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SPORTS

Section

A year of surprises in CIAA

The new year is already looking good.

St. Augustine's overcomes a 21-point deficit against North Georgia last month to win its third straight game. OK, it happened in late December — sue me. Defense? Are the Falcons starting to play defense?

North Carolina Central junior guard Jennifer Hukill ties a school record with eight 3-pointers in the Lady Eagles' win over UNC-Pembroke.

Fayetteville State coach Eric Tucker has the Lady Broncos back in winning form and in first place in the West.

Last week was a time of reminiscing; this week, let's see what our crystal ball predicts for 2007.

• He's b-a-a-a-a-c-k! Former Livingstone coach Rudy Abrams returns to lead the Blue Bears on the gridiron.

Abrams coached LC from 1994-98 and led the team to two straight CIAA titles and two Pioneer Bowl appearances before leaving to coach at NCCU. A move Abrams is still recovering from — psychologically.

• The roulette wheel. Joining CIAA champions Virginia Union in the basketball playoffs will be Virginia State in the East, and St. Aug.'s and NCCU in the West.

On the women's side, expect to see Shaw and Elizabeth City State in the East, and Johnson C. Smith and NCCU in the West. Yep, four teams, unless, in the next two weeks, I change my mind about Shaw.

• Too tired to travel. Union men won't make it to the championship game for the third straight year.

The Panthers will be so exhausted from having to win 20 games, the fuel tank will be near empty come playoff time. (A cancelled December tournament left Union three games short on its schedule.)

• Surprise! Shaw won't advance to the Elite Eight but another team will. Who? How should I know?

• I'm g-o-o-o-o-n-e. NCCU Chancellor James Ammons returns to Florida A&M. But before he leaves, coach Rod Broadway gets his long-term contract deal.

Then, a year or two from now, Ammons hires Broadway away from NCCU. Athletics Director Bill Hayes takes over, gets his five wins to reach the prestigious 200-win plateau and officially retires from coaching. Hey, it's my crystal ball.

• Hello. Goodbye. Despite not winning the CIAA tournament, St. Aug.'s men's basketball coach Thomas Hargrove returns.

They'd hate to prove me right. Livingstone women's coach Andrew Mitchell, however, doesn't.

Mitchell has a 137-196 record at LC and hasn't had a winning season since the Lady Blue Bears won the tournament in 2000.

• Growling Bears. Shaw's football program rebounds under second-year coach Darrell Asberry. Asberry is named coach of the year.

• Back on. CIAA baseball will be re-energized with the entry of NCCU.

New Eagles coach Henry White and Shaw coach Bobby Sanders renew their intense rivalry from White's baseball

Please see 2007/2C



JOY CHEEK
Duke
Games started/played: 0/15. Points per game: 5.0 FG%: 44.6.
Blue Devils' record: 16-0.

First impressions

From CIAA to ACC, Charlotte freshmen making an impact

By Herbert L. White
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A bumper crop of home-grown basketball talent is off to a good start as college freshmen.

The best of them are playing key roles with some of the top programs in the region. Joy Cheek of South Mecklenburg High is a key reserve with Duke's undefeated Blue Devil women. Jerry Hollis of Victory Christian has earned three CIAA freshman of the week awards at Division II Johnson C. Smith.

Charlotte Christian's Stephen Curry may have had the most significant impact, leading Davidson in scoring and three-point shooting.

Each brought specific expectations to their respective campus, and they've lived up to them so far.

Curry has the basketball pedigree. The son of original Charlotte Hornet Dell Curry, the 6-1 guard has started all 16 games for the Wildcats and leads Davidson with 19.6 points per game.

"I love my team," he said. "We're all learning the system together. We're all learning how to play as a group. It's a great situation for me to be in with great teammates and a great coach (Bob McKillop) who expects a lot out of us and works us until he gets it. There's nothing else to do but succeed."

Hollis, a 6-6 forward, has emerged as an athletic utility player with the Golden Bulls. He has started all nine games, averaging 12.4 points per game

Please see CHARLOTTE/2C

Stephen CURRY
Davidson

Games started/played: 16/16
Points per game: 19.6 (leads team)
FG%: 43.5
3-point FG%: 40.0
Wildcats' record: 13-3.



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

Jerry HOLLIS
J.C. Smith

Games started/played: 9/9
Points per game: 12.4 (third on team)
FG%: 56.6
Rebounds per game: 5.9
Golden Bulls' record: 5-4



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

Gwynn's choice leads to validation

Baseball hall of famer turned down basketball

By Bernie Wilson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN DIEGO — One day in June 1981, Tony Gwynn was drafted by the San Diego Padres in the morning and the San Diego Clippers in the afternoon.

Which sport should the kid with the afro pick? The NBA, where he figured he could make it for maybe a year? Or baseball, which he also played at San Diego State?

Eight NL batting titles, 3,141 hits and a gaudy .338 lifetime average later, Gwynn awaits the ultimate affirmation of that long-ago choice. On Tuesday, he's expected to be voted into the Hall of Fame after appearing on the ballot for the first time.

"I wasn't a real home run hitter, a big RBI guy," Gwynn, San Diego State's baseball coach, said during an interview at the cozy ballpark that bears his name. "My forte was putting the bat on the ball. To get into the Hall of Fame for me would just mean validation that I could be that kind of player and be very good at it and be rewarded for being that type of player."

"Since I've retired I think the game has put even more emphasis on being able to hit the ball out of the park, and that's a great thing to be able to do. But I think there's still a

Please see DECISION/2C

Riley misguided in attempts to shape up Heat

By Nancy Armour
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Running an NBA team is challenge enough for most people. Not Pat Riley. He wants in on Jenny Craig's and Richard Simmons' territory, too.

Before he rolls out a line of "Sweatin' With Riley" DVDs, though, he might want to reconsider the fitness guru thing. The Miami Heat are falling apart as fast as Riley's creaky knees and hips. Benching players for body-fat violations is going to be as effective in the long run as a crash diet.

Riley took a leave of absence to deal with achy joints and had knee surgery. Before he limped off, though, he deactivated Antoine Walker and James Posey after they missed their body-fat requirements by 1 percent.

If they don't meet the requirements by Jan. 15, Riley warned, they could be suspended. "It's not a disciplinary statement," he said. "This is simply about something I believe in. And I really don't care what they think. What I believe in is the bedrock of my philosophy, which is conditioning, first and foremost."

Dwyane Wade is with the Heat because Riley was on the treadmill one day, and he came across Wade torching Kentucky on Marquette's way to the 2003 Final Four.

JCSU's Taylor tries for 100th win against FSU

Johnson C. Smith women's basketball coach Vanessa Taylor will have to wait until Saturday to reach her 100th career victory.

The Golden Bulls fell to Virginia Union last week, giving the Panthers their first win of the season.

In Saturday's loss against VUU, the Bulls shot a season low of 27 percent and no JCSU player scored in double figures.

The Golden Bulls will take Taylor on the Fayetteville State Broncos on Saturday at 5:30 p.m.
Cheris F. Hodges



Taylor