Hoopsters gear up for tournaments

Rocking the holidays hoops

By Fred Lindsey
AFRO Sports Writer

"Rocking around the holiday hoops," is the way many young basketball players describe their participation in holiday basketball tournaments.

With several high school teams preparing for their last opportunities for "tune-up" games before heading into league play, many area teams will be making bids to fatten their records.

Calvert Hall will be at the Benedictine Capital City Classic in Richmond, VA. Lake Clifton will play in the 40th Annual Cambria County War Memorial Invitation in Johnstown, PA., and St. Frances Charles Hall will play in the Bladensburg Holiday Tournament in Bladensburg, Md.

Entering their first season at the varsity level, St. Frances is a "sleeper" in many respects because no one really knows a lot about them. Playing in the Catholic League with Archbishop Curley, Loyola, Calvert Hall and Mt. St. Joe, the Panthers may have to emerge as a force to be reckoned with.

Last season, they were 22-1, in JV competition, losing only to highly regarded Mackin High in Washington, D.C. Moving to a more competitive level, they are 2-0, with cancelled games at Loch Raven and Wilde Lake.

"I'm really afraid that some teams are scared to play us, but it doesn't matter. Hopefully, we can continue a winning momentum that will carry us through the season," said basketball coach William Wells.

Because of the cancellations, St. Frances will enter the Bladensburg Tournament very cautiously. They said they feel they need additional play to be sharp for the league.

"We don't know much about the tournament competition, so that is always a problem. I'm just hoping that we play well and that we get to the finals. If, we can do that then I'll be satisfied," Wells said.

Being a vigous advocator of team play, Wells downplays individual statistics, saying only team victories are more important than individual goals, but the indicators are Wells has a quality crew to deal with the opposition in the Catholic League.

He has 6'3½" (F) Sam McGee, 6'0" (G) Kevin Butler, 6'5" (C/F) Devin Gray, 6'2" (F) Sean Mayberry, 5'8" (G) George Brandon and 6'0" (G) Derrick Chase, all of whom are very talented.

"They are the nucleus of the team," Wells said. "I think we can be very competitive throughout the season, if we understand our purpose and that is to do the best we can in the League and to build for next year."

St. Frances' first league contest will be January 6th against Mt. St. Joe.

Fred Lindsey's Sure Shots

Basketball's Best in Baltimore

By Fred Lindsey

At the Christmas break, the top 10 high school basketball teams in and around Baltimore City, in this writer's opinion, appears to be:

1. Lake Clifton
2. Dunbar
3. Southern
4. Walbrook
5. Calvert Hall
6. Mt. St. Joe
7. Northwestern
8. Towson Catholic
9. Cardinal Gibbons
10. St. Frances Charles Hall

USA Today Ranks City Teams

According to USA Today, no player from Baltimore City was good enough to merit consideration to the high school All USA Football Team, but in basketball, Lake Clifton and Western are eighth and twelfth respectively.

Girls Track And Field Needs Sponsors

The Office of Physical Education and Athletics currently is seeking sponsors for the System Events in the Baltimore City Public Schools' Girls' Individual Track and Field Championships.

The championships will be on Saturday, May 20, 1989 and any individual or organization may choose an event and provide one or more of the awards. (For example: Runs, Dashies, Hurdles and Field Events are seeking individual student awards for first, second and third places.)

These awards may be in the form of trophies, cups, bowls, plates, medals, jewelry, or whichever is deemed appropriate by the sponsor.

For more information, contact Joni Scholwin at (301) 396-8610.

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AFRO photographer's favorites

AFRO photographer Paris Gray covers hundred of assignments each year, from the exciting to the ordinary.

Among his favorite photographs for 1988 are the two pictured in this space.

Taken in early November is a photograph of Catholic Bishop Carl Fisher, who formerly served in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. before he was ordained the first black bishop in the western United States. He now lives in the Los Angeles area.

Bishop Fisher is captured during a moment of silent prayer at his former parish church, St. Francis Xavier.

Several dozen parishioners, fellow clergy men and women and other well wishers flew to Los Angeles to witness bishop Fisher's ordination at the Los Angeles Sports Arena.

Obviously, by his recent visit, he has not forgotten his friends here in Baltimore even though his new duties are numerous.

Another one of Gray's favorite photos is this scene taken in October.

Baltimore City firemen are recorded at the scene of a multi-alarm fire in back of the world famous Lexington Market. It was a long night judging from the stance of some of the city's bravest and finest.

SPORTS

Sam Lacy Allegiance

In this business, one strives to be objective . . . . You must . . . . If you don't you lose credibility with your fair-minded readers; the others don't count.

When you know this and you find yourself choosing one team to cheer for over another on a given weekend afternoon or evening, it jerks you up and makes you wonder why this is so.

After some thought, it comes to you: somewhere in the sub-conscious a seed of loyalty is being nurtured . . . . Loyalty to a memory, even though the memory may — or should — be locked in cobwebs.

Baltimoreans, for example, are likely to root for the other team (no matter the name) when the other team is playing against Indianapolis . . . . It isn't necessarily "sour grapes" as some might suggest . . . . It is because Indianapolis is a team owned by Robert Irsay.

Irsay & Bidwill

And Robert Irsay's name is the one stamped indelibly on the memory bank of Baltimore's illustrious football history . . . . His act of destroying a noble franchise and then turning his back on a pleading fan population and solicitous city officials.

Villainy only slightly more obdurate than the behavior of William Bidwill who mangled his "free-agent" St. Louis Cardinals before a drooling city, knowing full well that after he had his fun, he was going to snatch away the bait in the manner of a child playing with a spool of thread before a naive kitten.

That's why Baltimoreans for the most part, will cheer for any team (except Indianapolis) that plays against Phoenix.

Browns & Patriots

Conversely the Cleveland Browns and New England Patriots find ties in Baltimore in their efforts against NFL teams.

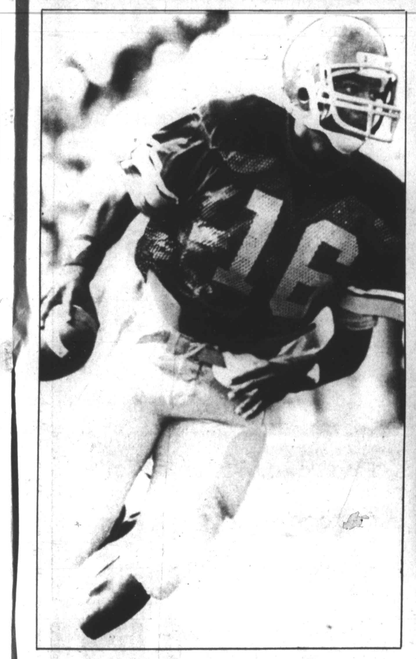
The Browns hold a special place in memory because Ernie Accorsi is the Cleveland GM, the man who puts the team on the field . . . . And Accorsi is warmly remembered as a fixture of the beloved Colts and because of his rebellion in quitting Irsay when the latter was making a shambles of the Baltimore franchise.

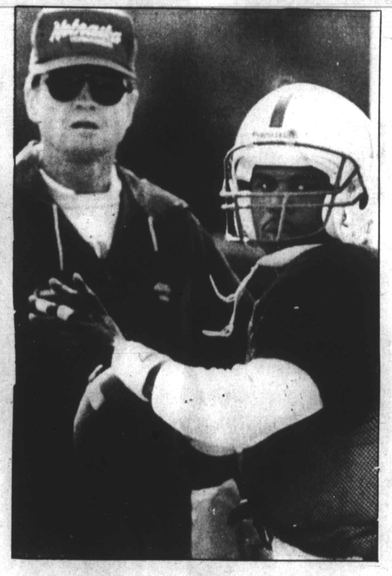
And the Patriots, even in failure last week, carried a huge Baltimore concern because they are coached by another of the beloved members of the halcyon days with the Colts . . . . name: Raymond Berry.

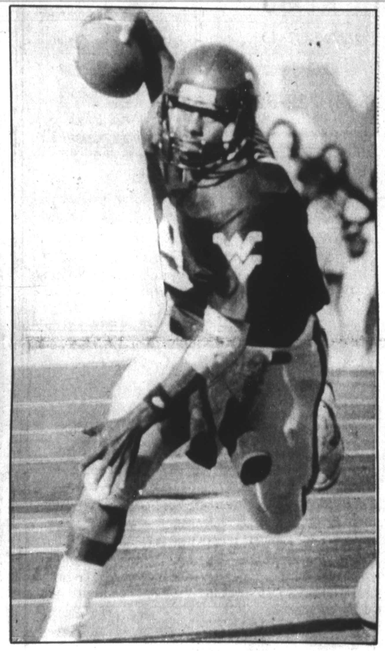
Notable quotable

Bob Uecker, acknowledging his reputation as a notoriously weak hitter in his playing days:

"It was the bottom of the ninth with my team trailing the Dodgers, 2-1, and I'm up with the bases loaded and a full count on me. I looked over at the Dodger dugout and they're all in their street clothes."







BOWL QUARTERBACKS — Black quarterbacks are expected to be a potent force in the college football bowl games. Among them are Rodney Peete (L) for USC in the Rose Bowl, Steve Taylor (C) for Nebraska in the Orange, and Major Harris (R) for West Virginia in the Fiesta.

Rich Laurel meeting

LAUREL, MD — Two rich $200,000 races, the Grade III Barbara Fritchie Handicap for fillies and mares and a companion event, the $200,000 General George Stakes for 3-year-olds and up, headline a million-dollar stakes schedule for Laurel's 1989 winter dates, Jan. 1 through Feb. 27.

The track ushers in the New Year on New Year's Day with the $50,000-added resolution Stakes for 3-year-old fillies at six furlongs.

Two $75,000 races for Maryland-breds are on the agenda. The Goss L. Stryker Stakes for 3-year-olds at a mile and one-sixteenth will be renewed on Sunday, Jan. 29.

Maryland-bred 3-year-old fillies will have their say in the $75,000 Jameela Stakes at a mile and one-sixteenth on Saturday, Feb. 25.

One-on-One

Disregarding the gold medals, world records and sisters-in-law angles and all that jazz, it suffices that Florence Griffith Joyner and Jackie Joyner-Kersee are the year's front-page faces on the widely read Sports Illustrated (Flo-Jo) and The Sporting News (Jackie) editions currently on news stands.

Former Tar Heel gridder shot in D.C.

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Former University of North Carolina football star Derrick Fenner was shot in the chest Christmas morning outside a Southwest Washington nightclub, District of Columbia police said.

Fenner, the record-setting running back whose off-field problems have put his athletic career in doubt, was listed in good condition at George Washington University Hospital Sunday before being released.

Police said Fenner was shot while outside the RSVP nightlcub at about 4 a.m., but details of the shooting were not available Monday.

He is currently enrolled at Gardner-Webb College in Boiling Spring, N.C, and had apparently returned home for Christmas break.

Fenner, from Oxon Hill, Md., rushed for an Atlantic Coast Conference best 1,250 yards in 1986 while a sophomore at North Carolina.

But his promising football career soon crumbled.

He was sidelined by academic problems, then spent the 1987 season fighting a murder charge in Maryland.

William Murray for United Press

The year in sports: a sad commentary

The excitement that usually accompanies an Olympic year was there. So was a thrilling World Series, an outstanding college and professional football season, an engaging series of Triple Crown races, etc.

But there were other clouds.

They once lingered along the dark edge of sports, with the sweat and the grunts in dimly lit weightrooms.

Steroids have been a part of the sports world's pharmacopoeia for decades, but in 1988 they came bursting out of the weightroom and into the newsroom.

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Canada's Ben Johnson ran the 100 meters faster than was once imaginable. He was awarded the Olympic gold medal and the world stood in awe. For about a day, Johnson's urine test came back positive for stanozolol, an anabolic steroid.

He was stripped of the gold medal and the controversy he touched off concerning performance-enhancing drugs became one of the most important sports stories of the decade.

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"Although it was unfortunate for Johnson, this doping problem was brought before a worldwide audience," said Prince Alexandre de Merode, chairman of the International Olympic Committee's medical commission.

"The dramatic increase in drug misuse in sports began in 1960. Social, economic and national pressures are imposed on athletes to win, sometimes at any cost.

"Some athletes use drugs in attempt to improve performance, reduce stress, increase muscle strength, lessen fatigue, etc. Such athletes not only begin to destroy their own sense of moral values and of fair play, but damage their sport and the ethics of the Olympic movement."

Steroid use is believed to lead to liver tumors, kidney and liver problems, psychological aggression and sexual dysfunction.

In all, 10 athletes were disqualified for failing drug tests at Seoul, one less than the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

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The NFL had to confront the early-season death of Atlanta Falcons defensive back David Croudip. Although the coroner could not pinpoint the cause of death, cocaine use was believed to be a contributing factor.

Tony Collins, once a star running back with New England, was more fortunate. Banned before the season because of his third drug infraction, Collins survived a cocaine overdose in his Indiana home.

Two players — Chicago's Richard Dent and Seattle's Terry Taylor — went to court and successfully fought 30-day suspensions after allegedly failing an NFL drug test. But 22 other players — including Washington's Dexter Manley, New York's Lawrence Taylor and Buffalo's Bruce Smith — served NFL drug suspensions.

In the NBA, four players — William Bedford, Chris Washburn, Duane Washington and Orlando Woolridge — were suspended during the year for violating the league's drug policy.