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By Dennis Garcia  
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RANDLEMAN - In order to pull off an upset in the world of sports, there first has to be belief. The UMBC basketball team had to believe they could defeat No. 1 Virginia in the 2018 NCAA Tournament before they did. Villanova, perhaps considered the greatest upset in NCAA Tournament finals history, had to believe there was a possibility it could take down mighty Georgetown in the 1985 championship game before they went out and actually did it. And just last year, members of the Fairleigh Dickinson basketball team had to believe, although absolutely no one else did, that they could bond together to somehow top No. 1 Purdue. And they did.

It may be on a different scale, but the Randleman Tigers must first believe it can beat what appears to be an unstoppable Salisbury team Friday night in the fourth round of the state 2-A playoffs.

With belief, comes opportunity.

"I told them I don't think there is anyone in this area or this state that wouldn't think it was an upset if we pulled this off," RHS coach Daniel Mitchell said of his 23-5 Tigers



*Randleman senior Greg Price in 2nd round action. Photo by PJ Ward-Brown.*



*Junior Tyshaun Goldston finishing a play. Photo by PJ Ward-Brown.*

heading to Salisbury to meet

the high-powered Hornets, a team that is 26-3 and features a player headed to Wake Forest. "But you have to believe it's possible. Some believe we can pull this off and we can do this. That's all anyone wants, a chance."

The Tigers have had an incredible season, winning the Piedmont Athletic Conference regular season and tournament championships, falling once to Trinity during the regular season. They then defeated Burns 93-69. East Gaston 63-46 and Newton-Conover 62-59 to reach the fourth round.

"After we lost to Trinity, we took a few days off and we practiced a bit and the message from the coaches coming back those next two weeks was to play better," Mitchell said. "We had some good practices in a row to get ready for Southwestern Randolph and Trinity (in the PAC Tournament).

We've done a good job of focusing on the game plan and then going out and carrying that game plan out."

The Hornets have been pretty much unstoppable. They average 85 points per game and the only teams they have lost to are to Rabun Gap-Nacoochee out of Georgia, Cannon, a team from the Concord area, and St. Anne's, a team from Virginia. The Hornets have scored 85 points 10 times this year and have held opponents to 40 points or less 10 times.

After breezing to the 1-A/2-A Central Carolina regular season and tournament championships, the Hornets have defeated Anson (85-39), Lincoln Charter (74-66) and Bandys (90-58). Salisbury recorded that last playoff win mostly without Juke Harris, the player headed to Wake Forest in the fall. Harris injured his eye in the first quarter and left the game after scoring seven points. The Hornets still had plenty of firepower to win its 19th straight game.

"Other teams have tried, but we do a better job than other teams in controlling the tempo," Mitchell said. "We're not the quickest or the fastest, but we make other teams find other ways to score than just the ways they are used to. When we've played high scoring teams, maybe not to Salisbury's caliber, but we have played Eastern Randolph and Trinity and held them in the 40s. If we're going to be successful, we're going to find some periods in the game where we go on spurts and when they have one, how we answer that will go a long way in determining if we can hang."



*Randleman junior Chase Farlow.  
Photo by PJ Ward-Brown.*



*Tiger sophomore Connor Cassidy. Photo  
by PJ Ward-Brown.*

Although the Tigers have seen plenty of high-quality talent on the opposing side, they very well may be facing the top talent they will see all year in Harris is a 30-point-per-game scorer.

"When I played, especially young in my career, we had to go to the second round of the playoffs before we would see someone who could consistently dunk," Mitchell said. "With this generation of kids who have played travel ball all summer, they have seen a lot of stuff already and have seen a lot of kids who can do some really cool things. You just have to play him and try to make his life difficult. He is gonna score on

you."

Harris is expected to be fine for Friday's game against the Tigers.

The main thing for the Tigers when they enter Salisbury High School Friday night is to believe. Just believe.