

THE BEARCATS RETURN TO THE TOP

While other Cincinnati sports' teams faltered, UC made national headlines for the first time in years

It was a year of ups and downs for the major sports teams in Cincinnati. Cincinnati, which has always had a history of being a fine athletic city let down many of its fans with disappointing seasons from the Reds', the Bengals', and Xavier University. But it was the University of Cincinnati Bearcat basketball team that unexpectedly stole the headlines from all the rest.

The Bearcat basketball team made national headlines for the first time since the early 1960s. Led by transfers and junior-college recruits, the Bearcats reached the NCAA Final Four by beating rival Memphis State. Their coach, Bob Huggins, used his intense style to mold the team into one of championship caliber.

Only a loss to Michigan prevented the team led by Herb Jones, Anthony Buford, and Nick Van Exel from challenging Duke for the national title. While making this run, the team enthralled the city to the extent that the Cincinnati Reds did when they won the World Series in 1990.

As well as the Bearcats', Joby Wright's Miami University Redskins qualified for the NCAA tournament by winning the MAC conference title. Once there, they gave perennial power North Carolina all they could handle before falling to them in the first round.

As for the downside, Xavier University, the crosstown rival of the Bearcats, was unable to extend its seven year streak of reaching the

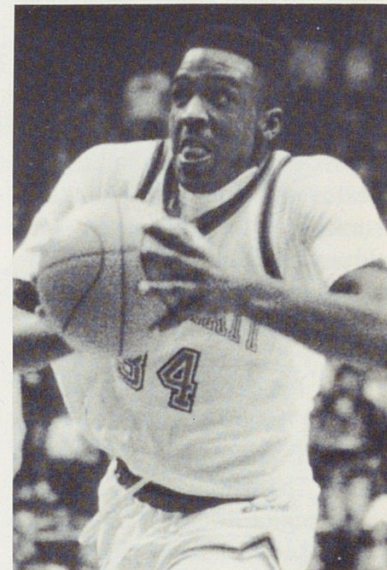
NCAA tournament.

The Reds' were also a major disappointment to Cincinnati after they failed to defend their World Series title. They put up little fight and in the final month slipped all the way down to fifth place.

The Cincinnati Bengals fared no better. After showing a glimmer of hope in 1988 by reaching the Super Bowl, the Bengals went on a steady decline. In 1991, they won only three games and in early 1992 allegations arose of an investigation of rape by fifteen unnamed players.

Although it was a far cry from a successful year for Cincinnati sports' fans, the Bearcats' did give everyone in the city a reason to cheer.

By Benjamin Tolchinsky




Herb Jones prepares for one of his many dunks which helped underdog Cincinnati reach the Final Four. Jones was the Bearcats' leading scorer.



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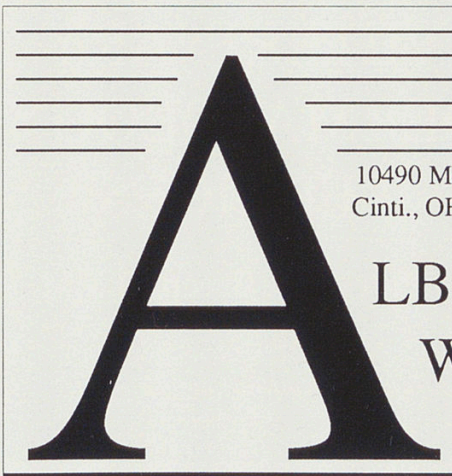
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