THE INDEPENDENTS

Jones and his Firebirds: 'Wait 'til this year'

By JIM TROTTER Special To The Review

Never count out a Wil Jonescoached basketball team.

Before this season's opener, many had expected the seventh-year head coach at the University of the District of Columbia to win his second national championship (the Firebirds won their first NCAA title in 1983). Most of those predictions were based on the belief that former Georgetown star Michael Graham would play in the middle for the Firebirds.

Alas, few things in life go as plann-

Because of a mix-up in the number of credits needed for Graham to play this year, the center fell three credits short. But UDC still may not fall short of a title, given Jones' 116-52 career record and the Firebirds' persormances thus far against first-class foes.

Never one to back down from stiff competition, Jones put his team to the test early. The Firebirds lost games to highly ranked Division II powers Delta State, Mount St. Mary's and Virginia Union on the road by a cumulative total of 16 points. But UDC also defeated Virginia Union at home. Hampton University twice and Norfolk State by 15 -- at Norfolk -- before the talented Spartans later avenged the loss, beating the Firebirds by 10 in Washington.

As of Jan. 27, UDC had posted a 10-7 record, surprising even the irrepressible Jones.

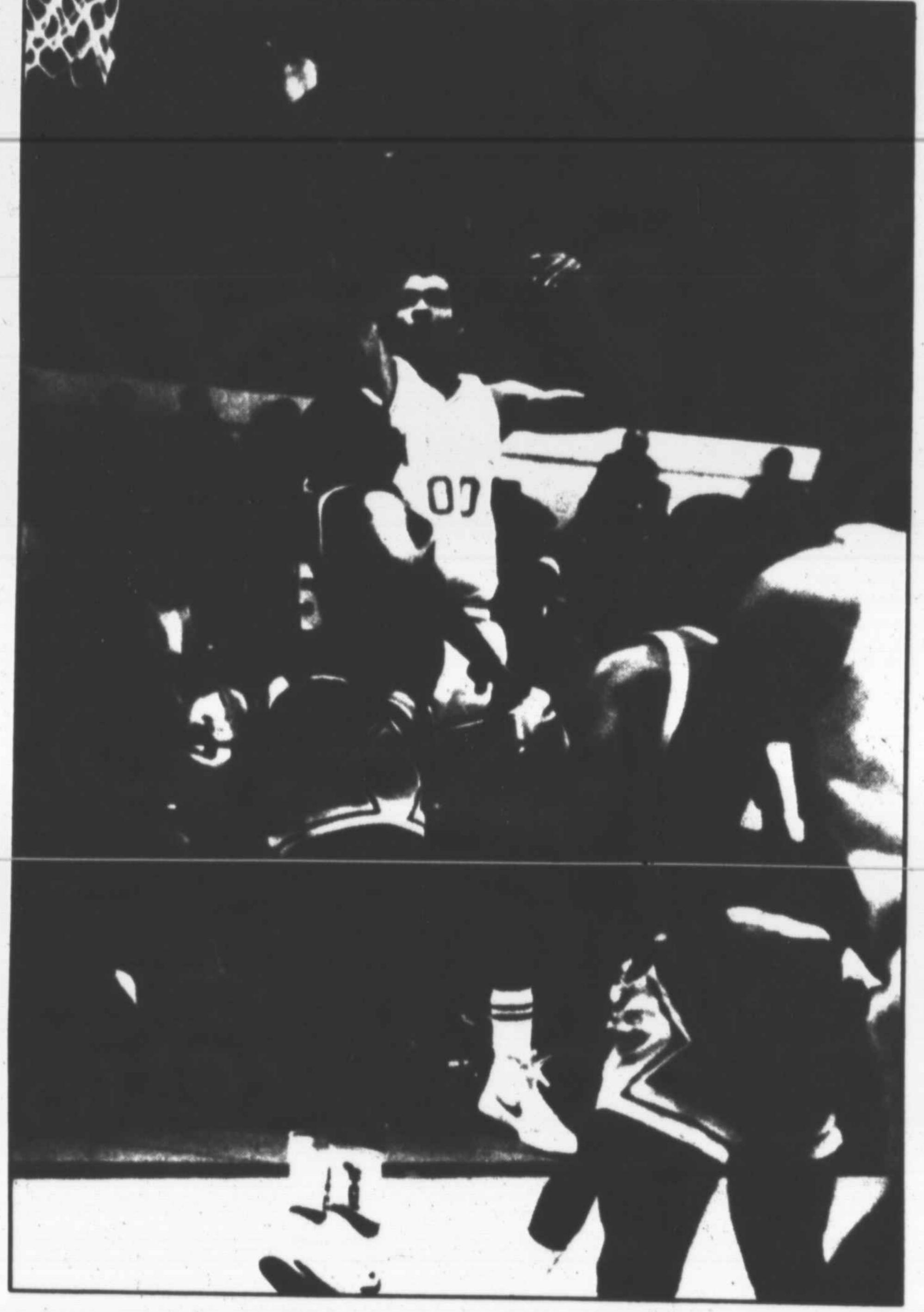
"It has surprised me that these youngsters have played as hard as they have," said Jones. "... This team has hustled hard when they've been behind front and hustled hard. This team had a good opportunity, had they been mature, to not have lost a game."

"I think they're of championship caliber," said Norfolk State Head Coach Charles Christian following his jock." team's victory in Washington. "Wil always keeps championship-caliber players."

DeBellotte leads Jones' championship- ppg) and was named all-Metro and an DeBellotte insists the competition on caliber players. He averages 16.3 all-America. He competed in the Division II level isn't any different points per game while playing out of McDonald's Classic in 1983 with such from what it would have been at the position. At 6-3, DeBellotte is a natural players as Tommy Amaker of Duke Division I level. guard.

"Lyndon is just a tremendous player," said Jones. "He can satisfy a College, Oklahoma and Houston. But lot of roles for you. He's a leader and a his grade-point-average wasn't high scorer. He gets you the points when enough to get him into those schools, you need them. Lyndon makes the so he went to Laredo Junior College in right basketball decisions."

When asked just how good is DeBellotte, Jones replied, "Name ? great guard: (Kenny) Smith (of North



and caught up. And they have been in UDC's Bryan Tucker shoots in the rematch with Norfolk State (photo by Carroll Smith).

Carolina) or (Gary) Grant at Michigan - they can't carry (DeBellotte's)

DeBellotte's journey to UDC was less than smooth. During his senior year at Cardozo High in Washington, for him to move on, too. He returned This year, junior forward Lyndon D.C., he led the area in scoring (28.4 home to play for the Firebirds. and Keith Gatlin of Maryland and was recruited by such powers as Boston Laredo, Texas, where he played alongside Lynwood Davis, who now starts at point guard for Oklahoma.

DeBellotte had planned to stay at

Laredo for two years and then transfer to Boston College, but, when Laredo Head Coach Gary Morris left after DeBellotte's first year to coach at West Texas State, DeBellotte felt it was time

"I don't think the talent is any less at Division II," he said. "More people can put the ball in the basket."

DeBellotte added that opponents are learning fast that the Firebirds are a team to reckon with, even without Graham. "Once the game starts, we good," he said.

While DeBellotte bombs from the outside, 23-year-old freshman forward Tim Stanfil, owner of a black belt in karate, pounds the boards. Stanfil averages 8.3 rebounds 14.6 points.

Stanfil was recruited to UDC after Jones' assistant, William "Doc" Robinson, saw him in a summer-league game. Jones' first recollection of Stanfil was at a summer-league game Robinson brought the head coach to.

"Stanfil was scheduled to play against Mike (Graham,)" said Jones, "so I caught a plane back from Florida. (Stanfil) walked onto the floor and they threw him the ball. He went to the goal and Mike came to block it. (Stanfil) threw the ball and Mike through the basket. ... That game was on a Saturday and on Monday I was in his house and waited six hours for his mother."

But the Firebirds are not a twodimensional team. Adding fuel to the flames are senior guard Johnny Gantt (11.9 ppg) and freshman Johnny Jones (9.6 ppg).

Coach Jones said he continues to get good talent because he and Robinson see things other coaches don't. "Some people think that some kids are fabulous and we think they stink." Jones said.

Some criticize Jones' basketball philosophy; others find him brashly honest. While, for instance, he says he cares about his players' education, he reminds you that he is a basketball

"(Players) come to me for basketball," said Jones. "I am a teacher in the university. I teach basketball. They go to the English teacher to learn English. ... I can't separate students from athletes. You can't be an athlete unless you're a student, and you sure as hell can't be a student and not be an athlete and participate in intercollegiate sports. All basketball coaches who go into a person's house don't go into it because he is a good student. ... They go into it because he can play their sport, be it football, basketball, track or whatever."

No one can argue with Jones' coaching abilities. And, while many point to next year, when Graham will play for the Firebirds, this year's team is more concerned with the present.

"We have the potential to go on and win the national championship (this year) without Mike," said Jones. "But we need a few breaks, a little luck. We play tough teams and the opposite have the talent to do it - we definitely coach knows we can play and we are have the talent. But first we have to get to the tournament."

BLACK COLLEGE REPORT

St. Augustine's Davis claims a pair of wins

By DAVID BULLA Review Staff Writer

World-class sprinter Patricia Davis of St. Augustine's claimed a pair of wins Feb. 2 in the Tar Heel Invitational indoor track and field meet at Chapel Hill, N.C.

The outstanding showing is nothing new for the all-America sprinterhurdler, who led St. Augustine's to the NCAA Division II indoor championship last year.

"Pat is really just beginning to fully mature," Coach George Williams said of his senior. "The thing people don't realize about Pat Davis is that she was only 16 when she entered college. That means she'll be 22 when the 1988 Olympics came around -- an ideal age for a sprinter."

Williams said that Davis, named the Most Valuable Runner in the meet, has improved her hurdling form.

"At the TAC nationals (in Indianapolis) last summer, I noticed she was floating over the hurdles," Williams said. "So we came back to Raleigh and taught her to drive the lead leg and karate kick the trail leg. She saw that the faster your leg hits the ground the faster you push over the

"If she keeps improving like this, she'll get a U.S. record before the season's over."

The Falcon senior won the 60-yard high hurdles in 7.88 seconds Sunday, well under the NCAA indoor track and field championship qualifying standard. The Fort Lauderdale, Fla., product captured the 60-yard dash in 6.93.

Teammate Ellorine Morris won the shot put with a throw of 47 feet, 7 in-

St. Augustine's Patricia Whitworth was named the Most Valuable Athlete in the field events after she won the high jump with a leap of 5-9. She took the silver in the long jump with a leap of 18-10.

The Falcon women have won 10 consecutive CIAA outdoor titles and will be the favorites at the CIAA Indoors at the Arthur Ashe Center in Richmond. Va., Feb. 28.

"They're going to hold the track and field in conjunction with the CIAA basketball tournament," Williams said. "The track and field meet will be on Friday from 10 a.m., until 4:15 in the afternoon when nobody has anything to do. It's a great idea."

Meanwhile, Davis ran in the Vitalis

Howard Center Darlene Beale (55) grabs a rebound against South Carolina State's 6-6 center, Wanda Pittman. The Lady Bulldogs had a 12-game winning streak stopped recently at Delaware State (photo by Norman Pruitt).

York's Madison Square Garden Feb.

The Division I indoor nationals will Olympic Invitational meet Feb. 8 at the be held at Oklahoma City, Okla., Meadowlands in East Rutherford, March 14-15. The Division II indoor N.J., and the Millrose Games at New nationals were victims of NCAA

budget cuts.

Also in the Chapel Hill meet, Roland Wade of the Falcon men's team captured the 60-yard dash in 6.30 seconds against a field that included N.C. State all-America Harvey McSwain.

Holland Honored

Winston-Salem State's Keith Holland, named to the Sheridan all-America team, was honored Feb. 15 in Atlanta by the One Hundred Percent Please See Page 15

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