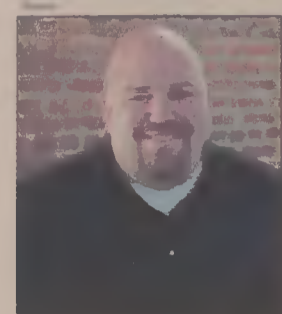


- BACA girls win
- LA boys split
- Church Briefs

Fourth and Long



David Friedman

I may have jinxed Rodgers

Those that read my column last week know that I have true power at my fingertips. Despite being the last person to recognize his "greatness", apparently just saying a few nice things about Aaron Rodgers in my column was enough to curse him and his entire offense throughout the NFC Championship game.

I'm not 100 percent certain my compliment of Rodgers and the Packers' inability to score a single point in the first half were correlated but I thought I might test the theory.

I'd like to start by pausing to appreciate the greatness that is Tom Brady, Bill Belichick and the New England Patriots. The four time Super Bowl champs have just won their ninth conference championship and look poised to take home a fifth Vince Lombardi Trophy in two weeks.

I recognize Atlanta might have something to say about that but I don't think they will be able to say or do much. The Falcons may have the league's most prolific offense but the Patriots have Belichick, two weeks to prepare and a pretty good offense of their own.

Belichick might look like a hooded grumpy goblin but his ability to scheme and adjust to best prepare his team against an opponent is second to none in the NFL. With an extra week to do just that, I expect New England will have a surprise or two waiting for Atlanta. This will prove especially true is Belichick gets time to have somebody film the Falcons practice.

I mentioned the Patriots offense and I might be the only one to do that this week. Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan competed just a hair under 70% of his passes during the regular season and has not thrown an interception in a few

See **FOURTH**, B5

Lady Falcons suffer first loss



JIM GREEN / Bertie Ledger-Advance

Bertie's Nyasia Barnes looks for a teammate after retrieving a loose ball against Riverside.

BY JIM GREEN
Enterprise & Weekly Herald

WILLIAMSTON — It was a game befitting two outstanding varsity girls basketball programs.

In the end, a rally by the Riverside girls handed Bertie its first loss of the season on Saturday, 66-62.

This was akin to a heavyweight fight with two proud boxers throwing their best shots.

Undefeated Bertie, who came in 16-0, and Riverside, who was 11-1, were very similar in their seasons to date.

Each had posted a handful of wins by margins under 10 points. Riverside's average margin of victory was

26 points per game; Bertie's was 22.

Something had to give.

The first quarter featured two ties and five lead changes.

Carlisa Spivey had a pair of baskets that put the Falcons ahead 11-10, but buckets from Arion Burns and Kayla Jones put Riverside on top, 14-11.

Bertie tied it when Jomiya Earley drained a three-pointer, but the Knights went back in front, 16-14, on two free throws in the waning seconds of the first quarter.

Akyia King's steal and hoop tied it at 16.

See **GIRLS**, B3

Eagles take 2 victories

Two more wins. Bethel Assembly Christian Academy's varsity boys basketball team finished last week with two victories.

The Eagles rolled past Calvary Baptist 72-36 Friday on the strength of four double-digit quarters of offense.

BACA led 20-14 after one quarter, 37-22 at the half and 56-44 after three periods. A 16-2 flurry in the fourth stanza sealed the deal.

Bethel placed five players in double figures.

Josh Bunch and Caleb Simmons had 16 points each, while Kyle Cullipher added 12 and Daniel Castello and Mason Dunlow provided 10 each.

Dunlow (10 rebounds)

See **EAGLES**, B3



ANDRE ALFRED / 2nd Chance Productions

Bethel Assembly Christian Academy's Caieb Simmons (No. 15) shoots against Calvary.

LA girls on top in TIC

The Lawrence Academy varsity girls basketball team is on top of the Tarheel Independent Conference.

The Lady Warriors improved to 6-0 in the TIC and 9-6 overall with a pair of league victories over Terra Ceia (56-47 Friday) and Albemarle (61-39 on Jan. 17).

Lawrence was a half-game up on Ridgcroft (6-1, 12-4) when play began this week. The Lay Warriors also hold the tiebreaker.

Lawrence trailed 16-14 at the end of the first quarter against Terra Ceia, but the Warriors outscored the Knights 18-9 in the second stanza and 16-9 in the third to regain control.

Lauren Baker led Lawrence with 17 points, while Gracen Rogers had one of her best offensive games of the season with 14 points.

Brinson Edmondson and Rebekah Goodwin provided nine and eight points, respectively.

Edmondson grabbed 15 rebounds, while Goodwin, Sydney Wilkerson and Katelynn Stotesberry chipped in five each.

Three days before, Lawrence pulled away from Albemarle with a 20-1 flurry in the second quarter on the way to a 22-point victory over the Lady Colts.

Baker poured in 24 points for LA, Goodwin added 11 and Rogers chipped in 10.

Goodwin was also a force on the boards, grabbing 12. Edmondson added nine.



JIM GREEN / Bertie Ledger-Advance

Bertie's Jamarri White (No. 22) shoots over Riverside's Austin Lee during Saturday's non-conference game.

Bertie boys fall to Knights

BY JIM GREEN
Enterprise & Weekly Herald

WILLIAMSTON — Experience won out over youth Saturday night.

Riverside High School's varsity boys basketball team jumped out to a big first-quarter lead and defeated Bertie 74-41 in a non-conference game at home.

The Knights improved to 11-2 overall, while Bertie dropped to 3-14 under first-year coach Derrick Bond.

Both teams possess athletes, Riverside head

coach Bobby Williams said.

"I definitely think our experience was the difference," Williams said.

"A few years ago I committed to this group we have now and I feel like we're getting better. I know where Derrick is right now, and he's going to get there with his program. He's got a lot of young, athletic players; it's just going to take time."

See **BOYS**, B3

Duck Thru Food Stores congratulates this week's Athlete of the Week.



JERNIGAN
OIL & PROPANE

Athlete of the week

BHS
Nyasia Barnes
Basketball

