

READERS' CHOICE PREP BASKETBALL AWARDS

Concord Academy guard top vote-getter

BY STEVE LYTTLE AND LANGSTON WERTZ JR.
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Taylor Smith said one of her main jobs this season was to help the new players on a young and talented Concord Academy girls' basketball squad.

"I had to step up and take a lead role with that," Smith said.

Smith was point guard on a team that reached the state championship game, earning all-state honors along the way and averaging 6.9 assists per contest, eighth-best in the state.

She apparently made plenty of fans along the way, as Smith was this year's top vote-getter in The Observer's readers' choice prep basketball awards poll.

In weeklong voting, Smith led the girls' assists leader category, and her overall vote total (11,139) was the highest of any winner in any category.

"It's really nice to have that support," Smith, a 5-foot-7 junior, said of the public online vote. "I really appreciate everyone backing me like that."

She described herself as rather reserved but said she is "basically, a friendly person."

Smith was a standout track sprinter in middle school but has focused mostly on basketball since first playing the sport at age 5. After a few seasons of recreation league ball in Cabarrus County, with her father, Jimmy, as coach, she moved to AAU ball



Taylor Smith

with Lady Attack.

She was the backup point guard last season at Concord Academy but became the quarter-

back of the offense this season. With freshmen Justice Alexander and Faith Bekich and sophomore Ava McDermott in the starting lineup, Smith became the experienced veteran.

"I tried to help my teammates with their mistakes — not by yelling, but by trying to teach them," she said. "We have some very, very talented young players, and it was a lot of fun to work with them."

Their losses (the Eagles were 32-7) came against national powers like Winston-Salem Christian and Shining Stars Sports Academy from Virginia, along with North Carolina state champions Lake Norman (4A) and Sanford Grace Christian.

The Eagles lost twice to Grace Christian, including a 56-45 setback in the N.C. Independent Schools Athletic Association's 3A championship contest.

Smith averaged 11.7 points, 6.9 assists, 5.5 steals and 4.9 rebounds. She a 1.93 assist-to-turnover ratio and had 10 or more assists in seven games. Many of her assists went to Alexander, who averaged 22.9 points a contest.

She said she plans to play in college and is getting interest from a num-

ber of schools.

But first, there is unfinished business.

"We came close to winning it all this season," Smith said of the NCISAA state title. "We have most of our players returning next year, and I think reaching the finals will help us. Now we know what we need to do next season."

"I want to win it all, and go out with a bang."

READERS' CHOICE HONOREES

Below are the winners in various categories for The Charlotte Observer's readers' choice high school basketball awards.

This year, boys' and girls' nominees were listed in several categories.

To qualify, a nominee had to rank among the state's top 50 on MaxPreps in a category as of 8 p.m. March 20, and play for an NCHSAA or NCISAA school.

Boys' scoring: LJ Smith, Lincolnton (5,359 votes)

Boys' rebounding: Bryan Little, Piedmont (6,035)

Boys' assists: Ka'Mari Cooke, Hopewell (4,626)

Girls' scoring: Justice Alexander, Concord Academy (1,417)

Girls' rebounding: Allasha Houser, Piedmont Community Charter (9,764)

Girls' assists: Taylor Smith, Concord Academy (11,139)

Langston Wertz Jr.: 704-358-5133, @langstonwertzjr

JuJu Watkins of USC named AP player of the year

BY RYAN KARTJE
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES

Through her stellar sophomore season at USC, JuJu Watkins set herself apart as a singular superstar. Now she's got the hardware to prove it.

Watkins became the first Trojan to be selected the Associated Press player of the year Thursday, joining Courtney Paris, Maya Moore and Breanna Stewart as just the fourth sophomore to win the award. The latest honor came after a week in which national awards for Watkins have piled up.

Watkins won the Naismith Trophy, another player-of-the-year honor, on Wednesday, becoming the third USC player — after Cheryl Miller and Lisa Leslie — to take home the award. The U.S. Basketball Writers Association, the

Athletic and Sporting News already heaped their own player-of-the-year awards onto the pile, and the Wooden Award should be close behind in giving Watkins her flowers as the best player in the game.

A knee injury cut Watkins' special season short in the NCAA Tournament's round of 32, and without her the Trojans were eliminated two rounds later in the Elite Eight.

It's unclear when she will return to the court. But the unfortunate conclusion to her sophomore campaign further illuminated just how extraordinary Watkins was in leading the Trojans to a top seed in the tournament.

USC won the Big Ten in its first season in the conference, while Watkins was named Big Ten player of the year. She posted her 20th career 30-point game and moved to ninth in school history in scoring

after becoming the fastest Trojan to reach 1,000 points.

Watkins averaged fewer points (27.1 to 23.9) and rebounds (7.3 to 6.8) than she did as a freshman but became a more refined and efficient player. Her defense also improved by leaps and bounds, enough so that she was a finalist for defensive player of the year.

Legals

Request for Proposal Nutrition Consultant Services
Proposals will be received by Union County Community Action, Inc. until 3:30pm on April 25th, 2025, for a Certified Nutrition Consultant that will provide services to our Head Start/Early Head Start program across Union, Anson, and Richmond counties. The Request for Proposal packet will be available at www.uccainc.org/procurement. For additional information please contact Austin Parker, Contract Administrator by email at austin.parker@uccainc.org, or by phone at (Cell) 980-699-9115. IFL0226278 Apr 6-8 2025

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Mecklenburg County Storm Water Services will receive sealed bids for **Kings Branch Stream and Sanitary Sewer Improvements** until 11:00 AM, May 15, 2025. At 11:00 AM bids will be opened in the Fourth Floor, Hoffman Conference Room at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services office building located at 2145 Suttle Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28208. Bid, performance, and payment & material bonds are required. NC law and applicable regulations of various licensing boards will be observed. This project will rehabilitate approximately 5,640 linear feet of Kings Branch and its riparian corridor. Work includes stream grading, installing rock and wood habitat and stabilization structures, erosion control measures, and riparian vegetation. The project also includes 1,650 linear feet of sanitary sewer relocation, bypass pumping, pavement repair, pier installation and boring.

Kings Branch Stream and Sanitary Sewer Improvements is partially funded by the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

There will be a non-mandatory pre-bid meeting on April 8, 2025, at 1:00 PM at Lexington Green apartments, 642 Archdale Drive, Charlotte, NC 28217.

Electronic plans and specifications can be obtained from Dawn Salley at Dawn.Salley@kimley-horn.com. Mecklenburg County reserves the right to waive technicalities and to reject any or all proposals. This information will be made available in an alternative format for persons with disabilities by calling 704-575-4947. IFL0226188 Apr 6 2025

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR THE COUNTY OF MECKLENBURG, NORTH CAROLINA REGARDING TAX-EXEMPT BONDS FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES TO BE ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL FINANCE AUTHORITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF NOVANT HEALTH, INC.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on April 15, 2025 a public hearing, as required by Section 147(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), will be held by the Board of Commissioners for the County of Mecklenburg, North Carolina (the "County"), with respect to the health care facilities proposed to be financed or refinanced by the National Finance Authority (the "Authority"), a component unit of the Business Finance Authority of the State of New Hampshire, with proceeds from the issuance of one or more series of tax-exempt bonds (the "Bonds"). The hearing will commence at 6:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the Board of Commissioners Meeting Chamber at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina 28202, the regular place of meeting. The Bonds will be "qualified 501(c)(3) bonds" as defined in Section 145 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), for hospital and related health care facilities. The maximum stated principal amount of Bonds to be issued is \$855,000,000.

The proceeds from the sale of the Bonds will be loaned to Winston-Salem Sustainable Energy Partners LLC (the "Borrower"), an Arizona limited liability company. The proceeds from the sale of the Bonds will be applied by the Borrower to (1) pay or reimburse the costs of the acquisition, development, construction, improvement and equipping of certain energy related improvements, including but not limited to, upgrading and replacing central utility plant assets, replacing electrical distribution infrastructure, replacing air handling units, upgrading building automation systems, implementing energy savings measures, and making other infrastructure improvements (collectively, the "Energy Projects") at certain hospitals and related facilities located at the addresses set forth on [Exhibit A](#) (collectively, the "Novant Facilities") and owned and operated by Novant Health, Inc., a North Carolina nonprofit corporation ("Novant"), and certain of its affiliates more specifically described below (collectively, the "Benefitting Entities"), (2) pay, or reimburse Novant for paying, a portion of the cost of the 2025 Projects (described below), (3) if determined to be applicable, refund existing indebtedness of Novant, the proceeds of which were used to initially finance a portion of the 2025 Projects, (4) if determined to be desirable, pay a portion of the interest accruing on the Bonds, and (5) pay certain expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the Bonds by the Authority.

The 2025 Projects include (A) constructing, renovating, furnishing and equipping (1) a new health care facility known as Novant Health Scotts Hill Medical Center to be located at 151 Scotts Hill Medical Park Drive, Wilmington, North Carolina 28411 and consisting of approximately 74 licensed inpatient beds, eight operating rooms, endoscopy procedure rooms, an emergency department, imaging and laboratory facilities and related support service areas (the "Scotts Hill Medical Center Project"); (2) an expansion to and renovation of the emergency department at Novant Health Mint Hill Medical Center located at 8201 Healthcare Loop, Charlotte, North Carolina 28215 and consisting of two new trauma rooms, 17 new treatment rooms, clinical support space, lobby expansion, new imaging services, new elevator shaft and additional support rooms (the "Mint Hill Medical Center Project"); and (3) a new observation unit at Presbyterian Medical Center located at 200 Hawthorne Lane, Charlotte, North Carolina 28204 (the "Presbyterian Medical Center Project"); and (B) routine capital expenditures at any of the Novant Facilities, including but not limited to (1) additions and renovations to such Novant Facilities and (2) the acquisition of medical, computer, office and capital equipment for use at such Novant Facilities (the "Routine Capital Expenditures Projects," and collectively with the Scotts Hill Medical Center Project, the Mint Hill Medical Center Project and the Presbyterian Medical Center Project, the "2025 Projects").

The maximum principal amount of Bonds to be issued to finance or refinance the following 2025 Projects is set forth in the table below:

Project	Maximum Principal Amount of Bonds to be Issued Relating to the 2025 Projects
Scotts Hill Medical Center Project	\$262,600,000
Mint Hill Medical Center Project	45,000,000
Presbyterian Medical Center Project	39,000,000

Set forth on [Exhibit A](#) is the maximum principal amount of Bonds to be issued at each of the Novant Facilities for the Energy Projects and the Routine Capital Expenditures Projects.

The Borrower and the Benefitting Entities are organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code or are properly classified as disregarded entities whose ultimate owner is an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. The Energy Projects and the 2025 Projects are together referred to as the "Project." The Project is or will be owned or operated by Novant and the other Benefitting Entities, including The Presbyterian Hospital; Forsyth Memorial Hospital, Inc.; Pender Memorial Hospital, Incorporated; Novant Health Matthews Medical Center, LLC; Medical Park Hospital, LLC; Novant Health Ballantyne Medical Center, LLC; Novant Health Mint Hill Medical Center, LLC; Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center, LLC; Novant Health Thomasville Medical Center, LLC; Brunswick Community Hospital, LLC; Novant Health Rowan Medical Center, LLC; South Carolina Coastal Medical Center, LLC; Hilton Head Medical Center, LLC; and East Cooper Medical Center, LLC.

The Bonds and the obligation to pay principal of and interest thereon and any redemption premium with respect thereto do not constitute indebtedness or an obligation of the Authority, the State of New Hampshire, the State of North Carolina, the State of South Carolina or any political subdivision thereof, including the County, within the meaning of any constitutional or statutory debt limitation, or a charge against the general credit or taxing powers of any of them. The Bonds shall be a limited obligation of the Authority, payable solely from certain revenues duly pledged therefor and generally representing amounts paid by the Borrower.

The hearing will provide a reasonable opportunity to be heard for persons wishing to express their views on the issuance of the Bonds or on the nature and location of the Project proposed to be financed or refinanced. Any person wishing to comment in writing should do so prior to such meeting to the Board of Commissioners for the County of Mecklenburg North Carolina, 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina 28202 Attention: Clerk to Board of Commissioners.

This notice is published in accordance with the Code and the regulations promulgated thereunder.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR THE COUNTY OF MECKLENBURG, NORTH CAROLINA

By: Kristine Smith
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners

Dated: April 4, 2025

[Exhibit A](#)

[Energy Projects and Routine Capital Expenditure Projects](#)

Facility and Address	Maximum Principal Amount of Bonds to be Issued	
	Energy Projects	Routine Capital Expenditure Projects
Ballantyne Medical Center 10905 Providence Road W. Charlotte, NC 28277	\$6,600,000	N/A
Charlotte Orthopedic Hospital 1901 Randolph Road Charlotte, NC 28207	\$18,700,000	N/A
Huntersville Medical Center 10030 Gilead Road Huntersville, NC 28078	\$25,400,000	\$23,600,000
Matthews Medical Center 1500 Matthews Township Pkwy. Matthews, NC 28105	\$27,500,000	\$21,700,000
Mint Hill Medical Center 8201 Healthcare Loop Charlotte, NC 28215	\$10,300,000	\$700,000
Presbyterian Medical Center 200 Hawthorne Lane Charlotte, NC 28204	\$70,700,000	\$51,900,000
Clemmons Medical Center 6915 Village Medical Circle Clemmons, NC 27012	\$13,700,000	\$7,200,000
Forsyth Medical Center 3333 Silas Creek Pkwy. Winston-Salem, NC 27103	\$83,800,000	\$53,100,000
Kernersville Medical Center 1750 Kernersville Medical Pkwy. Kernersville, NC 27284	\$19,700,000	\$11,500,000
Medical Park Hospital 1950 S Hawthorne Road Winston-Salem, NC 27103	\$12,400,000	N/A
New Hanover Orthopedic Hospital 5301 Wrightsville Ave. Wilmington, NC 28403	\$15,100,000	\$13,000,000
New Hanover Regional Medical Center 2131 S 17th Street Wilmington, NC 28401	\$65,900,000	\$62,000,000
Thomasville Medical Center 207 Old Lexington Road Thomasville, NC 27360	\$14,700,000	\$7,000,000
Brunswick Medical Center 240 Hospital Dr. Bolivia, NC 28422	\$21,200,000	\$16,300,000
Rowan Medical Center 612 Mocksville Ave. Salisbury, NC 28144	\$34,900,000	\$19,300,000
Pender Medical Center 507 E Fremont Street Burgaw, NC 28425	\$7,700,000	\$3,200,000
East Cooper Medical Center 2000 Hospital Drive Mt Pleasant, SC 29464	\$21,300,000	\$13,100,000
Coastal Carolina Hospital 1000 Medical Center Drive Hardeeville, SC 29927	\$9,800,000	\$6,200,000
Hilton Head Hospital 25 Hospital Center Blvd. Hilton Head Island, SC 29926	\$29,700,000	\$15,100,000

Report: Carmelo Anthony elected to Hall of Fame

Field Level Media

Carmelo Anthony has been elected to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame on the first ballot, ESPN reported Wednesday.

An NCAA champion at Syracuse, a 10-time NBA All-Star with the Denver Nuggets and New York Knicks, and a three-time Olympic gold medalist with Team USA, Anthony retired following the 2021-22 season.

Anthony was the No. 3 overall pick in the 2003 NBA Draft by Denver, a couple of months after leading the Orange to the NCAA Tournament title as a freshman sensation. He made four All-Star

teams with the Nuggets before joining the Knicks in a blockbuster trade in February 2011.

Energized by a return to his hometown of New York City, Anthony earned six consecutive All-Star nods from 2011-12 through 2016-17. He won a scoring title with 28.7 points per game in 2012-13.

Anthony finished out his 19-year career with Oklahoma City (2017-18), Houston (2018-19), Portland (2019-21) and the Los Angeles Lakers (2021-22), retiring with averages of 22.5 points and 6.2 rebounds in 1,260 games (1,120 starts). He made six All-NBA teams and was named to the NBA 75th Anniversary Team.