

C

SPORTS

Section

NCAA TOURNAMENT



Johnson C. Smith guards Maurice Hooper (right) and Jerome Givens embrace after the Golden Bulls beat Bowie State in the men's CIAA basketball semifinals last week. Smith earned an at-large berth and the No. 3 seed in the South Atlantic Region for this week's Division II national tournament. The Bulls play Georgia College & State University Saturday in Richmond, Va.

Let the chase begin

Bulls look ahead to South Atlantic after CIAA disappointment

By Herbert L. White
herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

Johnson C. Smith lost the CIAA tournament, but gained seeding for the Division II playoffs.

The Golden Bulls, who lost the CIAA championship to Virginia Union 71-64, moved from sixth in the South Atlantic Region poll to a sea-

son-best third this week. Smith (23-7) will play No. 6 Georgia College & State University (20-8) Saturday at the Arthur Ashe Center in Richmond, Va. Virginia Union, last year's national champion, is the host school.

"We're a mentally tough team, we know how to move on," senior center Charles

Clark said. "We've been through adversity. We're going to continue to keep working hard until the last game."

Smith had Union on the ropes for most of their third meeting of the season, but the Panthers rallied behind a fierce defensive rally that forced four of the Bulls' 12

turnovers over the final four minutes. The Panthers scored 23 points off Smith miscues, while the Bulls converted 17 Union



Joyner

See GOLDEN/2C

Once an outsider, JCSU women make tourney

First appearance since 1992-93

By Cheri F. Hodges
cherishodges@thecharlottepost.com

The season isn't over for J.C. Smith's women's basketball yet.

Despite a three-point loss to four-time CIAA champion Shaw in last week's league championship game, the Golden Bulls have a shot at the national championship.

The first step will be taken Friday in Raleigh at Shaw, which hosts the Division II South Atlantic Region. The Bulls, who advanced to the national tournament for the first time since 1993, will play at 3 p.m. in Spaulding Gym.

The Bulls will take on No. 3 seed Clayton State (24-4), which advanced to the semi-finals of the Peach Belt Conference tournament. The women's regional play will be held on March 10, 11, and 13.

Smith moved up from 10th in the regional rankings to six, quite a con-

solation after a heartbreaking loss on Saturday.

"I was really proud of the effort that the young ladies from Johnson C. Smith were able to give in the championship game," said head coach Vanessa Taylor. "At the end of the ball game we came up a little short. When you have a champion, you have to go and take it. I said to them after the game that I walk away as head coach feeling that you all left it on the floor."

The Bulls gave Shaw more of a challenge than any team had all season, in a game that saw 10 lead changes and four ties. Both teams shot under 40 percent.

When the two teams met in the reg-

See JCSU/2C



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

Johnson C. Smith guard Tiana Pope will need a good outing for the Golden Bulls to advance in the South Atlantic Regional.



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Tameka Stephens (left) and Courtney Hunter will compete at the USA Boxing National Championships in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Charlotte boxers aim for U.S. titles

Heavyweight Stephens looks to defend crown in Colorado Springs

By Eric Bozeman
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Tameka Stephens and Courtney Hunter have the same passion for boxing the men do. They train, eat, and sleep boxing just like the men do, even though they are female amateur boxers.

Stephens, 28, and Hunter, 25, will compete in the USA Boxing National Championships in Colorado Springs, Colo., March 4-11.

Stephens (6-3) competes at the heavyweight division. In the three years she has been boxing as an amateur, Stephens has had moderate success, earning a number two national ranking in 2004, and winning the national championships in 2005. As a woman in a male-dominated sport, she is boxing to advance the credibility of both.

"It's just a sport that I love," she said. "Actually I came in wanting to be a boxer, and now I just totally love the sport. The women are just as skillful as the men, we're working hard and we're not playing."

Stephens' coach, James Pressley, said she has developed skills in the last year that will make her tougher to beat.

"Mentally, her strongest tool is her work ethic, and physically she's strong," Pressley said. "Tameka's best punch is her jab. She won the national championship

Please see BOXERS/3C

MEAC BASKETBALL

DelState team to beat in tournament

By Herbert L. White
herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

This week's MEAC tournament has a new host and some intrigue.

The tournament moves to Raleigh's RBC Center in hopes of growing the event into a sports and cultural must-do. As far as the basketball itself, Delaware State has a track record of success over the last two seasons, but that's no guarantee of a trophy. Bethune-Cookman and Coppin State are capable of stealing the Hornets' thunder, but it'll take some doing. But, hey, it's postseason basketball, where dreams can come true with a couple of fortuitous bounces and a smidgen of grit. So without further ado, meet the field.

• Delaware State (18-12, 16-2)

See MEAC/2C

Korea trip more than goodwill for Steelers' Ward

By Alan Robinson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PITTSBURGH - Growing up in suburban Atlanta, Hines Ward often felt he was a victim of double discrimination. Not only did some of his white classmates make fun of his biracial heritage, his South Korean mother felt ostracized by her homeland because she had a son with a black American soldier.

Since the Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver won the Super Bowl MVP award last month, Ward has become a huge celebrity in Korea - cheered by those who know little about American football and once may have shunned him for being less than pureblooded.

To learn more about his heritage, Ward and his mother, Kim Young-hee, plan their first trip together to Korea next month - a country he knows little about and, until recently, knew little about him. Partly because of his recent accomplishments, Ward said

See KOREA/2C

