

## INSIDE:

Bears and Eagles rivalry makes for OT thriller, Lady Rams advance to finals, but fall to Jacksonville and... West Craven falls to North Lenoir in holiday tourney.



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## It's All Sports Playoff dreams show life



With Eric Voliva

Spending a week calculating division records while running through every possible playoff scenario in the NFL will drive a man to madness.

I knew there were going to be a few 10-win teams sitting back and watching the playoffs from home, but even knowing this, I wasn't about to let myself get wrapped up in the hype.

I was just going to watch the game with confidence, knowing that my team was going to win and secure its rightful place in the playoffs.

Or so I thought.

I ended up chewing through a bottle of antacid, while attempting to keep myself cool by dousing my face in cold water every three minutes.

And that was all before kick-off.

But through it all, I kept wondering how Pete, from a few doors down, was doing, as his Patriots had all but clinched a playoff berth.

He was probably sitting there wondering the exact same thing about me, as my Panthers, on the other hand, were soon to be engaged in mortal combat with their I-85 nemesis, the Falcons.

The odds were stacked against Carolina—Vick and the Falcons were 5-1 versus the Panthers—but I had to remain confident, even as the ulcer in my stomach grew to rival the size of the 16-pound bowling ball stashed in some remote corner of my office.

A very small office, I might add, but adequate enough for my simple musings.

Anyway, I sat there, slowly

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INDEPENDENT REGISTER/ERIC VOLIVA

Rams Milton Brown leaps over Croatan defenders for an attempted jump shot in the 68-45 Havelock win in the first round of the tournament.

## Rams win out in tourney

Rams beat Croatan early, then advance to defeat Patriots for title

BY ERIC VOLIVA  
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

MOREHEAD CITY—The Havelock boys basketball team outscored opponents in the holiday tournament, hosted by West Carteret Dec. 28-29, by a combined total of 29 points—paving the way to a tournament championship.

The Rams locked up the first game of the tournament against Croatan early and used a smothering defense to hold the Cougars to 45 points in the 68-45 rout.

The Cougars attempted to slow down the Rams scoring by continuously fouling Havelock throughout the fourth period, but the Rams were able to connect on the majority of their shots and pull away, sealing the victory over Croatan.

Andrew Taylor led the team with 14 points, while Steve Gonzalez had 12 points, Nikkio White had 11 points and Milton Brown had 10.

The Rams also took the ball away from the Cougars 30 times in the blowout.

Havelock rolled into the finals with a win under their belt, and a little bit

more confidence to boot.

The Rams started the game slow, allowing West Carteret to hold them to only three points in the first eight minutes, but the Rams pulled themselves together, outscoring the Patriots 12-6 in the final quarter of the game, leading to the dramatic come-from-behind 41-35 victory over West Carteret.

In the win, the Rams forced the Patriots to commit 18 turnovers.

Bruce Carter had a solid all-around performance, scoring 15 points, pulling down nine rebounds and blocking four shots.

## Cardinals light up Havelock

Rams' Carrie Lynch and Bears' Tiffany Brown make All-Tournament Team



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/COREY FRIEDMAN

Rams' Courtney Everette steadies herself for a foul shot attempt in Havelock's loss to the Cardinals.

BY COREY FRIEDMAN  
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

HAVELOCK — She lit up the scoreboard. She confounded coaches. She left opposing defenses in tatters.

And for her efforts, Jacksonville's Martha White was named the most valuable player of the Donna Comer State Farm Holiday Classic on Dec. 29 and 30, leading her Cardinals to a 45-28 rout of Havelock in the final round of this annual girls' basketball tournament.

White scored 23 points in the tournament final Dec. 30, vaulting Jacksonville over the hosting Rams (5-6), who entered the 2005 tournament with three consecutive Donna Comer championships to their credit.

"It's something we talked about, maintaining and keeping that tradition up," said Havelock head coach Anna Spear, whose Rams had high hopes for a fourth straight win. "When a tournament takes place in your house, you want it to belong to you even more."

Jacksonville (12-2) advanced to the tournament championship after edging New Bern 33-30 on Dec. 29. White led the way with 14 points, but Cardinals head coach B.J. McManus

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## Bears squeak past Eagles

A thrilling performance by the Eagles falls short on the road

BY COREY FRIEDMAN  
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

A county rivalry continues to percolate as a tension-filled contest between New Bern and West Craven stoked school pride Dec. 20 at the Bears' Den.

After a seesaw fourth quarter, Tony Jones sank a mid-range jumper with one second remaining to bring West Craven within a single point as New Bern held on for the 73-72 overtime win.

"They were jacked from the start being cross-town rivals, and I knew they were going to be. I tried to calm them down a little," said Eagles head coach Chris McDonald. "It's going to be a slugout any time you've got two schools 10 miles apart. Any time they get together, there's going to be an explosion."

McDonald expressed pride in West Craven's performance, but said the Eagles came up short at the foul line, going 3-of-8 in the first half and 13-of-28 on the evening.

"The main difference in the game was just hitting free throws for us," he said.

New Bern advanced to 4-5 overall and 3-0 in the Coastal 8 Conference, while West Craven fell to 4-6 and 1-3.

The Eagles entered the locker room down 24-23 at halftime, then attacked the boards in the third quarter, amassing a 29-25 lead



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Eagles' Rasheen Gatlin defends Bears' Geoff McLawhorn.

on consecutive scores from Jones, who paced West Craven with 27 points in the effort. Donte Fields led the Bears with 14 points.

Swapping the lead throughout the second half, both teams bared their teeth in a fast-

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## Eagles fall in finals to Hawks

Eagles defeat Eastern Wayne in first round, but fall in finals

BY ERIC VOLIVA  
THE INDEPENDENT REGISTER

LA GRANGE—All signs pointed towards West Craven winning *The Free Press Holiday Invitational*, but North Lenoir had other ideas, as the Hawks outscored the Eagles 87-66 in the final game of the tournament on Dec. 30.

West Craven defeated Eastern Wayne in the first round of the tournament, overcoming a 14-point deficit with 3:28 left in the fourth period.

The Eagles then went on to outscore the Warriors 17-5 in the remaining three minutes to tie the score at 68-68, sending the game into overtime.

In the 4-minute extra period, the Eagles grabbed the lead with a Donte Stewart 3-pointer and wouldn't relinquish it, even when the Warriors stormed back and tied it at 74-74.

West Craven went on to score four more points, closing the game out at 79-75.

Eagles Tony Jones paced the game with 28 points, while teammate Stewart was nipping at his heels with 19.

Eagles head coach Chris McDonald didn't feel he had to do anything special to defeat Eastern Wayne, just keep the Warriors from scoring from the perimeter.

"I didn't have to double team anyone, but



INDEPENDENT REGISTER/WILLIAM R. TOLER

Eagles' Mike Best is blocked by a North Lenoir defender as he attempts a layup.

I came in with the game plan tonight to take away the 3-point shot. They were shooting close to 50 percent from the 3-point line as a team," McDonald said.

In the next, and final, round of the tournament,

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6 Pack	Jacksonville @ New England NFL AFC Wild Card (Jan. 7)	Washington @ Tampa Bay NFL NFC Wild Card (Jan. 7)	Charlotte @ Orlando NBA (Jan. 7)	Detroit @ Carolina NHL (Jan. 10)	Pittsburgh @ Cincinnati NFL AFC Wild Card (Jan. 8)	Carolina @ N.Y. Giants NFL NFC Wild Card (Jan. 8)
Eric Voliva Record: 27-15	Patriots	Buccaneers	Bobcats	Hurricanes	Bengals	Panthers
William Toler Record: 23-19	Patriots	Buccaneers	Bobcats	Red Wings	Steelers	Panthers
Corey Friedman Record: 28-14	Patriots	Buccaneers	Magic	Red Wings	Steelers	Panthers

# Sports Scores

All scores and standings are current as of Tuesday, Jan. 3.

## NFL Scores

WL Record	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	Final Score	
<b>Carolina</b>	(11-5)	14	13	10	7	44
<b>Atlanta</b>	(8-8)	3	0	0	8	11
<b>Denver</b>	(13-3)	0	14	2	7	23
<b>San Diego</b>	(9-7)	0	7	0	0	7
<b>Cincinnati</b>	(11-5)	3	0	0	0	3
<b>Kansas City</b>	(10-6)	3	17	10	7	37
<b>Seattle</b>	(13-3)	0	7	7	3	17
<b>Green Bay</b>	(3-12)	6	7	7	3	23
<b>Detroit</b>	(5-11)	14	0	7	0	21
<b>Pittsburgh</b>	(11-5)	14	7	14	0	35
<b>Miami</b>	(9-7)	7	6	5	10	28
<b>New England</b>	(10-6)	7	3	3	13	26
<b>Tennessee</b>	(4-12)	0	0	0	13	13
<b>Jacksonville</b>	(12-4)	17	10	13	0	40
<b>Chicago</b>	(11-5)	3	0	0	7	10
<b>Minnesota</b>	(9-7)	0	17	7	10	34
<b>N.Y. Giants</b>	(11-5)	7	13	7	3	30
<b>Oakland</b>	(4-12)	7	7	7	0	21
<b>Arizona</b>	(5-11)	0	3	7	3	13
<b>Indianapolis</b>	(14-2)	7	3	7	0	17
<b>Baltimore</b>	(6-10)	0	13	3	0	16
<b>Cleveland</b>	(6-10)	0	6	14	0	20
<b>New Orleans</b>	(3-13)	0	10	0	3	13
<b>Tampa Bay</b>	(11-5)	7	10	0	10	27
<b>Buffalo</b>	(5-11)	3	10	10	3	26
<b>N.Y. Jets</b>	(4-12)	3	14	3	10	30
<b>St. Louis</b>	(6-10)	0	10	0	10	20
<b>Dallas</b>	(9-7)	7	3	0	0	10
<b>Washington</b>	(10-6)	17	7	7	10	41
<b>Philadelphia</b>	(6-10)	0	7	3	7	17
<b>Houston</b>	(2-14)	0	10	7	3	0
<b>San Francisco</b>	(4-12)	7	3	0	14	3

## NHL Standings

Atlantic		Central	
Philadelphia	(25-8-6)	Detroit	(26-9-3)
N.Y. Rangers	(22-12-5)	Nashville	(24-10-3)
New Jersey	(16-18-5)	Chicago	(13-21-4)
N.Y. Islanders	(17-19-2)	St. Louis	(10-22-5)
Pittsburgh	(10-19-9)	Columbus	(12-26-1)
Northeast		Northwest	
Ottawa	(27-7-3)	Calgary	(24-12-4)
Buffalo	(26-12-2)	Edmonton	(22-14-4)
Toronto	(24-13-3)	Vancouver	(21-13-5)
Montreal	(18-13-6)	Colorado	(20-17-3)
Boston	(14-19-6)	Minnesota	(18-17-4)
Southeast		Pacific	
Carolina	(24-10-4)	Los Angeles	(26-14-2)
Tampa Bay	(20-17-3)	Dallas	(24-12-2)
Atlanta	(18-17-6)	Anaheim	(18-15-6)
Florida	(16-20-5)	Phoenix	(20-18-2)
Washington	(13-21-3)	San Jose	(16-16-5)

## NFL Standings

NFC North		AFC North	
Chicago	(11-5)	Cincinnati	(11-5)
Minnesota	(9-7)	Pittsburgh	(11-5)
Detroit	(5-11)	Baltimore	(6-10)
Green Bay	(4-12)	Cleveland	(6-10)
NFC South		AFC South	
Tampa Bay	(11-5)	Indianapolis	(14-2)
Carolina	(11-5)	Jacksonville	(12-4)
Atlanta	(8-8)	Tennessee	(4-12)
New Orleans	(3-13)	Houston	(2-14)
NFC East		AFC East	
N.Y. Giants	(11-5)	New England	(10-6)
Washington	(10-6)	Miami	(9-7)
Dallas	(9-7)	Buffalo	(5-11)
Philadelphia	(6-10)	N.Y. Jets	(4-12)
NFC West		AFC West	
Seattle	(13-3)	Denver	(13-3)
St. Louis	(6-10)	Kansas City	(10-6)
Arizona	(5-11)	San Diego	(10-6)
San Francisco	(4-12)	Oakland	(4-12)

## NBA Standings

Atlantic	
New Jersey	(17-12)
Philadelphia	(15-15)
Boston	(12-18)
Toronto	(9-22)
New York	(8-21)
Central	
Detroit	(25-4)
Cleveland	(18-10)
Milwaukee	(17-11)
Indiana	(16-12)
Chicago	(12-18)
Southeast	
Miami	(19-13)
Orlando	(12-16)
Washington	(12-17)
Charlotte	(10-21)
Atlanta	(7-22)
Pacific	
Phoenix	(19-11)
L.A. Clippers	(17-12)
Golden State	(17-15)
L.A. Lakers	(15-15)
Sacramento	(12-17)
Southwest	
San Antonio	(24-7)
Dallas	(23-8)
Memphis	(20-10)
New Orleans	(13-17)
Houston	(11-18)
Northwest	
Minnesota	(14-14)
Utah	(15-16)
Denver	(15-17)
Seattle	(13-17)
Portland	(10-21)

## New Bern slides past West Craven

**Continued from Page B1**  
tempo tussle between dominant offenses, with neither pulling ahead by more than five points. Claude Shields drilled a jumper to give the Bears a narrow one-bucket lead as the 4-minute overtime period began. Spectators rose to their feet and cheered each basket — fists pumping and feet stomping in approval — fueling an already volatile atmosphere on the court. With six seconds left in overtime, Shields canned 2-of-2 from the charity stripe, giving New Bern a 73-69 lead that withstood Jones' 3-point blast at the buzzer. "Once we have a lead at the end of the game, we're running our delay game offense a little bit, and obviously, that was our strategy tonight," said Bears head coach Tod Morgan. Morgan compared the Eagles' lethal one-two punch of Tony Jones and Donte Stewart with Duke's duo of J.J. Redick and Greg Paulus. Stepping up the pressure on Jones with double coverage leaves Stewart open for the clutch 3-pointer, the coach explained. "You've got to pick your poison," he said. "We try to [cover] both."

## Hawks fight past Eagles in finals

**Continued from Page B1**  
ment, McDonald and his Eagles faced a much tougher opponent in the North Lenoir Hawks. The Hawks managed to hold fast and keep the score within 2 points at the end of the first half, but the Hawks adjusted and devastated West Craven in the third quarter. The Hawks outscored the Eagles 21-8 in the third quarter, and West Craven was never able to recover from that deficit, eventually slipping even deeper in the fourth period. The Hawks swept past the Eagles to win the tournament 87-66. Notable efforts from the game were West Craven's Tony Jones scoring his 1,000th point and being named to the all-tournament team. Teammate Donte Stewart was also named to the all-tournament team, while the Hawks Omar Jones managed a double-double with 32 points and 11 rebounds, while also being named to the all-tournament team. The West Craven boys are next scheduled to take on D.H. Conley at home on Jan. 6, at 7 p.m.

## ACC Corner

### Women's Basketball

Duke	(12-0)	Boston College	(12-2)
N.C. State	(10-3)	Miami	(10-2)
North Carolina	(13-0)	Florida State	(9-4)
Maryland	(13-1)	Clemson	(6-8)
Georgia Tech	(11-1)	Virginia Tech	(12-1)
Virginia	(10-1)	Wake Forest	(7-5)

### Men's Basketball

Duke	(13-0)	Wake Forest	(11-2)
N.C. State	(12-1)	North Carolina	(8-2)
Maryland	(10-2)	Boston College	(11-2)
Georgia Tech	(7-4)	Virginia Tech	(10-4)
Florida State	(9-1)	Miami	(8-6)
Clemson	(11-2)	Virginia	(6-5)

## NFL playoff dreams

**Continued from Page B1**  
washing away the chalky aftertaste of antacid lingering in the back of my mouth with a cold Pepsi, as I watched my Panthers march down the field on their opening drive and score a touchdown. The fear I felt earlier slowly faded, and all but disappeared late in the fourth quarter, when Carolina had a comfortable four-touchdown lead—and the win. Now, I sit here elated, knowing 11-5 = playoffs.

## Jacksonville girls win out over Havelock girls in Holiday Classic tournament

**Continued from Page B1**  
complimented New Bern (5-6) on a clever defensive strategy that blunted the MVP's impact. "They knew us very well," McManus said. "She [New Bern head coach Phylliss Willis] had a good game strategy. She had two girls who did an admirable job on Martha down low." For her part, Willis said New Bern "missed too many easy shots in the beginning of the game," leading to a close

contest that the Bears' Tracy Collins nearly forced into overtime with a 3-point shot that clanged off the rim in the closing seconds of the fourth quarter. Havelock earned its championship bid with an 80-26 thrashing of a shorthanded Pamlico team in the tournament's first round. Jesselyn LaValley led the Rams with 14 points. Lace Collins added 14 to the total and Carrie Lynch posted 13. "Lace Collins showed

greater leadership on the court," Spear said. "Pamlico was without their players tonight...they're a very competitive team and very athletic." Kelsey Bell paced the Hurricanes (1-8) with 8 points. Pamlico head coach Garry Cooper said his team was crippled by the absence of nine players, who were out of town on holiday vacations. "Havelock has a great team, and the eight we had tonight gave it all they had,"

he said. New Bern downed Pamlico 64-36 in the tournament's consolation round on Dec. 30. After the tournament champion Cardinals received their plaque and the Rams accepted their runner-up plaque, officials announced the All-Tournament Team, comprised of Kelsey Bell (Pamlico), Tiffany Brown (New Bern), Desiree Pickett (Jacksonville), Carrie Lynch (Havelock) and tourney MVP Martha White (Jacksonville).

## Independent Register

# NFL Top Performers

NFL Week 17

	Quarterback	Pts.	Running back #1	Pts.	Running back #2	Pts.	Wide Receiver	Pts.	Defense	Pts.	Total Pts.
<b>Voliva - 602 pts</b>	J. Delhomme	14	S. Alexander	13	T. Barber	35	S. Smith	22	Panthers	20	<b>104</b>
<b>Friedman - 491 pts</b>	T. Brady	4	C. Williams	8	J. Bettis	22	C. Johnson	5	Buccaneers	22	<b>61</b>
<b>Toler - 523 pts</b>	B. Roethlisberger	9	L. Tomlinson	15	D. Foster	25	H. Ward	4	Bears	3	<b>56</b>
<b>Consensus</b>	T. Brady	4	L. Tomlinson	15	T. Barber	35	S. Smith	22	Bears	3	<b>79</b>

**A look ahead at some fantasy matchups, which may be irresistible for the NFL wildcard playoffs.**

**Carson Palmer** leads the league in touchdown passes with 32. Expect Palmer to struggle early against a strong Pittsburgh pass defense, but in the second half he should find paydirt.

**Jerome Bettis** has seen a reduced role this year in the Steelers ground game, but has scored on average once every twelve times he carries the ball (9 TDs in 110 rushes). Expect him to score at least once.

**Tiki Barber** should be given his due respect. He has 1,860 rushing yards, 530 receiving yards and 11 touchdowns this year. He had 263 total yards and a TD against the Raiders last week.

**Joey Galloway** may be 34 years old, but he's playing like he's in the prime of his career, racking up 83 receptions for 1,287 yards and 10 touchdowns. Last week he burned the Saints for 2 touchdowns.

The **Steelers defense** is listed as the number four defense overall, and has limited its opponents to a measly 284 yards per game on average. They have also only given up 27 total touchdowns all season.

These are random quotes that have been overheard or sent in by sports fans. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Independent Register.

against Eastern Wayne]"  
"If you've played [basket] ball, you're in it. [Referring to spectator emotions]"

# Make The Call

coaches that were fired should have been given one more season. I mean, think about it, it's been a tough season for everybody, and there's been some good teams out there that they've beaten this year. Of all the coaches that have been fired, I haven't heard the owners or even the media ask the fans whether they should be fired or not."

"The hockey game between the Carolina Hurricanes and Montreal Canadiens was hard fought from the beginning to the end — it was a nail-biter. It kept me on the edge of my seat. The Hurricanes as a team have really taken it to a new level this season."

"N.C. State sophomore quarterback Mike Stone is a big guy with a good arm, and

he should definitely be the starter next year, and if he continues to develop, he should be a first round pick in the draft."

"Former N.C. State running back T.A. McClendon is just too good of a runner to not be on any NFL teams' practice squad right now. I know he's had a lot of injury problems in the past, but some team should pick him up and teach him how to better condition himself for playing in games."

"Man, just imagine how

good N.C. State's running game is going to be next year with those two freshman running backs they have, they'll be like thunder and lightning."

### Quote Of The Week

**"If Duke doesn't win it all this year, it'll be the biggest choke ever."**

If you have an opinion that you want to share with the other readers, label it "Make The Call" and e-mail it to [eric@indieregister.com](mailto:eric@indieregister.com) or mail it to 1734 Elmwood St. New Bern NC, 28560. The Independent Register reserves the right to not print quotes deemed unsuitable for publication.

"For the first time since 1997, the Panthers went down to Atlanta and defeated the Falcons in their own stadium. It was like going to Disney World."  
"Don't look now folks, but I think we're going into overtime. [Referring to West Craven High School closing the gap in the first round of the holiday tournament