

Young Golden Bulls growing up quickly with recent success

Continued from page 1C week selection Jerry Hollis, Smith has a young but explosive nucleus.

"If we come to play hard, we're tough to beat," said Scott, a sophomore transfer from College of Charleston. "We just have to bring it every day."

When the Bulls bring it, the results have been good. Over the last two weeks, Smith has beaten nationally-ranked

Virginia Union and Bowie State. Preseason all-CIAA guard Maurice Hooper doesn't have to beat double-teams, something he struggled with as Smith's only known offensive threat early in the season.

"Consistency is the name of the game with this team and the more consistent we get, the better off we'll be," Joyner said.

The Bulls still have to solve

some issues. Center David Sanders is prone to foul trouble and doesn't consistently dominate like a 6-8, 250-pounder should. Depth is a concern, especially if Joyner has to rely on it for extended stretches. But when everyone is in step, Smith has shown it can compete - and beat - the league's best. What the Bulls need is more floor time.

"We're starting to get into

that rhythm, we're starting to crank up the bus," Scott said. "We had too many breaks between games - four or five days - and wait for the next game. It's just tough to come back."

Says Joyner: "There might be some rhythm there. If we can develop some rhythm within ourselves, we're going to be all right. Some consistency is what we're looking for."

Bobcats ahead of last season's pace for wins

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don't have any superstars. One night one guy might step up, another night it might be somebody else and the next night might be someone else...and that's how we gotta play. We never know who's gonna do it, but we're all in this together and that's how we gotta play."

In Monday's loss at Toronto, it was Gerald Wallace, and returning from an ankle injury, Raymond Felton who stepped up, each scoring 19 points. In their last three wins, the Bobcats have had at least five players reach double figures, usually with at least one breaking the 20 point barrier.

"We've got guys on the bench who can come in and play well," said Gerald Wallace. "I think everybody plays a major part to this team. Our team is like a puzzle, and everybody fits in perfectly. Once we get everyone in together and everybody healthy...it's obvious what we can do on the court together."

Despite a continued fight to keep players healthy, the Bobcats were able to win in Atlanta, with Brevin Knight out due to abdominal surgery, Sean May benched with a sore knee, Raymond Felton with an ankle injury and Primoz Brezec dealing with back spasms. Felton has returned, but May, Brezec, and Knight remained sidelined. Brezec didn't make the trip to Toronto due to a bulging disc in his back; doctors will reevaluate him in the next 10 days.

In spite of the setbacks this year, the Bobcats have continued to push through. And while the injuries are a part of the game, when things go south for the team, it has been a constant in the past to say that they are still a young squad, but is there a point when a team stops using youth as an excuse, and just accepts it as the reality? Dell Curry thinks so. The 16-year former NBA veteran discussed the team's approach to handling their special situation in the league.

"I think this year Bernie has talked about taking the word 'expansion' away to be accountable for how you play and what you do," said Curry. "That's something we're trying to transition into this year's thinking."

Curry, the Bobcats' director of player development, recognizes a change in mentality does not change the make up of the squad, in living years, but playing years does.

"We should start getting the idea of what's expected and how you need to play to win in this league...and I think we're doing that."

When a city gets an expansion team, fans and critics alike have a tendency to compare their team to other expansion teams, but Curry feels this team is where it needs to be.

"It's a process, and you're not going to do it overnight," explained Curry. "You have to have a plan and commit to that plan through tough times or good times, you have to stay with it, and [Coach Bernie Bickerstaff] has done that."

As a former player of the "original" expansion team in Charlotte, he said there is no comparison.

"I don't think you can compare...because we had a few more veteran players on that first team, than this one," said Curry. "It's different in the fact we're replacing a team that was here, so the market was not new and you have to take all of that and factor it in."

"I think our players have done a tremendous job of not getting too high when we win, and not getting to low when we lose."

The Bobcats will try to get back to winning when they head out on Friday for a three-game west coast road trip. Charlotte will face the Lakers on Friday, Golden State on Saturday and the newly revived Denver Nuggets on Monday, before returning to play the New York Knicks at Bobcats Arena on January 31.

Charlottean inducted to CIAA Hall of Fame

Continued from page 1C he was head coach for four seasons. His career record of 254-93-15 included coaching five undefeated teams and five others that lost only one game.

Howell, a graduate of North Carolina A&T, led the Cal-Irvin-coached Aggies to conference basketball championships in 1958 and 1959.

Banks was the 1947 CIAA basketball tournament MVP at Virginia State. After graduating from VSU, Banks was drafted and played for the Utica Pros of the American

Basketball Association.

Baxter, of Virginia State, was named to the all-conference from 1973-1977. In 1976, she was tournament most valuable player. She has served over 27 years as a medical logistician and in June of 2003, Baxter was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. She is the first woman in the history of the Medical Service Corps to achieve that rank.

Hayes, a North Carolina Central graduate, played center on the football team, was a three-time all-America.

During his 27 year career as head coach at Winston-Salem State and N.C. A&T, Hayes went a 195-104-2 and is the winningest coach at both schools.

Whitfield was a four-year starter on the Elizabeth City State football team, captain of the wrestling team, and a member of the track and field team. As a junior, Whitfield received All-CIAA honors in all three sports.

After graduating, Whitfield played professional football with Dallas in 1967 and Denver in 1969.



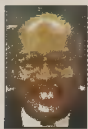
Baxter



Hayes



Howell



Roseboro

CIAA awards extra bye for tournament

By Herbert L. White
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The CIAA is handing out an extra bye for this year's basketball tournaments.

The league has adopted an 11-team bracket for the Feb. 26-March 3 tournament at Charlotte Bobcats Arena. Game times have also been

adjusted, with opening rounds for men's and women's brackets at 3 p.m., 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Tournament seeding will be based on conference records with three games in the first round. The top five teams will play in the second round. Tie-breakers

start with division record, followed by head-to-head competition and a coin toss.

The new format became necessary with Winston-Salem State leaving the league for Division I. Next year, another format will be used after N.C. Central secedes for the higher divi-

sion.

If the regular season ended today, Johnson C. Smith would earn a bye, as would West Division rivals St. Augustine's and Fayetteville State. Virginia Union and Virginia State would get byes from the East.

Bulls look to reverse slide with consistency

By Cheris F. Hodges
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Johnson C. Smith women's basketball were on slippery slope.

After losses to Bowie State, Virginia Union and St. Paul, the Bulls are 4-5 in conference play, but are still second in the CIAA West Division.

The Golden Bulls scored a victory Tuesday against division foe St. Augustine's, but have to put together

a run this season.

"We have to do a better job of our execution down the stretch of a ball game," said head coach Vanessa Taylor. "Every night you have to come out and play."

One constant for the women's team has been the play of center Rochelle Bodie. Bodie leads the league in rebounding and is fourth in the nation in that category. She's recorded six double-doubles this season.

"Rochelle has a knack for rebounding," Taylor said and she added that the rest of the team has to get in position to make plays. "We've got to be able to

group rebound so that everybody contributes in that particular stat."

Bodie said she's determined to get the ball and when she sees it go up, she goes after it. But she doesn't crash the boards just to pad her own statistics. Bodie said she knows if she doesn't average at least 10 rebounds, her team won't win.

"We have to win the war of the rebounds," Bodie said.

While she doesn't spend hours and hours in the gym throwing the ball off the glass and going for the rebound, Bodie said she practices just as hard as she

plays.

"Rebounding is just effort. You have to want to do it. If you don't want to do it, then you're not going to do it," she said.

What the Golden Bulls want and need to do is improve going into February. Now that they're moving in to division play, North Carolina Central looks as if they're going to be the team to beat.

The Eagles, who sit atop the West, are averaging 71 points per game and shooting nearly 50 percent. The Bulls are averaging 61 points per game and shooting 37 percent.

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