

• **EAST vs. WEST:** For 11 times in the past 15 years, the Western representatives have held the edge over the Eastern champions in the NCHSAA

state basketball championships, but for the second year in a row, the 2014 championships were an even four-four split.

This year's finals saw three of the four Eastern teams win the games in Reynolds Coliseum while the West took three of four at Smith Center. In 2013, it was the East taking three of four at the Smith Center and the West holding the edge at Reynolds.

The years the East representatives have held the advantage are 2012 and 2006.

In the 2012 championships, the East took five of the eight titles. Eastern teams swept the four games at Reynolds Coliseum while the West representative took three of four at the Smith Center. Eastern teams took both the 2-A and 4-A titles for men and women, along with the 3-A men's crown.

In the 2011 championships, the Western representative took seven of the eight title games, with only Winterville South Central breaking through with a 61-58 overtime victory at Reynolds Coliseum over Hickory for the 3-A women's crown.

In 2010, for the second straight year, the Western representative took six of the eight title games, with Kinston in the 2-A men and Rocky Mount in the 3-A men breaking through for the East.

In 2009, the Western representative took six of the eight finals, with only Dudley in the 3-A women and Northern Guilford in the 3-A men winning out of the East, but later Northern Guilford had to vacate its title.

NCHSAA CHAMPIONSHIP NOTEBOOK

Written by Rick Strunk

Wednesday, 19 March 2014 12:01

The West took five of the eight championship games in 2008, and the 2007 count had the West winning five of eight, but in 2006, the East representatives took six of the eight titles, with only Bishop McGuinness in the 1-A women and South Mecklenburg in the 4-A women's games winning for the West.

Western teams took five of eight championships during the 2005 Super Saturday activities, six of eight titles in 2004 and seven of eight championships during the 2003 finals. Only Fayetteville Seventy-First, with its 4-A women's triumph over Charlotte Zeb Vance by a 50-47 count, was able to give the East a victory in 2003.

The 2002 championships represent the only time that one side of the state has swept the other in the 30-plus years using the regional format, as the Western champions captured all eight of those NCHSAA title games, four men's games and four women's games. In 2001, the West went 6-2, with only East Bladen in the 2-A men's title game and Winston-Salem Carver in the 3-A women's championship breaking through for the East. In 2000, seven of the eight championships went to Western representatives, with only Whiteville's narrow victory over Pittsboro Northwood in the 2-A men's final preventing a complete sweep by the West over the East.

• **WEST IS STRONG HERE:** the victory by Kernersville Bishop McGuinness over Riverside (Martin) by 61-58 in the state 1-A women's final at the Smith Center continued a solid trend for the Western champ in that classification. The West has now won 26 of the last 28 titles in the 1-A classification for women. The only Eastern teams to break through during this time were Union in 1998 and Lakewood in 1994.

It was also the ninth consecutive title for Bishop McGuinness in the women's championships,

Written by Rick Strunk

Wednesday, 19 March 2014 12:01

now the longest string of state titles in basketball. The previous consecutive streak was owned by Hayesville, which won six under coach Darryl McClure from 1988 through '93.

• **IT MADE SPORTSCENTER:** Bishop McGuinness defeated Riverside on a last-second shot by Alex Putman on Saturday—the only basket that Putman made all night, and it wound up as part of ESPN's Top Ten plays on SportsCenter. Putnam led the ball fly with her foot right on the NC logo in the middle of the floor, and the half court three-pointer dropped in to give the Villains the 61-58 triumph.

• **AS A PLAYER, AS A COACH:** Freedom head men's basketball coach Casey Rogers has an amazing accomplishment with NCHSAA state championships. Rogers earned one as a player, earning the Most Valuable Player honor in the 1998 championship as the Patriots beat Fayetteville Pine Forest 74-59 in that title game, and then guided his team as the head coach to a dramatic 59-57 victory over Wilson Hunt in this year's 3-A men's final. Kasen Wilson's jumper in the waning seconds lifted Freedom to the victory.

NCHSAA CHAMPIONSHIP NOTEBOOK

Written by Rick Strunk

Wednesday, 19 March 2014 12:01

In that '98 final, point guard Rogers, the son of head coach Terry Rogers, had 23 points and 11 assists to earn MVP honors and lead the Patriots to their 30th win in 31 games. Nick Collette added 18 points and Cory Largent scored 15 to go with 10 rebounds for the winners. The Trojans narrowed the gap to 47-45 with 3:02 left in the third quarter before Rogers hit two key threes.

The NCHSAA just doesn't have any records to be able to track if a father/son combination has ever coached different teams to state championships in basketball.

•AT THE TOP OF THE LIST: Sherry Norris, the head women's basketball coach at Chapel Hill, is unusual in one regard, as she has compiled monumental coaching records in two different sports and she added a state championship last weekend. Norris, in her 38th year as head coach, has notched well over 500 career victories in basketball. Norris is also the all-time winningest coach in the sport of volleyball with a sterling record of 732-257. Her teams have won a pair of NCHSAA state championships in volleyball and now two in women's basketball. She was the recipient of the Toby Webb Award from the NCHSAA in 2012, which annually recognizes an outstanding male and female head coach, and was named to the "100 To Remember" list of coaches for the NCHSAA as part of its centennial celebration earlier this year.

NCHSAA CHAMPIONSHIP NOTEBOOK

Written by Rick Strunk

Wednesday, 19 March 2014 12:01

• **PERFECT RECORDS:** There were five schools that entered the NCHSAA state championship games with perfect records, but only one stayed unblemished after the weekend games. Chapel Hill and Hickory both entered the NCHSAA 3-A women's championship at the Smith Center with unbeaten records, and Chapel Hill downed Hickory 69-56 to finish the season 32-0.

Raziyah Farrington was named the Kay Yow MVP of that game, leading the victorious Tigers with 22 points, including three of three from behind the three-point arc and nine of 10 at the foul line.

The East Carteret men, the Bandys women, the Riverside (Martin) women and the aforementioned Hickory squad entered the state finals undefeated but lost in the championship.

Since 1987, there have been eight men's varsity teams to go through an NCHSAA basketball season without a loss, while Chapel Hill is the 21st women's squad to complete the season with a perfect record during that stretch.

• **LET IT FLY:** East Carteret had an exciting team to watch and almost snapped Winston-Salem Prep's string of 1-A men's championships. The Mariners fell 72-71 to the Phoenix at the Smith Center in another game that went down to the wire. Kwa'tre Hollingsworth's basket in the final seconds lifted Winston-Salem Prep to the victory.

East Carteret fired away with 29 three-point attempts during the game and nailed 14. Trevor Willis had 24 points for East, including six of 11 from behind the arc, and Sam Johnson contributed 20 points with five of eight from long range.

• **LOTS OF TITLES:** Kinston added to its storied history in basketball with its 10th all-time title in a whopping 20 appearances in the championship (Kinston was known officially as Grainger High prior to 1970). Kinston teams have now earned crowns in 1950, 1955, 1956, 1964, 1965, 2008, 2010 and '12, '13, and '14, so the Vikings have won four times in the last five years. It was the second straight title for Kinston coach Perry Tyndall, who assumed the Kinston reins when veteran coach Wells Gullledge resigned after the 2012 campaign.

• **OTHER OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES:** Brandon Ingram of Kinston had a great game in the Vikings' 67-57 2-A men's championship win over North Rowan. Ingram earned the Charlie Adams MVP honor with a 28-point, 16-rebound effort...Imani Watkins of High Point T.W. Andrews led the Red Raiders to a 57-51 win over previously unbeaten Bandys in the 2-A women's title game at Reynolds. Watkins pumped in 27 points and also had four steals and Bandys suffered its first loss in seven trips to the NCHSAA finals...Rydeiah Rogers of Charlotte Myers Park was the Kay Yow MVP in the 4-A women's championship with good reason. She poured in 25 points and grabbed 20 rebounds, including nine off the offensive glass, as her team beat Southeast Raleigh 61-46. Myers Park had a 25-0 edge in second-chance points in that game...Ian Boyd had 25 points and eight rebounds and T.J. Evans added 22 to lead Apex to a 62-59 triumph in the 4-A men's championship at Reynolds. Boyd was named the Charlie Adams MVP.

• **TIME WARNER TELEVISION:** all eight of the state championship basketball games are available to Time Warner Cable subscribers across the state on Carolina Video on Demand. They were all available on live television on the Time Warner system on Saturday. Personnel calling the games included Mike Solarte, Paul Biancardi, Caroline Blair, Jim Connors, Patrick Kinsas, Joe Simmons, Paige Woodard, and Paul Doherty.

• **OTHER RANDOM NOTES:** Northern Durham and Garner High Schools served as the official hosts for the championship ...the Bouncing Bulldogs, the famous rope-skipping demonstration team from Durham, provided the halftime entertainment at the men's 3-A final on Saturday night and the women's 4-A final earlier and were once again well received by the crowd. The Bouncing Bulldogs, under the direction of Ray Fredrick, have become one of the highlights for fans attending the championship games and have come to the championships for the last 28 years...live statistics and live video streaming of all championship games were available on Saturday on the NCHSAA web site.