## BASEBALL

## Norfolk State possesses speed, power, pitching

Norfolk State's baseball program has average and 40 RBIs). become the topic of much discussion

among college baseball observers.

And there's good reason.

games with all of those ingredients. They comes out of each ball game believing captured their third consecutive CIAA diamond crown and made their first trip to the NCAA Division II Playoffs.

But this year's 28-12 season and a national ranking (No. 15) is far from being a fluke. The team is talent laden with mostly all underclassmen -- seven juniors, seven sophomores and eight

In the process, the Spartans boasted two NCAA Division II All-America performers in junior first baseman Mel Wearing and junior second baseman Chris Mitchell. Wearing was voted to the first team and Mitchell made the second

NSU's initial appearance in the playoffs wasn't as satisfying as they'd hoped for. They were ousted in the first round of the double elimination tournament, losing 4-3 to Shippensburg in an 11 inning game. Only minutes after that contest, they faced the No. 1 seed in the North Atlantic Region, Slippery Rock and dropped a 12-6 decision.

In the game vs. Shippensburg, the Spartans battled on even terms as the contest went into extra innings. Shippensburg's game plan was to stay away plate. But his defensive skills at from Wearing in order to keep the game closely contested.

Wearing (6-3, 240 lbs.) had been pure at the NCAA playoffs. torture on pitchers in '89. The All-American hit for power (17 home runs), average (.497), and was reliable with the stick with men on base (64 RBIs).

In six at bats, Wearing managed only one hit. In four of those at bats, he walked, two of them coming intentional-

"Melvin has developed into one of the most feared hitters in college baseball," said Miller. "He's good in clutch situa- year, Wilkerson was bullish on hitters. He don't pitch to him very often."

back with the Spartans next spring. Pro ERA). He was the ace with a record of 7scouts have displayed great interest and 2 Miller expects that Wearing is likely to turn pro when he is taken in the basebal' draft this year.

While Wearing has forged his reputation nationally, Mitchell 's season was from the game. one of rapid development. Known as a "Wilkerson throws with decent velocislick fielder, Mitchell helped to key ty but he won't overpower you," Miller But with Wearing gone, they will rely NSU's defense with eye-popping skills pointed out. "His biggest area of more on base hitting and aggressive base light, and at times, Gomez is turned loose around the bag. He's improved tremen- improvement is the change-up pitch that running to put runs on the board. dously at the plate also (.402 batting he's developed. He's a control pitcher In '89, the Spartans ran with controlled

Coach Marty Miller has assembled a ball. "Chris really started to develop this ter." speed, power hitting, and solid pitching. difference this year is that he's gained a This past season the Spartans won lot of confidence in his abilities. He

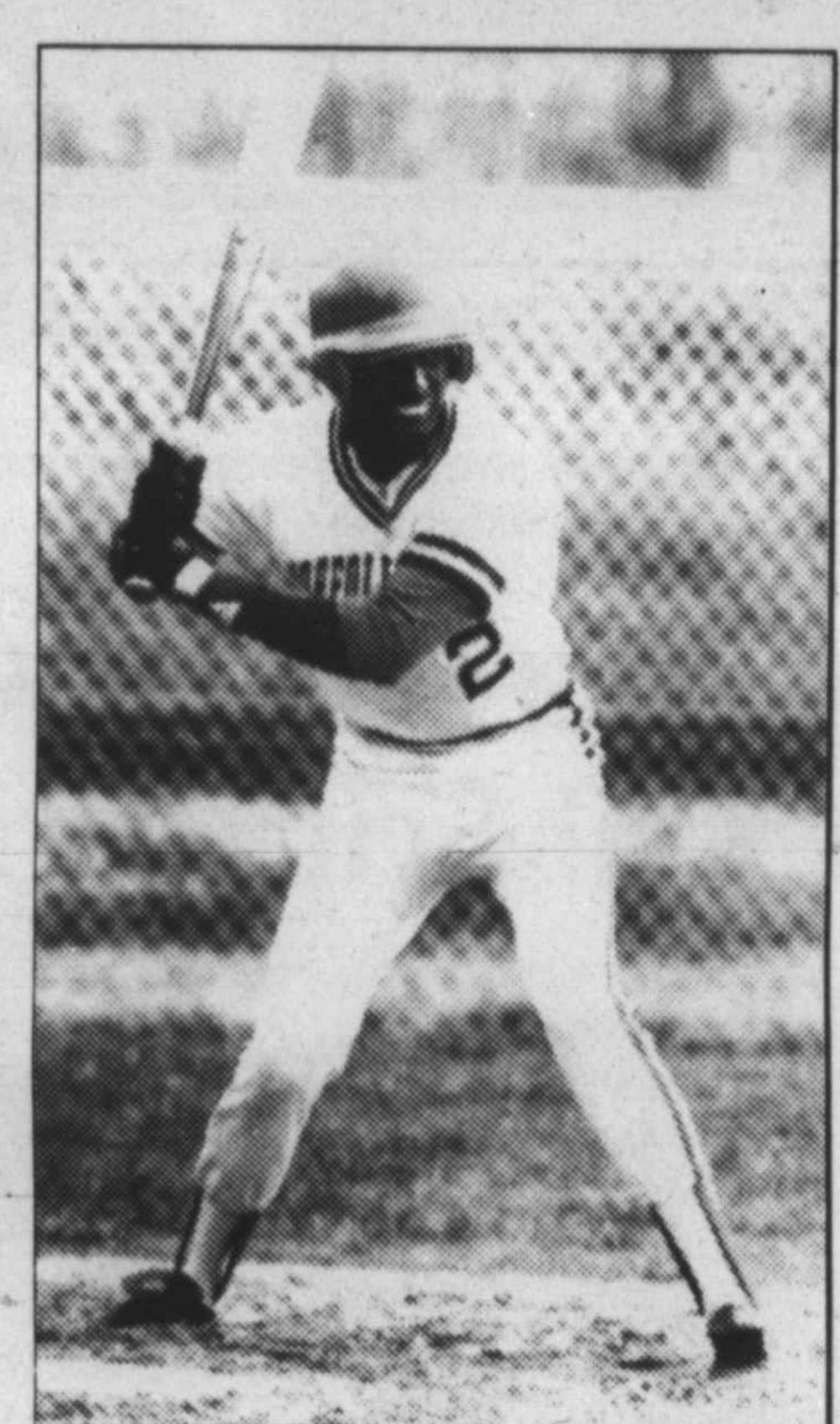


Photo Courtesy of Norfolk State

Chris Mitchell does the job at the second base got high marks from opposing coaches and pro scouts

that he is the better ballplayer."

With Wearing around, NSU opponents knew that the Spartans had the big stick. They soon found out that they had some stellar pitching to go along with the bats and the defense.

Washington Wilkerson was the man in the Spartans' pitching rotation. On the miserly two home runs, and was even 124 runs. The burly slugger may or may not be more stingy in giving up runs (1.95

> The junior from Richmond, Va. displayed his wares in the playoffs. He more than held his own, pitching 10 innings against Shippensburg before being lifted

Even though Mitchell has raised his the count. And since he's able to change everytime NSU put runners on base. As a level of play, Miller feels he'll be better speeds on all of his pitches and he has team they stole 120 bases in 40 games -off by playing another season of college good control, he's gotten that much bet- an average of three per contest.

who can throw any pitch regardless of abandon and gave opponents nightmares

Trevor Peterson led the assault on the cast that possesses all of the tools it takes year," the coach said. "He has always While Wilkerson is the pitching staff's base paths, pacing the team with 34 to win consistently on a national level -- been fundamentally sound. But the big ace, he isn't the only promising prospect. thefts. Mitchell had 23 stolen bases and



Photo Courtesy of Norfolk State

Mel Wearing is the power guy for the Spartans. Over the last two seations so that explains why so many teams struck out 61 in 60 innings, gave up a sons, he's touched opposing pitchers for 30 homers and has driven in

> Dwight Cherry (4-0, 2.45 ERA), Corey Pierre Gomez added 16. Phillips (5-2, 3.51 ERA) and Antonio Boone (3-2) form the nucleus of a mound staff that promises to be even tougher in

Miller realizes that Mitchell returning along with catcher Seldon Winer, the Spartans will be a good defensive team.

"We use our speed as a basic part of our offensive plan," Miller added. "I have people on this team who have a free sign to steal. And I think it's good that you have those kinds of athletes, as long as they're good base runners."

Peterson and Terry Bradshaw (.300, 12 SBs) are the pair that get the green

- Orlando Martinez

## TENNIS

## Hampton proudly wears the national crown

sion II tennis nationals for the past four by margins of 5-4. years was getting a little old for Hampton University. During that span, the Pirates had proven themselves to be among the best, if not the best in nation.

The only problem was that they were never able to get over the hump and capture the tournament trophy.

This year, that changed. The Pirates took no prisoners, flooring all teams that stood in their way and winning their second national title in school history. Their victory in Bolivar, Mo. on the campus of Southwest Baptist last time HU won the nationals was 1976.

No. 1 - Luis Nascimento

No. 3 - Marco Azevedo

No. 4 - Innocent Modica

No. 6 - Muritala Ajibade

No. 7 - Steven Martin

No. 1 - Ul-Haq/Ajibade

No. 3 - Modica/Atiomo

No. 2 - Nascimento/Azevedo

World melting pot" because many of the

1 margin, with Cal-Poly San Luis Obispo

semi-finals. (Last year it was Chapman

handled would-be contenders in the es."

finals: Luis Nascimento downed Tim Fre-

Martin completed the win streak with a 6-

sive outings against Division I competi-

3, 2-6, 6-3 victory over Peter Killian.

players are from Africa and South Ameri-

The assemblage can be called a "Third always miss out."

matches. They defeated all comers by a 5- tougher.

No. 2 - Islam Ul-Haq

No. 5 - John Atiomo

PIRATES' SLATE

Hampton was so strong that they with more outward emotion and the psy-

becoming the final victim in the finals. ent," Screen confessed. "But this group of

Prior to that, Chapman College fell in the guys is more unified and more aggressive.

who won the championship by beating after us when they played Hampton.

Finishing No. 2 in the NCAA Divi- decisions to Florida and Oklahoma, both

In addition, they had two players ranked among the top 10 singles players in Division II (Nascimento at No. 2 and Ul-Haq at No. 8). The team also produced the No. 1 rated doubles team in the country with Ul-Haq and Muritala Ajibade.

"I believe that the major difference for us this year was that the tournament wasn't played in California," said Robert Screen, Hampton tennis coach. "When the tournaments are played out West, the California schools draw the large crowds and the teams root for each other. It's a very College ended a 13 year title drought. The slight advantage, but an advantage nonetheless when you're playing at that As usual, Hampton climbed to the level. Even though we came close to wintop with a team full of foreign players. ning it all for the last four years, we'd



Photo by Max Dunhill

Hampton's netters rallied around each other this season. The team breaks the huddle after an inspirational talk. Clockwise are Marco Azevedo, Islam UI-Haq, Innocent Modica, Eugenio Almeida and coach Robert Screen.

Hampton and spoiling an undefeated sea- They'd really get psyched and play us as injuries. Azevedo, the No. 3 player battled they dedicated themselves to showing the son). Bloomsburg University wilted under hard as possible. But that's been reversed HU's pressure in the opening round of because now, we go after them. We play hard and aggressive and we constantly injuries to both groins. This is how completely the Pirates encourage each other during the match-

That style was quite a change for all about," said Screen. "In those cases, senuia, 6-7, 6-1, 7-6; Islam Ul-Haq won Screen, who is the first to say that his they just stood in there and fought all the Screen explained. "But we put our heads over Brendon Walsh, 1-6, 7-5, 6-4; Marco mannerisms tend to be more low-key and way. We just have some guys who are together and told ourselves that we were Azevedo got the best of Alex Havrilenko, reserved. He felt it would take something 6-7, 7-5, 6-2; Innocent Modica prevailed extra for the team to cover the extra mile over Eric Sasao, 6-4, 6-4; John Atiomo that separates champions from the run-

defeated Max Allman, 6-4, 6-3; and Steve ners-up. "All season long, I kept stressing the point to be aggressive," Screen said. ". What Hampton accomplished was an told the guys that when it's time to play, extension of what they had done all year. they have to let it all come out and play They finished the regular season at 22-3 with spirit and emotion. That gave us that and were the top ranked team in the divi- extra ingredient. We were just more detersion. HU's slate included several impres- mined to win."

took on a modified look from previous

campaigns. This time around, HU played

"I've had better teams in terms of tal-

It used to be that people would always go

Were they ever.

Going into the championships, tion -- winning over North Carolina State, Oklahoma City, Virginia, Virginia Tech, Hampton wasn't in the very best of physi-North Texas State, William & Mary, and cal condition. Two of their prime players James Madison. They dropped two close toiled on court, but still won in spite of

back spasms. No. 5 player Atiomo played college tennis world that they would not gallantly while being saddled with painful only survive, but that they would come out stronger than ever. "That really typified what this team is

Modica is the same way." The beginning of the season didn't

look particularly promising for Screen's in the molding of his '89 championship team. They lost Nigerian senior-to-be team. "We had solid people at the 1, 2 Yakubu Suleiman to visa problems. and 3 positions," he said. "But what made Suleiman completed his junior year as the us even better is that we were a lot No. 1 ranked singles player in Division II. stronger than our opponents at No. 4, 5,

viewed as a nearly insurmountable set- tition." back. Without the top guy around, the thinking was that the Pirates would have a difficult time being a national contender

The HU crew, though, fought through the feeling of losing a key member and

"There's no doubt that losing Suleiman pulled us down emotionally, hard nosed and can play through pain. still a good team. And of course they proved that they could win without him."

Screen added that depth was critical Initially, Suleiman's absence was and 6. Plus we did well in doubles compe-

> Now that Hampton finally has got the monkey off its back. Screen wants to continue what took place this year.

> > His theme? -- Play it again Pirates.

-Evan Nottingham