If you're thinking about making a serious wager on the outcome of this year's CIAA Basketball Tournament, you must be a daring soul.

The '88-'89 CIAA season has been consistently inconsistent. There have been an ample amount of upsets along the way. This leads one to think that teams finishing at the top of their respective divisions shouldn't be viewed as undeniable favorites to make the championship final of the tournament on Feb. 25 at the Norfolk Scope in Norfolk, Va.

Uncertainty has been the one consistent factor that has categorized the league this season.

## Tourney Time

The CIAA's tournament takes place at the Norfolk Scope in Norfolk, Va., Feb. 22-25. The semi-final round and final round will be aired by Black Entertainment Television. The championship final will be broadcast live at 7 p.m. on

All 14 teams will be involved in this round robin tournament. For more information about the tournament, contact the CIAA office at 804/838-8801.

"It could be anybody's tournament," says Bob Moorman, CIAA commissioner. "This year, things might be tighter than ever. It's going to be difficult because anybody can win it.

"The conference's winningest teams are not rolling over everybody. The teams who haven't been winning have played the top teams tough and close. We don't seem to have any one team that's dominant. But that's good for the conference."

The unpredictable nature of the conference has manifested itself several times this season. Norfolk State stymicd highly regarded Virginia Union in their first meeting of the year. Then Union returned the favor by body slamming the Spartans in the rematch that took place three weeks later.

Not only did Union fall to Norfolk State, but St. Paul's got in on the upset trend. In what has to be considered as the shocker of the year, coach Harry Bradley's Tigers took a 76-73 decision over Union within the hostile confines of the Panthers home court. The Tigers wren't expected to be especially strong this season. All six of their victories have come against conference opponents (6-13 overall, 3-5 in the Northern Division, 6-8 in conference play). But they have played the big guys tough on several occasions.

North Carolina Central, the top rated team in the Southern Divsion, wasn't able to escape the upset epidemic. They were

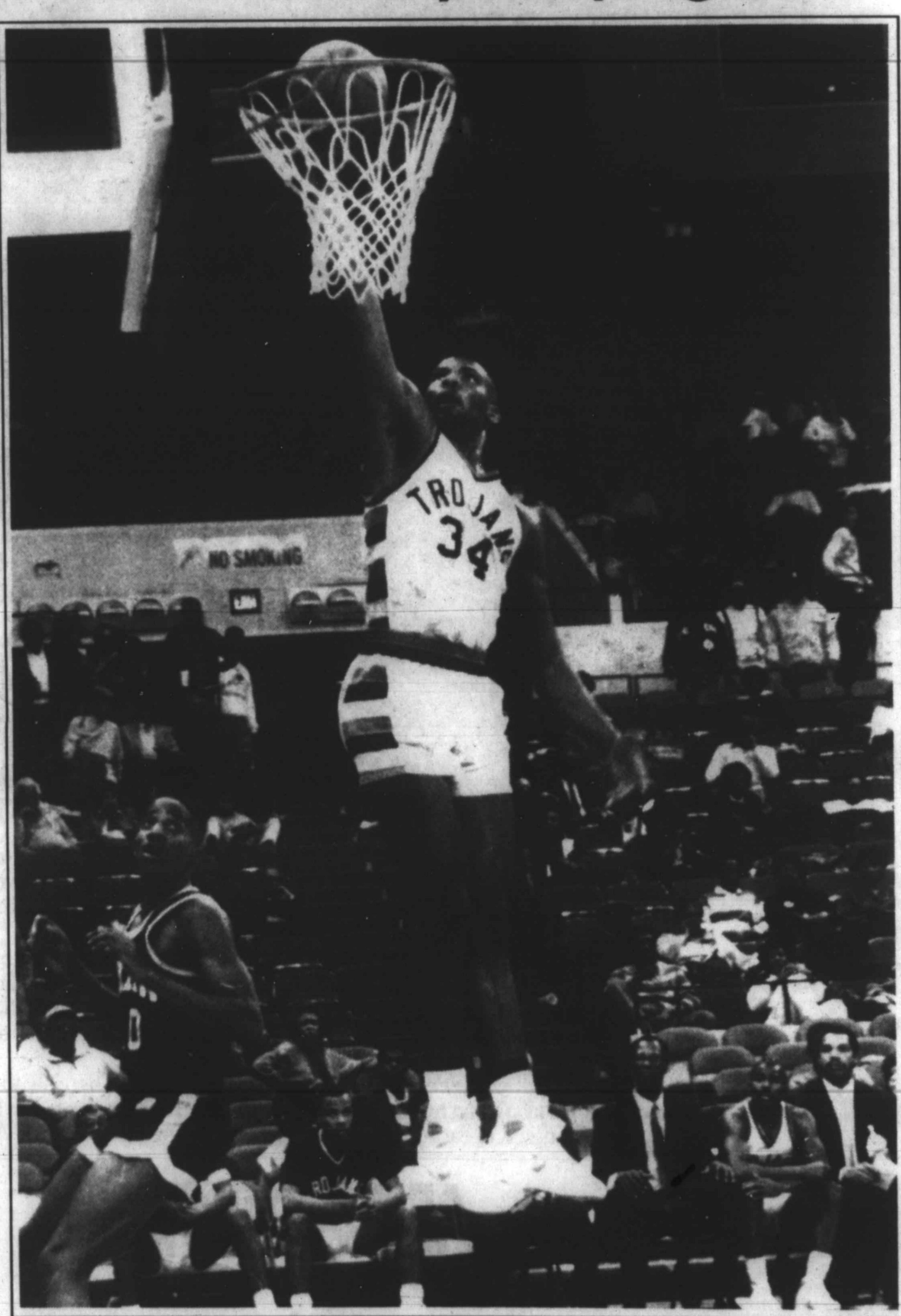


Photo by Frank A. Davis

The CIAA Basketball Tournament has a notorious reputation for producing surprise winners. Last year, Virginia State walked off with the trophy, thanks to some sky walking, slamming and jamming skills displayed by Leonard Harris.

surprised by Bowie State and Virginia State. Norfolk's two conference losses have come against Union and NCCU. Big battle at Norfolk

In the first Union/Norfolk match-up, the Spartans utilized patient offense and a suffocating defense to defuse the Panthers, 61-56.

11th straight victory.

With 5:30 left in the game, the Spartans led 55-45. But the Panthers rallied to make it a 59-56 game (NSU's favor) with 18 seconds to go. Union called time-out and set up a three-point shot for A.J. English, which if converted, would've tied the game and forced an overtime

But English's last-second attempt clanked off the rim, NSU's James Walker grabbed the rebound, fired a full-court pass to Eustace Jules who made the dunk shot as the final buzzer sounded.

Walker paced with the Spartans with 19 points and Darren Sanderlin added 11. Jerome Coles and Jules each scored l points for the victors.

Norfolk won the game because of their tenacious man-to-man defense which took Union out of its game plan to get the ball in the hands of Terry Davis and English. Entering that game, Davis and English had collectively averaged 50 points a game. On that night, the duo was held to 20 combined points (English had 11 and Davis scored nine).

Roosevelt Wallace was VUU's top scorer with 22 points.

Union settles the score

Union made the rematch a true nightmare for the Spartans. The Panthers got even by administering a 65-42 victory over their nemisis.

ranked No. 4 in the Division II polls and that category.

The key for Union was their ability to shut down NSU's offense. For the game, the Spartans shot an unthinkable 27 percent from the field (17 for 63).

This game was actually won in the first half when the Panthers had a 28-3 run during a nine minute stretch. They had trailed 14-9, but then they turned it on and bolted to a 29-17 advantage. During that time span, the Spartans managed just one basket, a three-pointer by Walker.

The Panthers used several combinations of zones to limit Norfolk's long distance shooting tandem of Sanderlin, Guy Fauntleroy, Ray Copeland, and Matt Yates. The Spartans were never able to land. Sanderlin, by the way, leads the CIAA in three-point goal shooting (62

Davis paced Union's scoring efforts with 15 points, nine rebounds, and three blocked shots. English contributed 13

Virginia State is puzzling

The Trojans of Virginia State have

been a mystery team this season. The defending conference tournament champions haven't done as well in the CIAA as many would have expected.

Overall, their 11-7 record makes the one of the top 10 black college teams in the most recent Sheridan Poll. But in the CIAA, things haven't gone smoothly. At That loss snapped Union's 15 game presstime, they were 7-6 in the conferwinning streak. For NSU, it was their ence, and a surprising 2-5 in division performances. The Eagles are far and

> The Trojans have found themselves involved in a lot of close games this season. Their average margin of victory is +1.8 points a game.

Leonard Harris is the leader for the Trojans. He's among the league's elite in ppg). scoring (22.3 ppg) and rebounding (12.2 rpg). Lamont Walker takes much of the offenisve load off of Harris' shoulders with his 18.9 points a game scoring aver-

Chris Holloway is the guy who makes things happen for VSU as their lead guard. The junior is largely responsible for ensuring that Harris and Walker get good shots. Holloway is the CIAA's top son. Outside of Central, Southern Diviassist man, averaging 9.8 per contest.

But in spite of their record, the Trojans can't be counted out. They have a habit of peaking around tournament time and making life miserable for those "highly favored" teams.

Hampton can pose problems

The Pirates have discovered that rebounding skills are vital for victories. HU is the league's best in that department (48.7 a game). And more importantly, they outrebound their opponents by an average of more than 12 caroms a game.

Peltre Williams is the Pirates' top rebounder at 8.3 a game. Other than Williams, HU doesn't have any individuals ranked among the league leaders in

But they do have some very decent contributors on offense. Not so much in totals, but in quality. Sylvester Hartfield is hitting 50 percent of his three-pointers, while Williams shoots 55.1 percent from the field.

Anthony Wood is HU's floor leader who dishes out 6.3 assists per contest. Elizabeth City has the firepower

The Vikings of Elizabeth City State have the league's most potent offense (94.5 ppg). In 19 games, they've put nearly 1,800 points on the board.

However, the Vikings are at the bottom of the barrel when it comes to stopping people. They're ranked last in CIAA scoring defense (93.2 ppg). But they are squads (No. 2 at 46.1 a game).

The Vikes aren't completely lacking on the defensive end. James Eaton and Ernie (averaging eight steals per game collec-

Griffin avergaes 18.9 ppg and is No. 5 among CIAA shooters in number of three-point goals made per game (2.4 at Black College Sports Review

Central controls the South

North Carolina Central's Eagles rule the Southern Division with iron wings.

They are the only team in the division with a winning record overall (16-3) and in the conference (10-3).

Coach Michael Bernard's crew has done it all season with stifling defensive was virtually on fire, hitting 18 of 23 shots from the field (including five for away the best defensive team in the five from three-point range). In addition, league, limiting opponents to 56.2 ppg. Norfolk State is No. 2 at 65.7 ppg.

NCCU needs to stop people. They're not the kind of team that can get into a racehorse contest. Offensively, they're on the bottom in terms of team offense (70.0

Adrian McKinnon is the chief threat for NCCU at both ends of the court. He averages 8.3 rebounds a game and has 47 blocked shots in 19 games.

It appears that if the Southern Division is going to be represented in the conference finals, NCCU is the most likely team. Comparing the South 's record against the North is really not a comparirecord of 24-81. That says a lot about the South this season.

The word about Hurd

Johnson C. Smith isn't eating the competition alive this year. The Golden Bulls had been waging a war against themselves to get out of the Southern Division basement. At presstime, they had improved to 4-15 overall, 3-9 in the conference and 2-4 in the division.

While J.C. Smith doesn't figure to pull off any major surprises in Norfolk, offensive minded spectators will be in for a treat when Walter Hurd takes the floor.

The sophomore sharpshooter is among the nation's most dangerous scoring threats. He's hitting at a 26.4 points per game pace and makes 60 percent of his conference leaders in rebounds (9.1 a three-point shots.

ranked as high as No. 1 nationally in three-point goal percentage (65.6 percent at that point) and in the Top 10 in scoring average).

team sport where one individual can rarely carry a team all on their own. Such was the case with Hurd last month. In a game pitting Smith against Shaw Unversity, Hurd was magnificent, scoring 49 points and tieing the school's single game scoring record. The New York City native

However, basketball continues to be a

he converted eight of nine free throws. But in spite of Hurd's heroics, the Bulls still lost, 90-80.

Bears are back Livingstone College has been given the go-ahead to resume their basketball schedule. The Rowan County (NC) Health Dept. had curtailed all athletic competition of teams in that area because of an outbreak of the measles. The Bears haven't played since late December. They will be seeded seventh in the Southern

Division for the conference tournament. Prior to the measles outbreak, Livingstone had shown signs that they could be a troublesome opponent. They had played the opposition tough, but in the end, their own miscuses caused their downfall. The team appeared to be coming into its own just as the measles epidemic hit Rowan

Can Shaw do any damage?

Shaw Univresity has hovered around the .500 mark for a large portion of the season (3-2 in the division, 5-6 in the conference, and 8-10 overall).

It's been difficult for the Bears to maintain any consistency on the floor. But there have been some positive things happening for Shaw.

Freshman Sheldon Owens has made it known that he'll contest all shots in the paint. Owens in the league's top shot blocker with 54 rejections in 18 games.

Anthony King is ranked among the game) and field goal shooting percentage (.590). Guard Mike Earvin is slick as a defender (42 steals in 18 games) and an adroit ball handler (7.6 assists per game

-Craig T. Greenlee

## CIAA Standings As of February 5, 1989 Northern Division Conference Overall Division Virginia Union Elizabeth City State Virginia State -12 Bowie State Southern Division Overal Division Conference 10-3 North Carolina Central Livingstone College 3-9 5-8 St. Augustine's