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SPORTS

Section



INSIDE
Charlotte Bobcats hire former Nike executive to run team.6C

CIAA doubles intensity with basketball schedules

By Bonita Best
THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

Winston-Salem State is gone, and the NCAA is threatening to move the CIAA to another region. So the conference is making some changes of its own.

Kerry

League will go to round-robin format to ensure NCAA playoff minimum

Beginning next basketball season, the remaining 11 schools will be required to play each other twice during the regular season. Commissioner Leon Kerry said the change is mainly about economics. "We're trying it to see what happens," he said. "Most of the teams are ranked compet-

itively. It may save us some money and help us with scheduling because you have to play but 26 games, so it cuts out the outside play." For some conferences, limiting their schedules to "in-house" only, would spell trouble in terms of rankings and strength of schedule. The CIAA shouldn't have such

problems. First, the conference is one of — if not the — strongest basketball league in Division II, and its extra in-region games should make the NCAA happy. The basketball committee will "normally look at in-region strength of schedule and then the outer region," said Sharon Cessna, NCAA

director of championships. "So if everybody plays four outside conference games but in their region, it will be easier for the committee to make the comparisons from region to region." Although most coaches are not complaining about the change, the timing they said could have been better.

Conference officials announced the change only a few months ago, which required some re-juggling of schedules. "The only thing I wish they had done was to let us know that that was the way they were going as soon as the season was over," said one coach who wished to remain anonymous. "A lot of us had to can-

See CIAA/2C



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

After nine seasons in the WNBA, Charlotte Sting forward Tangela Smith (50) earned her first All-Star game nomination.

All-Star shines bright

Sting forward Tangela Smith plays to higher standard

By Herbert L. White
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After nine years in the WNBA, Tangela Smith is getting her due. The Charlotte Sting forward was named to the All-Star team for the first time last week and she's been the most consistent frontcourt player, leading the Sting in scoring (13.4 points per game) and three-point shooting accuracy (44 percent). "I just go out there and do what I can do and help my team get the win," she said. "We thought the second half of

the season we wanted to have a fresh start, so this is really good for our confidence." Smith, one of 10 WNBA players to top the 3,000-point plateau, battled early-season knee trouble that limited her playing time. Now that the pain has subsided, she's playing with more confidence. "She's starting to get healthy," Sting coach Muggsy Bogues said. "Early in the season, she was getting her legs, getting her strength. Now the last two weeks, she's really been coming on." Said Smith: "The knees are

doing well. That's just nine years of playing in the league. ...I'm feeling really healthy and I just want to go out there and play aggressive and play strong." Smith has been flexing her game as a versatile offensive threat. At 6-foot-4, she's quick enough to get to the basket and can score from the perimeter. In her first game after her All-Star appearance, Smith's play has been more pronounced with the 5-16 Sting riding a modest two-game winning streak, its first of the season. See SMITH/2C

All-Star numbers

Charlotte Sting forward Tangela Smith has been a force on both ends of the floor, especially offense.

Category Smith Team rank

Scoring	13.4	1st
FG %	44.3%	3rd
Assists	1.5	6th
GMs started	21	7-1st

Family affair for Wood and Tar Heels

Victory Christian Center standout follows dad and sister to North Carolina

By Herbert L. White
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Candace Wood is following her father's basketball footsteps. And sister's.

Wood, a 5-11 guard/forward at Victory Christian Center, announced her intention to play at North Carolina in 2008. Her father, Al, is the school's fourth-leading scorer of all time and has his number retired there. Wood's sister, Martina, a 6-2 sophomore center, played in 18 games with the Tar Heels last season.

Wood has stood out in national competitions, most recently at the Adidas Tournament of Champions, where she played for the Carolina Classics coached by former NBA star Blue Edwards and the Nike Jr. Phenom all-star game. Wood showed "athleticism, long-range touch, ballhandling and defensive prowess" against national competition, according to HoopGurlz.com, an online magazine covering girls' basketball.

She was also picked to play on the North Carolina squad at the AAU Junior Olympics in Hampton, Va., this month.

Wood averaged 20 points, six rebounds and four assists as a sophomore at Victory Christian, one of Charlotte's top girls' programs.



Victory Christian Center's Candace Wood.

PHOTO: GLENN NELSON

Owens blames media portrayal for controversy

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IRVING, Texas — Terrell Owens blames the media for portraying him as a selfish player, although he admits a tendency of saying things about others that he wouldn't want said about himself.

In an interview with Bryant Gumbel airing Tuesday night on HBO's "Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel," Owens acknowledges dishing out more criticism than he's willing to take.

"The only thing I can really think of is maybe it was the way I grew up, you know," he said, according to a transcript released Monday to The Associated Press. "I got picked on so much, and it's like I feel like I'm still constantly being picked on."

Owens said he doesn't think reporters are necessarily conspiring against him as much as using him "to gain viewers' attention." As a result, he believes that he is "misunderstood." He said other players have been, too, "but I feel like I have been one of the main guys who've been vilified."

Why? "That's the million-dollar question," he said. "Why me? ... At some point it does get to me. And I can't say it enough. Dude, I'm human and that's what I'm trying to get people to understand."

Owens also discussed his spat with quarterback Donovan McNabb that eventually led to his release by the Eagles.

As he wrote in a recently released book, Owens

Please see T.O./3C

WNBA chief: Charlotte can succeed

By Herbert L. White
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The WNBA is healthier than ever, and Charlotte's chances of keeping the Sting here are good, according to the league's president.

Donna Orender spoke at length last week about the WNBA, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary season. The league has expanded to 14 teams and is improving attendance, but Charlotte is a troubled market. Despite a modest two-game win streak, the Sting is 5-15 and is near the bottom of the league in attendance. The following are her comments, edited for brevity and clarity.

Q: Will the Sting stay in Charlotte?

Please see STING/3C



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

WNBA President Donna Orender believes the Sting will rebound in Charlotte.

Drag racer looks to set example on and off the track

SPECIAL TO THE POST

RALEIGH — Candyece Marsh is a new breed of sports competitor who is determined to win on and off the racetrack.

"Working hard to win in life and in sports has been a personal commitment that I've shared for many years,"

Marsh said. "I've had to make a lot of sacrifices along the way to get to where I am today. In the end, it's all worth it."

Marsh, a drag-racer, is paving the way in the motor-sports arena. But, according to Marsh, "It's far beyond ethnicity that inevitably drives

competitors like myself to the finish line; it's the talent, hard work and dedication to the sport."

Similar to Serena and Venus Williams, Marsh launched her career at an early age. With the guidance of her father, a racer himself, Marsh made her debut at 17

on the International Hot Rod Association national event tour in the Hot Rod class. After completing just two seasons there, she was able to gain a substantial amount of driving experience and increase her knowledge of racing. These successes led

See RACER/2C



Marsh