MILLER PRESENTS BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PROFILE

Barnett: Helping put Cheyney back on the map

By DONALD HUNT Special To The Review

As John Chaney's top recruit four years ago, Ronald Barnett had really looked forward to playing for the highly regarded head coach at Cheyney University.

But he never got the chance.

No sooner had Barnett become a freshman at the Cheyney, Pa., school than Chaney left the Wolves' consistently successful basketball program to coach at Temple, where he's also built a winner.

"I wanted to play for him very badly," says Barnett, who was an all-Public-League standout at Philadelphia's Olney High School. "He's a great coach. He won a national championship (1978) here.

"He's one of the best coaches in the school's history. But I can understand why he made the move to Temple. That was a great opportunity for him. He's done a good job there, too."

Although Barnett was a little disappointed at Chaney's departure, Charlie Songster, Cheyney's third-year coach, has worked hard with him, and it

After two years of receiving limited playing time, Barnett blossomed his junior season, averaging 14.7 points and 11.7 rebounds a game. The Wolves' 6-7, 205-pound senior also was named to the all-East team selected by the National Association of Basketball Coaches and the all-Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference first team.

"He's a solid all-America candidate," Songster says. "Ronald has a very good chance of being drafted. He reminds me a little of George Melton (a former Cheyney star), who used to play for us.

"The only thing about George was that he powered everything to the basket. But Ronald has the ability to play with power and finesse. He has a nice touch from the outside and some good moves to the basket."

Barnett is averaging 15.2 points and 10.6 rebounds a game for the Wolves. But he feels his individual statistics would be even more impressive if he wasn't surrounded by other good players.

"I don't have to carry the entire load," Barnett says. "We have a good team this year. We've gotten off to a good start. I have to give a lot of credit to Coach Songster and guys like Edward Amos, George Lee and Darryl Banks. They've done a good job of scoring and rebounding.

"Clarence Green has also been a huge factor. He played high school



Barnett's hard work in practice has paid off for resurgent Cheyney (photo by John Merritt).

points. "We played them pretty tough

"So we really held our own. I'm

Athletic). Right now, Millersville looks

league championship last year.

It's the final time around for me.

Athletic) conference.

(Washington, D.C., Spingarn) basket- Barnett, who has scored 868 career ball with Michael Graham (the former Georgetown star). I'm glad I don't down there. Delaware State's a lot bighave to average 30 points and 20 re- ger than us. They play a major bounds a game. I wouldn't like to carry schedule in their (Mid-Eastern that pressure around with me the entire

What Barnett would like to do is really proud of the way we've played so help Cheyney win the Pennsylvania far. We have a good chance to win the State Athletic Conference championship and nab a Division II playoff

The Wolves (7-1) have their chances. Though it hasn't yet cracked the Top 20, Cheyney has lost only one game this season, 86-84, to Division Delaware State.

"It was a very close game," says

have a opportunity to do something good for our school." Cheyney nearly lost its spot on the

into the Top 20. Our team would like

to put Cheyney back on the map. We

map a year ago, when the school almost forfeited its accreditation.

The Wolves' sweet-shooting forward had visions of leaving during that time. Fortunately, the school's accreditation problems wre cleared up with the Middle State Association in Pennsylvania.

"I had contacted a few schools," Barnett says. 'I really didn't know what was going on at the time. I didn't know whether the school was going to open or not.

"Coach Songster told me not to worry -- that everything would be straightened out. I'm glad I listened to him. I could have gone somewhere else, but I may not have been as happy as I am right now."

Although Barnett appears to be destined for an all-America team, Songster would like to see more than that for his star -- like an NBA career.

"If we can get some national attention," Songster says, "this would certainly give Ronald a shot in the arm. He has the ability to play in the NBA. If not, he can definitely play in

"The only thing, he has to work on his dribbling. He has to improve his ballhandling a little more. We're allowing him to handle the ball more this

"So he's going to get better. Hopefully, we'll have a good year and he'll get invited to the Portsmouth (Va.) Invitational (all-star) Tourna-

If Barnett does get drafted, you can expect to see him playing in Philly's Baker League for pros this summer.

"The Baker League will definitely get you ready for the pros," says Barnett, who played in the Sonny Hill College League last summer. "The league has a lot of talent, like Sedale Threatt, Leon Wood, Earl Cureton and Clemon Johnson.

But, in the meantime, he says, there's a college career to complete.

conference (Pennsylvania State ".... That's a long ways from here," Barnett says of his pro aspirations. "I like the team to beat. They won the have to concentrate on winning some basketball games. So far, we've been "If we can get by them, we should be doing a pretty good job of doing just in good shape. This is my senior year.

"I would like to get my degree, score Donald Hunt is sports editor of the 1,000 points, win the league and move Philadelphia Tribune.

Page 6-January, 1986

January, 1986-Page 7