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COVER STORY

Clark's Lee: He's 'going for the gold' this year

By CRAIG T. GREENLEE Review Staff Writer

ERNEST LEE is chomping at the bit as he enters his final season for the Clark College Panthers.

And why not? For the past three seasons he's been chewing up opposing defenses, leading all NCAA divisions in scoring as a sophomore and winning the Division II scoring title last year as a junior.

Lee has amassed 2,437 career points while shooting 55 percent from the field and 72 percent from the line. He's very likely to break the 3,000-point barrier sometime in late January or early February.

"I'm really looking forward to my last year," Lee says with gleaming eyes. "I'll be coming at people. This year, I'm going for the gold."

As if Lee's current accolades haven't been hefty enough.

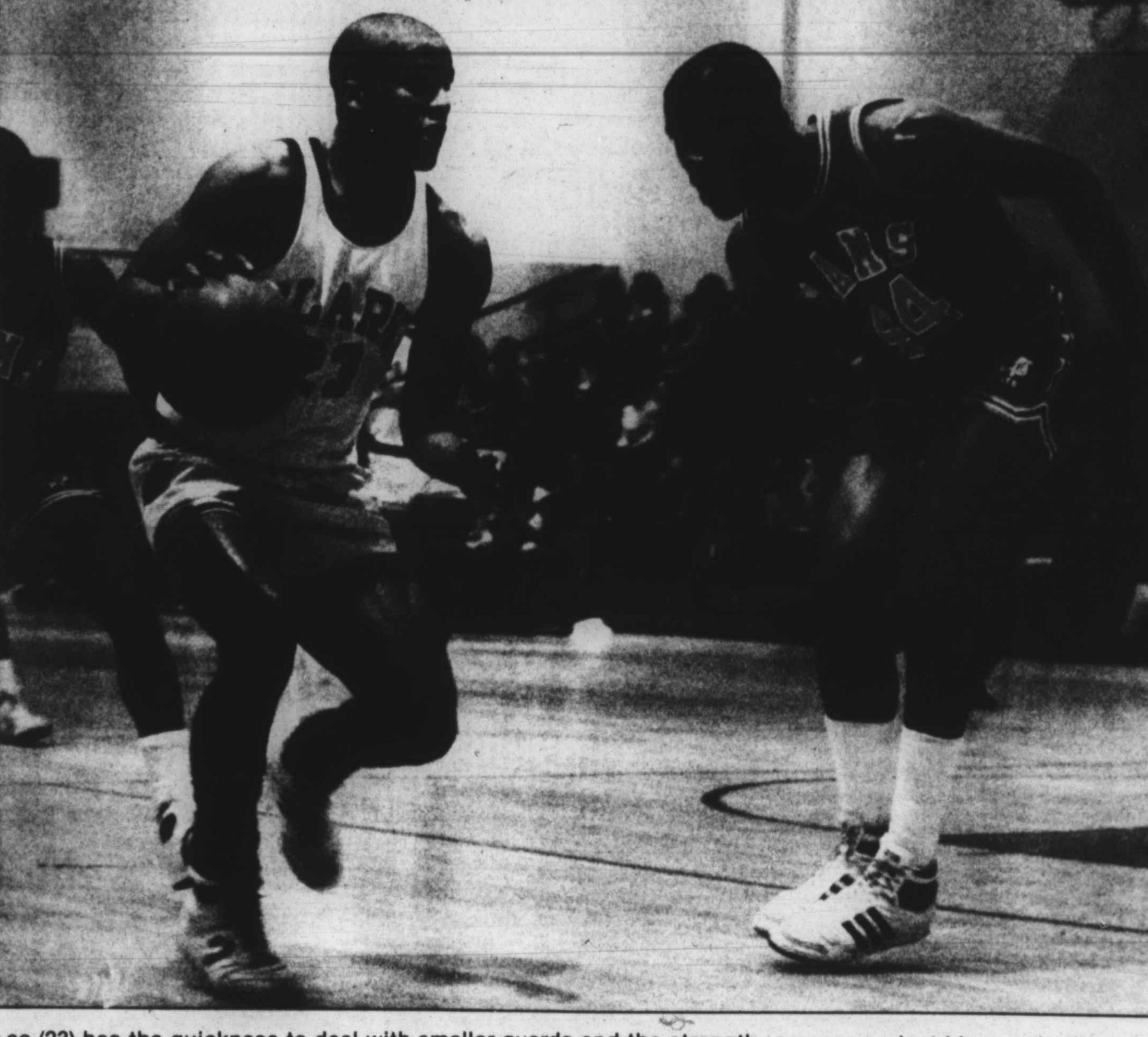
For three years he's led the SIAC in scoring and been named first-team allconference. He's also been named the conference Player of the Year twice.

There's no denying that Lee's reputation precedes him. When you've averaged more than 30 points a game in a two-year span, people tend to expect that level of production all the

"When I go into the gym before a game, everybody seems to have this attitude that I'll light up the scoreboard," Clark's scoring ace says. "The question I hear the most is: 'How many are you gonna get tonight?' But what people don't understand is that I come to win, not just to score. As long as we win, I'm all right."

At this juncture in his career, Lee has refined other skills besides putting the ball through the hoop. His scoring 205-pound Lee was like as a freshman: can use his speed, strength and power production is down, but he's still able a raw, highly skilled offensive player drives down the lane. to get his points and remain within the who was very much at home in playing Lee was an all-America point guard He also likes the requirement for he shot a lot less (540), Clark won more games (18-11) and his teammates were more involved in the offense.

gress in developing my overall game," he can free-lance and get the points." The Division II scoring king has is all about. Without confidence, he games anymore because I'm getting tle old. more rebounds and assists."



Lee (23) has the quickness to deal with smaller guards and the strength to go up against big men in the paint (photo by Craig T. Greenlee).

options for easier shots.

Pritchett says, "but it's good to know when he went to visit his mother, who cockiness. With a career average of "I feel like I've made a lot of pro- that, when our offense breaks down, lives in Atlanta.

Sometimes it's a real struggle, Lee play the three spot. Robert Pritchett, Clark's head says, because he detests slowdowns and Guards, Lee adds, have more opporcoach, remembers what the 6-3, loves the open-court game where he tunity to run the offensive show

Clark offensive system. For example, one-on-one. But when it came to at John F. Kennedy High School in ballhandlers to penetrate for either laythe year he led all divisions in scoring, working in a structured offense, Lee Sacramento, Calif., and was highly Lee took 695 shots and the Panthers had problems. He lacked the patience recruited by the Pac-10 and University foundation of Lee's game. finished the season at 15-12. Last year, to go through set plays and consider of Nevada at Las Vegas. But, because of his low grades, Division I ball was pion is more a matter of unshakable. "His shot selection is much better," out. Clark became a viable alternative confidence rather than brash

Lee says. "I know more about how to Clark foes are all too aware that Lee fond memories of his days at Kennedy, says, you might as well forget about best handle different situations on the has to be at least neutralized if they're where he averaged 25 points and a floor, whereas in the past I'd put up to have any success. So most opt to dozen assists an outing. In fact, he the shot. But now I'm not forcing my employ some kind of combination man wouldn't mind moving back to guard says that an element of luck is involvshots, and that makes teams play all of and zone to irritate him - often a for the Panthers because he feels he ed, but there's more to it than that. our guys instead of concentrating triangle and two or a box and one. By can exert more control over a game "Evidently, it was just meant to strictly on me. There won't be a great now Lee's accustomed to special from there than as a small forward. be," he says. "I've done it two years in need for me to have 50- and 60-point defenses, but they still tend to get a lit- But, because of the Panthers' need for a row, so that should prove that it's no his scoring and rebounding, he's had to fluke."

because they can see to entire defense and determine who should get the ball. ups or passes; drives are really the

In Lee's view, being a scoring cham-28.3 points, he knows what consistency being an excellent offensive player.

As for his national scoring titles, he

One question that always arises when discussing great scoring machines Please See Page 23