

SECTION **B**



# Sports

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Fourth and Long



David Friedman

## Which Kobe was better?

The Los Angeles Lakers honored Kobe Bryant on Monday by retiring his jersey numbers.

Having your number retired by your high school team would be a big deal for almost anybody. Having your number retired by the same franchise that had "The Logo" Jerry West, Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Magic Johnson, James Worthy and Shaquille O'Neal is a massive deal.

It is only after realizing this that you can appreciate just tell how big a deal it is that the Lakers retired both the numbers 8 and 24.

I understand why the organization retired both numbers. Bryant was one of the greatest players to ever play the game and, in his 20 years with the organization. He spent half of it wearing the number 8 and half of it wearing the number 24.

It does bring up the inevitable question though, which Kobe was better? Number 8 Kobe is the baller that took Brandy to the high school prom. He's the one that came straight to the league out of high school, won the NBA Slam Dunk competition in his rookie year, went on to win three NBA titles and dropped 81 points on the Toronto Raptors. He was first team All-NBA three times and four times was named to the leagues first team All-Defensive squad.

Number 8 Kobe rocked a small afro, tried to start a rap career and wore Adidas for awhile. He was young, brash and unafraid of anyone. Number 8 Kobe birthed the Black Mamba.

As good as numero ocho was, he was also the rookie that rode the bench behind Eddie Jones and he had the benefit of playing alongside one of the most dominant big

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LIBERTY CHRISTIAN 38, BETHEL ASSEMBLY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY 34



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Bethel Assembly Christian Academy guard Maddie Knowles (in white) tries to maintain her balance as she passes against a double-team from Liberty Christian's Hannah Grayson (No. 3) and Shameya Watson (No. 21) during Friday's game in Askewville.

## Eagles go cold against Heat

BY JIM GREEN  
Bertie Ledger-Advance

**ASKEWVILLE** - The Heat got hot, and the Lady Eagles went cold.

Liberty Christian used a 16-9 run in the fourth quarter - including 8-3 in the final 4:46 - to defeat Bethel Assembly Christian Academy 38-34 Friday night.

The teams were tied 18-all at halftime as the contest turned into a

scoring battle between Bethel's Kayley Minton and Liberty Christian's Hannah Grayson.

Minton's basket off a pass from Lindsey Todd put the Eagles (8-3 overall) ahead 27-26 with 5:46 remaining.

But Grayson - who scored 16 of her team-high 23 points in the first half - had some help as the Heat rallied.

Shameya Watson's bucket gave Liberty a

28-27 lead, and Grayson's basket off a pass from Ashley Denning made it 30-27, prompting Eagles' coach Ashley Byrum to call timeout with 5:05 left.

Minton converted two free throws, and Maddie Knowles stole a pass and went the distance for the go-ahead basket, 31-30, with 4:46 remaining.

The Eagles, however, couldn't put the Heat

away, missing on four straight shot attempts on their next possession.

Liberty took a 33-31 lead on an old-fashioned three-point play by Grayson with 4:07 left.

The only basket of the game from Deja James made it 35-31. Bethel then missed three more attempts to pull closer with under two minutes to play.

Minton's front end of a two-shot free throw opportunity pulled Bethel within three (35-32) with 1:07 left, but Denning's basket just seven seconds later pushed the lead back to five, and the Eagles turned it over at 48.1. Denning's free throw with 37.8 accounted for the final point for the Heat.

Bethel just couldn't

See **EAGLES**, B4

LIBERTY CHRISTIAN 78, BETHEL ASSEMBLY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY 65

## Big deficit too much for BACA boys

BY JIM GREEN  
Bertie Ledger-Advance



JIM GREEN / Bertie Ledger-Advance

Bethel Assembly Christian Academy's Caleb Simmons (No. 15) and Mason Dunlow try to defend Liberty Christian's Joseph Magollon (No. 20) during Friday's game against the Heat.

**ASKEWVILLE** - Liberty Christian's "big three" of Damon Beckwith, Isaiah Conner and Cameron Oliver combined for 63 points and 10 of the team's 11 three-pointers in a 78-65 victory over Bethel Assembly Christian Academy Friday night.

The Eagles (7-4 overall) had plenty of balance on offense as four players scored in double figures, but a 22-point deficit in the third quarter proved too much to overcome for the home team in its final game before the Christmas holidays.

Beckwith led the Heat with 25 points including a pair of 3s, while Conner added 21 points and three triples. Oliver tallied 17 points - 15 of them coming on five 3-pointers.

Liberty started hot and stayed hot most of the first half. In addition to six triples, the Heat were able to score several times in transition and as a result of offensive rebounds.

A 12-2 run in the final four players scored in double figures, but a 2:06 of the first quarter gave Liberty a 26-11 advantage.

A basket from Caleb Simmons off a turnover cut the deficit to 14 (29-

See **BOYS**, B4

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109 S. King St., P.O. Box 69  
Windsor, NC 27983

**Athlete of the week**

BHS  
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