

SPORTS BRIEFS



Bears' Miller to miss rest of regular season

Chicago Bear's starting quarterback, Jim Miller, has been suspended for the team final four regular season game after testing positive for the use of steroids violating the NFL. An NFL spokesperson has said the Miller violated the leagues policy on anabolic steroids and related substances. The substance Miller was using was not identified. A Bears' representative said that the team would not comment until a Wednesday afternoon conference. Miller is the third NFL drug suspension in the last two weeks. Others NFL players were New York Giants rookie safety Lyle West and New York Jets tackle Jason Ferguson.

SEC refs suspended for fumble call

The crew that officiated the Georgia-Georgia Tech game has been suspended by the Southeastern Conference after they missed a crucial last minute call in Saturday's game. The seven man crew was rated the best in the SEC but they ruled Jasper Sanks fumble at the one yard line wrong. Television replays show that the ball popped out after Sanks hit the ground. The score was tied 48-48 when the ball was awarded to Tech, taking away the chance for a Georgia fieldgoal. The Yellow Jackets went on to win 51-48 in overtime. It has been ruled that the team will not officiate the ACC title game between Florida and Alabama. Many officials involved will also lose their post season assignments. The SEC has not yet commented if the officials could be fired.

Rockets face up to six weeks without Olajuwon

Houston Rocket's starting center Hakeem Olajuwon did not have a groin strain but a hernia that will require surgery. After further examination Tuesday an inguinal hernia was revealed which will bench Olajuwon for the next 4-6 weeks. At first he was expected to miss 3-4 weeks due to the groin strain but now will miss 4-6. A Rocket's spokesperson said Olajuwon will have surgery Wednesday to be performed by team physician Dr. Walter Lowe. "I think that almost all of his symptoms are coming from the hernia," Lowe said.



Man U wins World Cup thriller

Manchester United beats Palmeiras of Brazil 1-0 at the Tokyo National Stadium Tuesday to become the first British club to win the World Club Cup. United skipper Roy Keane scored a goal in the 35th minute to give Man U the lead. Keane lead his team to their fourth major honor of the year winning the European Cup, the English League Championship and the F. A. Cup last season.

Home game attendance wanes



50,092 fans packed Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium for the Pirates home game against N.C. State (above), while fan support for other sports dwindles. (photo by Emily Richardson)

Lack of fan support disappoints teams

Tiffany Waters
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Sometimes empty seats can be louder than the roar of a crowd.

"I'm sad that there is not more support for our own teams," said sophomore spectator Cynthia Laney. "I don't understand why people don't support other teams like they do football."

Football can probably be considered the most dominant sport at ECU, but according to some students, it's not the only one that deserves respect and fan support.

"Yeah, I think there should be more people at all the games," said sophomore spectator John Lowe.

Yes, football finished very well this year and accepted a bowl bid but they are one of many teams that have excelled this year.

The women's soccer team has its best season ever, going 11-5-1, setting a new school record for the most season wins. The Lady Pirates also set the record for most shutouts with five straight in mid-season plays.

With great accomplishments like these, you would think the stands would be packed full of proud Pirates, yet they're not.

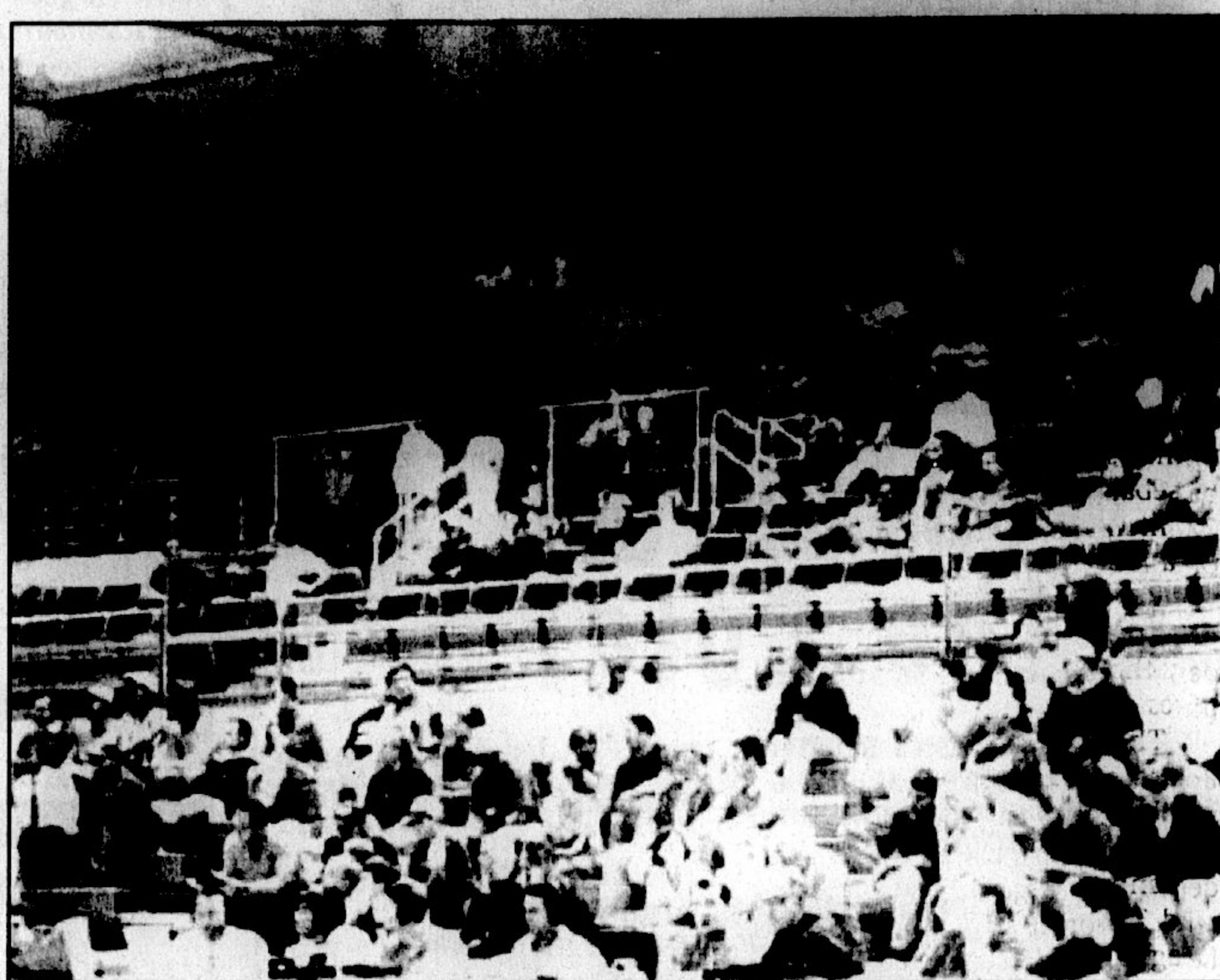
"Fans are apathetic," said women's basketball Head Coach Dee Gibson. "I feel that if you want to have a winning team, support them anyways."

Women's basketball is another sport at ECU that has lackluster fan support. The team has had a few losing seasons but showed promise last year with a winning season and having two players named to the CAA second team.

Men's soccer has also shown vast improvement over the years, but the number of fans in the stands is dwindling.

ECU students and staff are allotted free tickets to most non-revenue sports.

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Empty seats are common at home basketball games. (photo by Emily Richardson)

ECU Facility Capacities

Facility	Capacity
Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium	Football 50,000
Williams Arena	Volleyball 7,500
Harrington Field	Baseball 2,000
Bunting Field	Soccer 500
ECU Softball Field	Softball 500

Source: ECU Media Relations

Game attendance

Sport	Total Season Attendance	Per Game Average
Women's Soccer	65	12.22
7 home games		
Men's Soccer	724	120.67
8 home games		
9 away games	1,497	166.33
Football	200,495	40,099
5 home games		
4 away games	151,650	37,912.5
2 neutral site games	93,760	46,880

Veney leads Lady Pirates to victory

Senior guard aims to be among CAA elite

Tiffany Waters
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Senior guard Waynetta Veney is the perfect example of leadership and excellence on and off the court.

"I think that she really rededicated herself this summer," said Head Coach Dee Gibson. "She lost like 28 pounds, and she has really refocused herself."

Veney, a 5-10 guard from Hampton, Va. begins her second season at ECU after transferring from the College of Charleston.

"I think as a person she really matured and changed a lot, and I think that's for the better," Gibson said. "It's only going to make her a better person and a better player."

She is the lady Pirates' leading scorer with an average of 13.7 points per game.

"I think I know the game of basketball, and I do a great job of reading it," Veney said.

"I think I have a long ways to go and that there is always room for improvement."

Veney also lead the Pirate team with 106 assists in the 1998-99 season. "She is one of our leaders this year, and I think that she is doing a good job so far," Gibson said. "She's playing well and we're real pleased with her effort so far."

Veney was ranked fifth last year in CAA scoring with an average of 14.2 points per game.

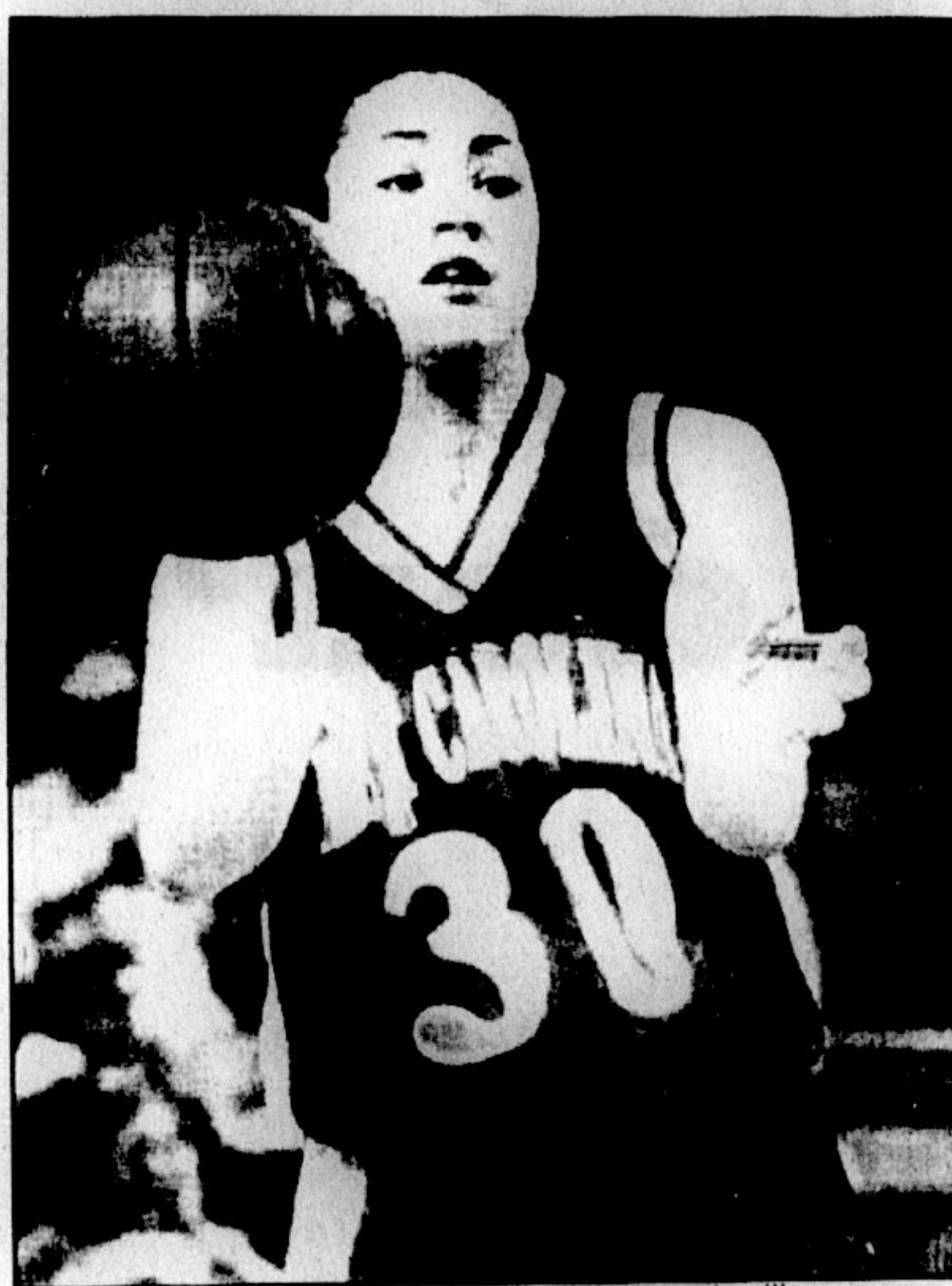
"She is pretty unstoppable off the dribble," Gibson said. "That was one of her trademarks last year."

Veney was also CAA's third overall assist leader with 125 total and 4.46 average per game. Veney finished fourth in free throw percentage making 118 of 151 with a .775 season average.

"She shot the most free throws of anybody on our team," Gibson said. "That's because she can really take the ball to the basket well."

In 1998 Veney was named the CAA Player of the Week for the week of Nov. 30.

"She's getting better defensively," Gibson said. "Last year we couldn't get her to help anybody else, but now she's helping. But her on-ball defense isn't very good, so we've got to get a happy medium."



Veney returns for her senior season and will assume a leadership role on the Lady Pirates squad. (courtesy of ECU Media Relations)

Veney is off to a great start this year as well.

"I want to win for my team and myself that's my main goal," Veney said. "I think if we're all successful then all of the individual things [records] will fall into place."

Veney is currently ranked fifth in scoring with an average of 21 points per game and is tied for fifth in assists with an average of four per game.

"She really gets the team pumped up when she plays," said senior forward Danielle Melvin. "She has great court vision and is great off the dribble."

Teammate Rosalyn Canady and Veney are tied for first in 3-point field goal percentage.

"Her shot off the dribble is really her best asset," Melvin said. "She's really leading the team now, too."

Veney is majoring in communications and hopes to be coach or cover collegiate basketball after college.

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Club sports season complete

Teams returned to competition despite hurricane, flood interruptions

Susanne Milenkevich
SENIOR WRITER

As the semester comes to an end, many student activities are wrapping up for the holiday break.

ECU club teams are a few of the activities that are finishing their semester long seasons before returning after the break for spring semester competition.

Although some clubs missed events due to Hurricane Floyd, they were able to return to competition and complete their seasons.

"They [club sports] did very well considering we had to deal with the hurricane and the flood," said Gray Hodges, recreational coordinator. "But after it, we did great."

Many teams had stand-out finishes in competition and also hosted a number of tournaments this season.

The ECU swim club traveled to Elon two times this year and hosted the annual Pirate Invitational at Minges pool.

"We had some fast times this year," said Michelle Nepton, swim club president. "We set some new team records as well."

The swim club ended the season when they traveled to Elon College for the East Coast Swim Championships where the men's team placed second and the women's fourth in a field of 10 teams.

Ultimate frisbee traveled to the Sectional Championships where they faced a mix of collegiate and club teams. Out of the 14 men's teams and eight women's teams at the competition, ECU placed fifth but failed to qualify for regional championships.

The ultimate frisbee team will conclude their season this weekend when the Ultimate Helios women's team hosts eight other teams and the Irates men's team hosts 18 men's teams at Blount Fields beginning at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

The rugby team played in seven matches, finishing 5-4, this season then went to the state tournament in Fayetteville where the team finished third.

"We had a lot of new guys this year and started out on the rough side," said Frank Snyder, rugby team president. "We finished third in the tournament, though, so that's something good for us."

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