

Sports

THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2007

SECTION C



BUSINESS/8C

Corporations latch on to the CIAA as a vehicle to recruit black consumers, employees

Winthrop eyes Big South prize

By Erica Singleton
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Winthrop's road to NCAA redemption starts this week at the Big South tournament.

The Eagles have dominated their conference, but Winthrop is looking to advance past the first round of the NCAA tournament. The Eagles head into the tournament 14-0 in conference play, the first team to go undefeated in the Big South with Big South Coach of the Year Gregg Marshall. Marshall is just three wins away, at 190-82 overall in his seasons at Winthrop, from tying the Big South record for most coaching victories. But he hasn't done this alone, nor has he been honored alone.



Marshall

Three Eagles were voted all-Big South: 6-10 senior Craig Bradshaw and 6-3 junior Michael Jenkins made the first team, while 6-5 senior Torrell Martin was named to the second.

Bradshaw, an Olympian from New Zealand, averaged 15.1 points and 7.2 rebounds in conference play. Jenkins led the Eagles in scoring and 3-point shooting. He is averaging 15.6 points and 3.7 rebounds and is among the nation's 3-point percentage leaders, connecting on 44 percent from beyond the arc. Martin, a two-time tournament MVP and the league's pre-season player of the year, bounced back from a mid-season foot injury to average 14.6 points and 5.3 rebounds.

Though Marshall nearly left Winthrop in June to accept a coaching offer from College of Charleston, he came back and led the Eagles to their third consecutive regular-season championship and the Big South's first-ever perfect conference season at 14-0. The first four-time Big South Coach of the Year, Marshall's squad enters the Advance Auto Parts Men's Basketball Championship with a 25-4 record, highlighted by wins over Mississippi State, Old Dominion and a "Bracketbuster" victory at Missouri State.

Winthrop's four losses were all to Top 25 teams (North Carolina, Wisconsin, Maryland, Texas A&M) away from home.



PHOTO: WINTHROP UNIVERSITY

Winthrop senior guard Torrell Martin earned second-team all-Big South Conference honors. The Eagles' goal is a sixth NCAA berth.

CIAA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT



CHARLOTTE BOBCATS ARENA

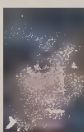


PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

Johnson C. Smith forward Shemika Jones leaps to keep the ball inbound during the Golden Bulls' 58-45 win against St. Augustine's Monday in the CIAA women's basketball tournament. JCSU, the No. 6 seed, plays No. 2 Elizabeth City State Friday in the semifinals at Charlotte Bobcats Arena.

Bull market for JCSU women

Underdog role fits along with spot in CIAA semifinals



Taylor

By Cheris F. Hodges
cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

"Payback is what Johnson C. Smith center Rochelle Bodie said the victory against Shaw was Tuesday night.

But what the victory does is place the Golden Bulls in the semi-finals of the CIAA

women's basketball tournament and guarantees there will be a new women's champion.

For the first time in four years, the Bears lost a game in the tournament. The Golden Bulls lead the entire game, winning 58 to 47.

Free throws was the dagger that took away Shaw's

championship swagger. JCSU shot 80 percent from the free throw line. Neither team shot well from the perimeter. In the second half, the Bulls and the Bears came up empty from the 3-point range.

"My veterans showed me a lot about them tonight. All

Please see **A BULL/3C**

Eagles want last dance to be great one

By Cheris F. Hodges
cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

North Carolina Central looks like the team to beat in its last CIAA women's basketball tournament.

The Eagles are nationally ranked for the first time in school history and senior Cassie King is on a mission

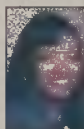
to leave the CIAA and NCCU with the crown. The Eagles are moving up to Division I next year.

"We have to be on top of our A game," said head coach Joli Robinson, a Charlotte native and former coach at Independence High.

Central is peaking at the right time, and doing things now that they haven't done earlier in the season.

The Eagles rolled through the West Division, had a first round bye and entered the tournament after a dominating win over Johnson C.

Please see **EAGLES/3C**



Robinson

Jumper Classic adds new events for 2007

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

The Charlotte Jumper Classic is back for a fourth year.

The April 13-15 classic includes three days of equestrian competition at

Charlotte Bobcats Arena. It also will include education sessions and a champagne brunch before the Grand Prix finale.

"We want to create a total fan experience," said LaRita Barber, the classic's

executive director. "We have worked to provide exciting activities throughout the arena that complement the high caliber of competition inside the ring."

Three-day passes are

\$99 and \$20 for children 3-12. Single-session tickets are \$5 for children and \$15-\$35 for adults. Tickets are available at the box office or online at www.charlottebobcatsarena.com.

Please see **WILLIAMS/4C**

Williams adds a veteran's presence

By Erica Singleton
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Eric Williams is no stranger to basketball, but he might be a stranger to Bobcats fans.

The Bobcats acquired Williams, a 2009 second round draft pick and cash consideration from San Antonio in exchange for Melvin Ely on Feb. 13. Williams suited up for the first time with Charlotte on Feb. 20 against New Orleans/Oklahoma City, but his first playing time was last Saturday against Toronto.

"I was a little surprised," said Williams. "They threw the old fella out there in the fire...but sometimes that's the way it goes."

Williams took the court as the Bobcats went down 10 points to the Raptors after starting the second half only down by three.

When asked about his decision to put Williams in, Bobcats coach Bernie Bickerstaff said, "A drowning man will grab a razor blade."

Whatever the reason, Williams was glad for the chance to stretch his legs.

"It felt good to shoot the ball," he said. "I haven't been out there in a long, long time...so it felt good to finally get a chance to put the 88 out there."

The 6-8, 250-pound New Jersey native has appeared in 653 career NBA games and averaged 8.6 points, 3.3 rebounds, 1.4 assists and 24.0 minutes. Williams playing career has included two stints in Boston, and stops in Denver, Cleveland, New Jersey, Toronto and San Antonio. In 16 games with the Spurs this season, he averaged 2.6 points in 5.5 minutes.

"It's always difficult to part with a player of Melvin's stature and skill set," Bickerstaff said. "At the same time, we've acquired another veteran player and a future draft pick, which allows us even more flexibility as we continue to build this franchise and develop our younger players."

Like Derek Anderson, Williams brings another facet to the Bobcats, including playoff experience. In 26 career playoff games, he averaged 8.5 points and 3.9 rebounds in 30.7 minutes.

"I know what stage in my career I'm at," Williams said. "I'm still able to play...but I grew with the business and I see the business now starting to grow with me.

"When you come back, you try to help the young players," added Williams. "My thing is to show them to be professional on and off the court."

It seems appropriate that Williams' locker is right beside that of rookie Ryan Hollins. Williams is making sure that he is also sharing the knowledge that he learned on the court with the Bobcats youngest players.

"I talk to [Hollins] all the time...Adam [Morrison] too," said Williams. "In game situations...you have the coaches telling them things...but I like to tell them other subtle things that make the game a little bit easier for them. Sometimes players just play with instinct. I try to give them a thinking way of playing the game...to slow their pace down. And...they listen, that's the good thing about it," said Williams.

The Bobcats are in the midst of a six-game West Coast trip. Williams may see a lot more time as the team continues to battle injuries; still playing with-