

HIGH SCHOOLS

SIMEON 78, OAK HILL ACADEMY (VA.) 75

Crowd rallies around Rose

Simeon guard feels the love from fans at UIC

By Matt Beardmore
Tribune staff reporter

Maybe Derrick Rose underestimated Chicago and its high school basketball fans.

"Chicago doesn't really support teams like New York does," Rose said last Sunday following Simeon's 53-51 loss to Rice at Madison Square Garden. "So we will have to deal with a lot of negative feel in that game."

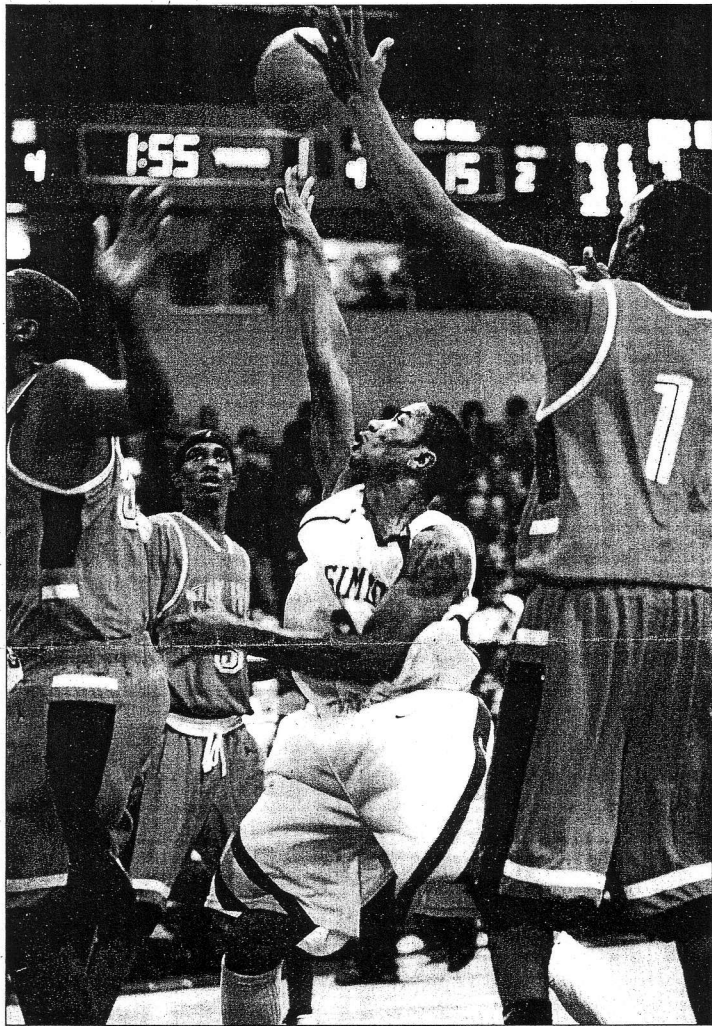
That game—Thursday's eagerly anticipated contest against powerhouse Oak Hill Academy (Va.)—matched Rose and the Wolverines against the No. 1 team in the nation. With a national audience watching on ESPN, Simeon (13-2) handed the Warriors (22-1) their first loss of the season, 78-75.

"I was glad they came out and supported us," said Rose, who scored 28 points. "Before the game I was shaking hands with them and thanking them."

By the response of the 3,070 in attendance at the UIC Pavilion, Chicago basketball fans are still pulling for the senior guard from Simeon. From the player introductions to his "Sports-Center" dish to Kevin Johnson in the fourth quarter, the crowd was decidedly pro-Rose.

Since Rose hit the game-winning jumper in last season's Class AA state championship game against Peoria Richwoods, he has been on everyone's radar. And after the guard spurned Bruce Weber and Illinois in November for John Calipari and Memphis, the anti-Rose sentiment that's popped up in chat rooms and message boards is surprising to some.

"I don't get that one bit," said 26-year-old Ninos Schoul, a for-



Tribune photos by Charles Cherny
Simeon's Derrick Rose puts up an off-balance shot against Virginia's Oak Hill on Thursday night.

mer UIC student. "So [Rose is] not going to Illinois. He's the best player to come out of the city in a while and people are complaining."

With Weber's team struggling this season, and with Class of 2007 recruits including Rose and Eric Gordon among those heading to other programs, Steve Lazarra, a Chicago resi-

dent attending the game with sons Nick and Danny, understands Illini Nation's concerns.

"Bruce [Weber] has had trouble pulling in anybody from the Chicago area," said Lazarra, wearing a gray Illinois sweatshirt. "Getting to the finals (in 2005), you'd think he'd be able to pull more people out of the Chicagoland area."

O.H.A.	FG-A	FT-A	PT	SIMEON	FG-A	FT-A	PT
Vaughn	3-4	1-4	7	Flowers	4-7	2-3	10
Thompson	4-5	0-0	9	Johnson	8-17	3-3	18
Legion	9-18	0-0	23	Hall	0-3	0-0	0
Smith	5-11	1-4	12	Rose	9-18	6-13	28
Jennings	6-17	3-3	19	Orange	1-4	0-0	2
Steele	0-0	0-0	0	Smith	4-5	0-0	9
Andron	0-0	0-0	0	Green	4-5	0-0	11
Boyd	1-2	3-4	5				
Totals	28-57	8-15	75	Totals	30-63	12-19	78

Records: Oak Hill 22-1; Simeon 13-2. **Hot:** Simeon 40-30; 3-pointers: Oak Hill 11-26; Legion 5-10; Jennings 4-12; Thompkins 1-1; Nolan 1-3; Simeon 6-16; Green 3-6; Rose 2-6; Smith 1-1; Hall 0-2; Orange 0-1. **Fouled out:** Smith, Jennings, Rebs: Oak Hill 3; Legion 0; Simeon 40 (Flowers, Johnson 10). **Asst:** Oak Hill 13 (Jennings 8); Simeon 18 (Rose 9). **Fouls:** Oak Hill 22; Simeon 14. At 3:07