

Murray keeps up with league, Bears

former Shaw standout Ronald Murray credits the CIAA tournament with preparing him for the glare of the NBA with the Seattle Sonics.



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

By Chris F. Hodges
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Seattle Sonics guard Ronald Murray may be playing in the NBA, but he'll never forget the year he led Shaw to a CIAA championship.

"The CIAA, the best conference in America," he said.

During his senior year at Shaw, Murray led the Bears to the NCAA Division

II Final Four, he was named MVP of the CIAA tournament and led Shaw to its first CIAA crown.

"That was great, leaving a legacy there at Shaw," Murray said. "It was a big thing for us and the university and I'm glad I was a part of it."

Murray said he still follows the league and is sad to see his Bears struggling of late. If he could, he'd be at the tournament.

"I still try to get to the CI, but we're playing and I can't get down there," he said. "Sometimes I wish I could get close to the area so that I could get down there and watch some of the games."

Playing in Seattle makes it a little difficult for Murray to head "down South" and cheer on his Bears. But he said his CIAA experience prepared him for sell out crowds in the NBA.

"Playing in the CIAA prepared me for having a lot of people look at you. During the tournament, we played in front of 20,000 people," he said. "Playing in

that environment where it was a capacity crowd will definitely prepare you."

Murray is a key component to the Sonics' success. Last season the team was 3-3 when he started. He had four games where he scored over 20 points, led Seattle in assists twice and scoring three times.

Murray declined a five-year, \$14.5 million contract from Seattle and signed a one-year, \$875,000 deal, as he'll be an unrestricted free agent next season. Maybe he'll get a chance to get closer to Charlotte for the 2007 tournament.

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