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SPORTS

Black College Sports/4C

1-9 season gnaws at Bulls coach

Spring drills no place to forget miserable 2003 campaign

By Herbert L. White
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Tim Harkness can't escape Johnson C. Smith's one-win football season.

And he won't let his Golden Bulls, either. Last year's nine-loss meltdown is in the past, yet it casts a long shadow over spring drills, which opened last week. Among the lowlights were losses to Shaw and St. Augustine's, a pair of second-year programs.



Harkness

"It's another year, but you don't want them to forget about it because we were 1-9," Harkness said. "You don't want the seniors to forget about it because this is their last time around. They haven't had a winning season since they've been here. They should make the difference."

Smith needs difference-makers on offense, which was last in the CIAA. The offensive line, which loses four starters, was inconsistent and sophomore quarterback Donja Goodson struggled. Goodson is still the starter, with freshman Bernard Hawk the top backup.

"This year the emphasis, the onus is on the quarterbacks to grow up, mature and understand how to operate the system," Harkness said. "I think we've got three who are good enough to do that."

Smith's best returning offensive player is receiver Marquis Belton, a former North Mecklenburg High star who earned a spot on the CIAA's all-rookie team. His success next season will likely depend on the quarterbacks and the emergence of a second receiver.

"We've just got to make sure they're on the same page as the receivers and when we come back in the fall they can merge the new guys coming in with what we've got."

Defensively, Smith is retooling the front four, but is otherwise set for the fall with an experienced group.

"The defense hasn't been bad over the past few years," Harkness said. "They've just been on the field too long. We've got enough bodies to compete with the people we play but we don't score points and we don't sustain drives and keep the defense off the field. Basically we just didn't execute offensively."

But there's always hope in the spring. For Smith, the goal is to focus on improving for fall while remembering last season's missteps.

"You don't let them forget it, but you don't dwell on it," Harkness said. "You don't hold them responsible for it, but you let them know that last year is there and we've got to erase it. It stuck in my craw. A lot of stuff that we did and what happened to us we don't have control over it but we still went out there and played the game."

GARINGER BOWS OUT



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Garinger High's Marcus Robinson glides to the hoop during the Wildcats' 82-73 loss to Winston-Salem Reynolds in the West Regional Monday in Winston-Salem.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK AT JCSU



PHOTO/WADE NASH

FLEET OF FOOT: Johnson C. Smith is building its women's track program with an infusion of young sprinters from Charlotte like freshmen Porscha Douglas (left) and Aisha Lide (right). Cassandra Tweedy, a senior from New York, is one of the top distance runners.

Race on to build women's program with local talent

By Herbert L. White
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Women's track is no longer an afterthought at Johnson C. Smith.

The Golden Bulls have turned to homegrown athletes to boost the program, which struggled to field competitive teams in the past. Among the newcomers are Harding High sprinter Aisha Lide and high jumper-sprinter Porscha Douglas from Butler, who each made an impact indoors. Lide won the 100 meters in 12.51 seconds at an indoor meet at Oglethorpe College and Douglas took the 300 hurdles in 59.2 at Appalachian State.

"Hopefully, we can get Johnson C. Smith track back where it used to be," sprint coach Trenton Guy said. "We definitely won't be at the bottom of the barrel."

Smith has some holdover talent. Cassandra Tweedy, a senior from New York who finished fourth in the 1500 meters at last year's CIAA championships, said any success this year will help attract better athletes to campus.

"For the last couple of years, we haven't that many females," she said. "Now that we have more females and more young people, the energy of the team is much higher and we're getting new recruits."

Lide, who won a state title on Harding's 400 meter relay team last year, said she considered Hampton, N.C. Central and UNC Charlotte before deciding on Smith. Guy, who coached Lide in high school, convinced her that JCSU's balance of athletics and academics would be beneficial.

"For me, I was always talented in track, but for me to come here the track season was a lot shorter and didn't require as much as the D-I schools," Lide said. "So I felt this would be the best for me, also because the school is small and the classes are smaller, so you get more atten-

tion than you would if you were in a bigger environment."

For Douglas, her relationship with Guy extends back to junior high. She had Division I aspirations, but changed course when she missed her senior season to have a baby. Guy offered Douglas a chance to continue her education and take care of family obligations.

"Originally, I wanted to go to (Florida A&M), but I had a baby in August and I felt I needed to stay home and do the best I could to take care of my child and my education," she said. "He told me he'd help me through my problems and he wanted the best for me and my child, not just for a good track team."

The Bulls, who run this weekend at FAMU, face an uphill climb to the CIAA's summit, where national power St. Augustine's regularly produces Olympic-caliber athletes. But Smith has one of the top track facilities on the East Coast in the Irwin Belk Complex and a mother lode of junior and high school programs to recruit from. It also has athletes who believe they can have an impact now.

"Johnson C. Smith as a school, as a whole, we can go to the top, especially women," Tweedy said. "Now that we have females, we're trying to show the men that everything they can do, we can do."

Said Lide: "That's the whole goal, the whole purpose - to get Charlotte people to sign. There's so much talent in Charlotte. Everybody's real intent on going out of state and far away from home, but then most people come back after their first two years of college."

Guy, a former Smith sprinter who qualified for the 1988 Olympic trials, believes the school can remake its track reputation.

"Hopefully, we can build Johnson C. Smith track to the point where people will come down that hill and watch us run," he said.

Free agents address needs

By Herbert L. White
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The Carolina Panthers' low-key approach to free agency is addressing needs at linebacker and the offensive line.

Carolina signed free agent offensive lineman Adam Meadows and linebacker Jessie Armstead this week, the second for free agent acquisitions.

A seven-year veteran, Meadows started 96 of 103 games in seven seasons with the Colts.



Armstead started 15 of 16 games for the Washington Redskins last season and led the team with 6.5 sacks in addition to posting 99 tackles before being released last month.

"I feel like we have acquired two quality veteran players," Panthers coach John Fox said. "I was with Jessie in New York, and I am familiar with the contribution he makes to a team. Adam is a versatile offensive lineman who has played in this league at a high level."

Armstead, 33, has played in 176 games over 11 seasons with 129 starts, 986 tackles, 40 sacks and 12 interceptions. He was selected to play in five consecutive Pro Bowls from 1997-2001 before joining Washington in 2002 as an unrestricted free agent.

Meadows, 6-5, 290 pounds, had spent his entire career with Indianapolis. He started all 16 games for the Colts in 1997, 1999, and 2000. He started five games for Indianapolis last season, and played in 12 contests, including the 23-20 overtime loss to the Panthers on Oct. 12.

"I came to Carolina first because this is where I wanted to play," Meadows said. "I really have a great deal of respect for the Richardson family, coach Fox and coach (Mike) Maser. I am really excited about being here."

Meadows was drafted in the second round of the 1997 draft (48th overall) by the Colts.

Originally chosen in the eighth round (207th overall) by the Giants in 1993, Armstead played in 144 games with 98 starts for New York from 1993-2001 with 780 tackles and 30.5 sacks. Armstead led the Giants in tackles from 1996-2000, compiling more than 100 stops each season.

Armstead, 6-1, 237, racked up a career-high 134 tackles and 3.5 sacks in 1997.

Once again, Cobras try for first AFL win in Charlotte

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Ten times the Carolina Cobras have played at Charlotte Coliseum.

Ten times, they've lost.

On Saturday, the Cobras will try to break the streak against the Dallas Desperados at 7:30 p.m. Carolina needs a win to snap a three-game slide that followed two season-opening victories on the road.

A risky two-point conversion with no time remaining gave the Austin Wranglers a 56-55 win over the Cobras in front of 10,655 last week at the Frank Erwin Center. After John Kaleo found Tacoma Fontaine on the game's

final play to cut the Cobras lead to one-point, Kaleo was able to find Shannon Culver on the two-point conversion.

Kaleo was named Offensive Player of the Game after completing 28-of-36 passes for 286 yards and six touchdowns, while Charlie Davidson earned Ironman of the Game honors after reeling in 13 receptions for 135 yards and three scores.

The Cobras were led by Matt Nagy, who completed 22-of-28 passes for 254 yards and six touchdowns, while also adding his third scoring run of the season. Todd Doxzon led Carolina receivers with nine catches for 95 yards and a score, while Bernard Holmes

added two touchdown receptions in his first game of the season.

Nagy and Kaleo duelled throughout the final quarter in the see-saw battler, as neither defense was able to contain the passing attacks. The duo combined for six consecutive touchdown drives, including the game-winner. Austin was aided by two Cobras, penalties on the game-winning drive as Carolina was flagged for 15 penalties for 101 yards in the game.

Nagy completed 11-of-13 passes for 101 yards and three touchdowns in the first half for Carolina, while Kaleo hit on 15-of-20 attempts for 136 yards and two scores.