

SECTION  
**B**



# Sports

WEDNESDAY • NOVEMBER 15, 2017

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Fourth and Long



David Friedman

## UNC will win it all again

It was in mid-December last year, after an ugly two-point win against Tennessee, that I predicted UNC men's basketball would win the national championship.

When I tried cashing in a well-deserved "I told you so" with some friends at the end of the season, they told me that for my prediction to have truly been impressive, I should have made it after the first game.

Well friends, mark my words. Carolina will win it all again!

I know what you're thinking; you think I must be crazy. You think because I'm a fan, my bias is reflected in my prediction. You think I clearly know football better than I know basketball.

I think all of those things are true. I also think this UNC squad has the tools required to bring home another title.

A deep run in March requires veteran leadership. The Tar Heels have proven leaders in seniors Joel Berry and Theo Pinson and I expect junior Luke Maye and Kenny Williams to become more vocal as the season progresses.

Carolina opened the season with two of their most experienced players, Berry and Pittsburgh transfer Cameron Johnson, injured on the bench.

Injuries will happen and teams that want to win it all require depth. Fortunately for Tar Heel fans, Roy Williams is one of the all-time greats and has compiled a versatile team with only 13 scholarship players and still manages to be deep at all five positions.

Shooting can get hot and cold quickly but under Coach Williams, a good offense starts with great defense, and this team has the potential to be really special defensively.

Berry is a physical defender and as I was reminded of last week, so is Ken-

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## Baggett tourney returns to BACA

Memorial basketball event starts Thursday, concludes Saturday

From Staff Reports

ASKEWVILLE - Bethel Assembly Christian Academy will be the site of the Eighth Annual Eric Baggett Memorial Basketball Tournament later this week.

The three-day tournament begins Thursday, continues Friday and concludes Saturday with consolation and championship games.

The tournament honors the life of Baggett,

A BACA student-athlete who died in a single-car accident in 2010. BACA decided to name their annual basketball tournament after him shortly after his death.

Due to the generosity of Baggett's parents, Mark and Debra, as well as others, scholarships are given to deserving students at the conclusion of the event.

This year's tournament field features junior varsity boys

and girls teams from Bethel, Northeast Academy, Ahoskie Christian School and Ridgcroft Academy as well as varsity boys and girls squads from the same schools.

There will be a new champion in the varsity boys bracket, as Lawrence Academy (the defending champion) is holding its own tournament.

The Ridgcroft varsity girls, the Bethel JV

boys and the Northeast JV girls are defending champions in their respective brackets.

The first day (Thursday) features JV contests. The Northeast girls play Bethel at 4 p.m., followed by the Ahoskie Christian girls vs. Ridgcroft at 5:15 p.m.

The JV boys are next - Ahoskie Christian takes on Northeast at 6:30 p.m., followed by Ridgcroft vs. Bethel at 7:45

p.m. The second day features the varsity boys and girls teams.

The girls take the floor first, with Ridgcroft facing Bethel at 3 p.m. followed by Northeast vs. Ahoskie Christian at 4:30 p.m.

The JV girls consolation game will be held at 6 p.m., and then the varsity boys will play. Ahoskie Christian

See BAGGETT, B2



JIM GREEN / Bertie Ledger-Advance

Lawrence Academy senior softball player Gracen Rogers (seated, center), flanked by her parents, Nancy and Benjie, signs her National Letter of Intent Monday to play for NCAA Division II Barton College in Wilson. Also on hand for the ceremony were (back row, from left) LA Athletic Director Lee Hoffman and Head of School Jason Wynne.

## LA's Rogers to continue softball career at Barton

BY JIM GREEN

Bertie Ledger-Advance

MERRY HILL - A Lawrence Academy senior has the opportunity to continue her softball career at the next level.

Gracen Rogers, the 17-year-old daughter of Benjie and Nancy Rogers of Plymouth, signed her National Letter of Intent Monday (Nov. 13) to play for Division II Barton College in Wilson.

"I am excited to con-

tinue playing softball, but also nervous," said Rogers, who was recruited as an outfielder and backup catcher by Bulldogs head coach Junior Bailey.

A little more than a year ago, however, Rogers was a junior at LA and not even considering playing a sport in college.

"I was looking at ECU (East Carolina University) and Barton both for just school in general. I never even thought

about playing a college sport; it never even crossed my mind," Rogers said.

"A few people then brought up the idea to me. A lot of people thought I should play softball or run track in college, because I started running a lot of 5Ks my sophomore and junior year," she added.

Last spring - as the Warriors were making a run toward another Tarheel Independent Conference championship

- Barton was brought into the conversation as a possible college destination for Rogers.

"A lot of people around here know Coach Bailey," Rogers said. "They told me he was really nice and a really good coach, so that's when the idea of playing at Barton really started."

Around the same time, ECU fell out of favor with Rogers, mainly because of its size of more than

See GRACEN, B2

## Hoops event is set

Two-day tourney at Lawrence

From Staff Reports

MERRY HILL - Lawrence Academy will hold its own basketball tournament this weekend.

The Lawrence Academy Shootout will take place Friday and Saturday, Nov. 17-18.

The round robin event features the varsity boys and varsity girls teams from Lawrence Academy, Pungo Christian Academy, Southampton (Va.) and Kenston Forest (Va.).

The event kicks off Friday at 4 p.m. with the Pungo girls taking on Southampton girls, followed by the Pungo boys against Southampton at 5:15 p.m.

Lawrence Academy's girls squad opposes Kenston Forest at 6:30 p.m., followed by the Lawrence-Kenston Forest boys at 7:45 p.m.

The round-robin tournament concludes Saturday with four more games.

The Pungo girls battle the Kenston Forest girls at 11 a.m., followed by the Pungo-Kenston Forest boys at 12:30 p.m.

The Lawrence Academy girls will play at 2 p.m. against Southampton, with the boys game between the same schools to follow at 3:30 p.m.

Admission is \$5 per person (ages 8 and

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Bertie Ledger-Advance congratulates this week's Athlete of the Week.

**Bertie**  
Ledger-Advance

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**Athlete of the week**

BACA  
Basketball  
Mason Dunlow

