to change is the name on the head coach's desk."

Davis' hiring is a homecoming

for the 1965 Smith graduate. He was an all-CIAA center and line-backer for coach Eddie McGirt and later served as offensive line coach and offensive coordinator from 1969-72. Smith had tried unsuccessfully several times to hire Davis, but the timing was never right. Neither was the school's financial situation, with a CIAA-low 13 scholarships.

"We tried to hire him back here on many occasions, and we were never fortunate," Smith President Dorothy Cowser Yancy said. "The rest of the world seemed to have more money, more scholarships and more coaches."

It's better to get home late than

never, though.

"I'm delighted to be back home and I guess it took me a long time to make this circle," Davis said. "When you can go back home, it's always good."

Davis, who was out of coaching for a season after he was fired by Tennessee State, said he missed the game. At Smith, he gets a chance to improve on a career 113-68-1 record over 18 seasons, fifth-best among active black college coaches.

"I enjoy coaching. If my wife didn't need a car and clothes and stuff like that, I would coach for nothing," Davis said. "That's how much I enjoy it."

Even without the financial

resources other schools take for granted, Yancy and Davis are convinced Smith will compete this season. As athletic director, Davis will also be responsible for raising Smith's sports profile as well as money from alumni and businesses.

"Let's not talk about what we don't have," Davis said. Let's talk about what we can do with what we have."

"He's promised me that he knows how to wash clothes without washing powder," Yancy said. "We'll find out what he can do."

Smith, which hadn't put together a winning season since 1982, went 7-3 last year with

upsets wins over S.C. State, N.C. Central and Winston-Salem State. Davis said he sees no reason why it can't be duplicated.

"We going to win. We're going to put the fun back in football," he said.

"She offered me a lifetime contract, but she told me during the process that she could have me declared dead at any time."

Spring practice, which resumed this week, will give Davis a first-hand look at the team he inherits from McNeill. Davis said he'll also visit high school players signed by McNeill to assure them that they're wanted. He'll also intensify

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PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Johnson C. Smith football coach Bill Davis says he'll use the same philosophy as his predecessor, Daryl McNeill.

## Knight's time is right now

By Karl Petraroja  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Charlotte Knights are thinking about a winning season and a run at first place in the International League.

Billy McMillon is hoping for a chance to prove he belongs in the majors.

After two poor seasons, the Knights feel they have the right mix of veterans and promising young talent to make a run at the International League title. Back for his second season with the Knights is McMillon, the International League Rookie of the Year last season. All he did in 97 games was hit .352 with 17 home runs and 70 runs batted in. Those impressive numbers earned McMillon a September call-up to the parent Florida Marlins, where he hit .216 in 51 at-bats.

The Marlins' offseason signing of free agent outfielder Moises Alou meant McMillon was Charlotte-bound again. Marlins management told him to work hard, keep a good attitude and his time would come but it's frustrating for McMillon, especially after the way he played last season.

"What a lot of people don't realize is my goal is to play in the big leagues so if it happens with the Orioles or with the Mariners or whoever, I would be more than willing to do that," he said.

"I've just got to be ready for

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## House of Cards 1-6

By R.B. Fallstorm  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. LOUIS — The St. Louis Cardinals are off to such a miserable start that workaholic manager Tony La Russa scheduled a practice the day before the home opener and then suggested nobody attend.

Not many could stay away. Players filtered through the clubhouse throughout the morning Monday, optimistic that Tuesday night's game against Montreal could be the one that starts the turnaround for the NL Central Division champions. The Cardinals won 2-1, giving St. Louis a 1-6 record.

"Every team has their ups and downs," third baseman Gary Gaetti said. "It's just extremely exaggerated at the beginning of the season."

And how. The start is the worst in the 106-year history of the franchise. After getting swept at Montreal and then Houston, the Cardinals are batting .190, have scored two or fewer runs in five

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# The long road back

## Biakabutuka aims for total recovery

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Tshimanga Biakabutuka can't wait to get back to playing football.

The Carolina Panthers running back hasn't been able to do that since he went down with a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee against Jacksonville Sept. 29. Since then, he's gone through reconstructive surgery and rehabilitation that has been difficult at times.

"Through the whole process, you get to learn about yourself a lot. You learn your weaknesses," Biakabutuka said. "I'm a competitor and I try to do too much and overdo things. You get setbacks and you have to back off and I wasn't real comfortable with backing off. That was one of the key factors. You have to back off at a given moment to help the healing process to go farther."

Biakabutuka has progressed to the point where he's cleared to participate in minicamp April 25-27. Although Biakabutuka says he's "about 75 percent" recovered, his recovery has been rapid.

"We're ahead of schedule and we're looking forward to being back in minicamp in April," he said. "We've worked hard. I had a lot of setbacks, but we've made tremendous progress and I'm satisfied with the work we've done."

"I'm not sure how much Tshimanga's going to be able to do," Carolina coach Dom Capers told The Associated Press last week. "I know he's been in here

working extremely hard. The last report I got from our training staff is that he's been ahead of schedule. It'll be nice to get him out there and start to get him headed back on the right track."

Biakabutuka, who spent the off-season in Charlotte, has started running again and reports little pain. Although he



PHOTOS/CALVIN FERGUSON

Carolina Panthers running back Tshimanga Biakabutuka works out with a brace that protects his reconstructed left knee (top). His goal is to regain the speed and elusiveness that made him Carolina's first-round draft pick last season.

won't get hit during the three-day minicamp, Biakabutuka will learn how far he has to go before training camp opens in July.

"Once you get your knee 100 percent, the major thing is being able to do the things you used to do," Biakabutuka said. "I've got to get to a point where I am so comfortable with my knee that I am able to cut without hesitation and take a hit knowing my knee is solid."

Much was expected from

Biakabutuka last year. He brought much-needed speed to the backfield, rushing for 279 yards before the injury. Then he was reduced to being a cheerleader as Carolina advanced to the NFC championship game.

"It was real hard because you want to be part of it. You want to be part of the wins, you want to be part of the team the brotherhood you have," Biakabutuka said. "You can't get down on yourself you have a knee you have

to worry about, you have the rehab you have to worry about."

"You have to take a different approach. I became a cheerleader, I followed my favorite team, but at the same time I was working hard and trying to get back there. Seeing them do good helped me work harder."

The last thing Biakabutuka thinks about these days is getting hurt again. Football is a high-risk sport, especially for

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## Tiger is ready for Augusta

By Paul Newberry  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUGUSTA, Georgia — Tiger Woods was back home in Florida last week getting in some extra work for the U.S. Masters. He tightened up his swing for those critical iron shots at Augusta National. He dabbled with the putter to prepare himself for those treacherous greens.

Woods

During this period of self-analysis and introspection, Woods found time to play a practice round with his good friend, Mark O'Meara. When the day was done, Woods had dispensed only 59 shots to get around his home course.

"It was actually pretty easy," Woods said with a shrug Tuesday. "I hit some bad shots, yes, but they were only tee shots, so I could salvage them."

Ho hum, just another day at the course, another 59. And since the subject is Tiger Woods, that begs the obvious question: Can this wondrous 21-year-old, who has been to the Masters twice as an amateur, shoot such a ridiculously low score in his first appearance as a professional?

"You know what? Physically, yes, you can do it," Woods said, earnest rather than mocking.

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## Wood named Yadkin player of the year

By Brian Powe  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

SPENCER — Jackie Wood was voted Yadkin Valley 2A girls' basketball player of the year.

Wood, a sophomore who led North Rowan to the final four of the state tournament, was one of the five Rowan County players to be named on the 13-member Yadkin Valley team.

Cavaliers coach Gary Atwell said Wood was an important part of the team's success.

"She is an exceptional athlete, and deserves all the accolades for her accomplishments," Atwell said. "Jackie runs the floor well and has a soft touch around the goal."

Atwell said Wood's talents extend much further than the basketball court.

"Jackie is an all-around good person from a quality background," Atwell said. "She is

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