

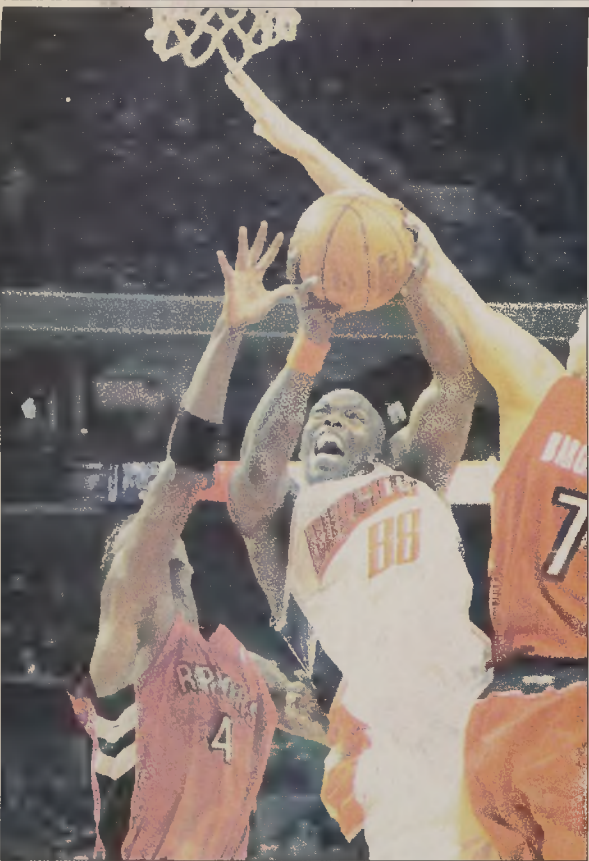
Opening-day crowds look a little larger for women's play



PHOTO/N.C. CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
N.C. Central's Cassie King gets much love as the CIAA's best player, but Elizabeth City State's Celeste Trahan is the MVP.



PHOTO/WADE NASH
Livingstone's Chelsea Johnson drives past St. Paul's Katrina Wright in Monday's opening round game. St. Paul's supplied the tournament's first upset in a 58-56 win.



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON
Eric Williams, acquired from San Antonio last month for Melvin Ely, adds 11 years of NBA experience to the Charlotte Bobcats.

Williams adds NBA experience

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out forwards Sean May and Othella Harrington with knee ailments. Now, center Emeka Okafor, who suffered a strained left calf against the Raptors, did not play for the first time this season when the team faced the Los Angeles Clippers.

Williams scored his first basket on Monday against the Clippers, and finished with two points and two fouls in seven minutes. "Williams will get his time," Bickerstaff said. And the newly-acquired veteran plans to be ready when he's called upon.

"I'm still in shape...I still look good out there. I try to tell these young fellas, I can run a lot," laughed Williams. "When they are ready to put me out there...give me some real good minutes...and I can show what I can do...I'll be ready."

By Herbert L. White
herb.white@thecharlottepost.com
Cheris F. Hodges
cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

The first three days of the CIAA tournament are always the slowest in terms of attendance, but this week was better than the previous year. Tuesday night's doubleheader of Central against Virginia State and J.C. Smith against Shaw, were decidedly better in terms of fan support than the same time last year. Of course, with the hometown Golden Bulls playing, one would expect attendance to pick up, but that's no guarantee. Remember the Pioneer Bowl? Anyway, you could definitely tell the Smith fans from the river of gold and blue in the arena.

Halftime of the Shaw-Smith game featured a Soul Train line of CIAA mascots. The dancing was pretty good and the crowd favorite was Shaw's bear. Don Cornelius, the long-ago host of the original "Soul Train," would've been pleased.

If you were looking for JCSU football coach Daryl McNeill over the first three days, you were not likely to catch him at the tournament. He was holed up in his office breaking down video of potential recruits.

There's a raging argument over the best women's player in the league. One camp is squarely behind N.C. Central's Cassie King, while another set prefers Elizabeth City State's Celeste Trahan. That's a tough one, but Trahan's all-around game would suggest she gets the nod. Trahan is one of the nation's top defenders and rebounders, which is why she is the league's player of the year.

Shelia Johnson, owner of the WNBA Washington Mystics and co-founder of BET, will give a pep talk prior to the women's championship game Saturday.

Johnson, the ex-wife of Charlotte Bobcats owner Bob Johnson, will visit both locker-rooms courtesy of Coca-Cola.

The management and staff of

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FORD SHOOTS AND SCORES AT 2007 CIAA TOURNAMENT WITH STEVE HARVEY AND R&B ARTIST MARIO

CHARLOTTE, Mar. 1, 2007 – Ford is enlisting the *Steve Harvey Morning Show* and Grammy-nominated R&B singer Mario to turn up the volume at the 2007 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Basketball Tournament as exclusive automotive sponsor of the **Ford Fan Experience** and **Ford Finals Night**.

As part of Ford's support of the CIAA, the company will continue to play an instrumental role in improving the academic outlook for CIAA students by awarding over **\$100,000** in scholarships and providing them a chance to win a hot new 2007 Ford Edge crossover.

"Education is a great liberator," said Crystal Greene, Ford Customer Experience Manager. "Ford is providing these scholarships and 7 years of CIAA tournament support because they aid in shaping the lives of young people. They receive a quality education and we provide them with excellent transportation to take these new skills to new places."

Ford's activities will be held at the **Charlotte Convention Center** on Mar. 1-3 at the free **CIAA Ford Fan Experience**. Ford will have on display some of its hottest products including the all-new Edge, all-wheel drive Fusion and two of hip hop DJ Funkmaster Flex's custom concepts – a Ford 2006 Fusion and 2007 Expedition. Ford will treat fans to various interactive games and activities including opportunities to receive T-shirts and other prizes. Ford's Genuine Parts and Service Group will be on hand providing fans with free demonstrations on how to maintain your vehicle and gives fans chances to **win free oil changes** and other special offers.

The Ford Fan Experience will also feature a special live taping of the *Steve Harvey Morning Show* presented by Colgate Total Whitening on Mar. 2 from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. where Steve's co-host Carla Ferrell will be discussing Ford's latest sweepstakes to win a 2007 Ford Edge online at

Then on **Mar. 3 at 6:00 p.m.** Grammy-nominated artist Mario will be performing at the Fan Experience followed by an autograph session from 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Ford display.

Finally, during the halftime show of Ford Finals Night at **Bobcat Arena** on Mar. 3, Ford will give away an all-new 2007 Ford Edge crossover to one lucky fan.