

SPORTS

Dr. John Wells 'plays at the office'

By Joan Sterk

Being responsible for the health and safety of 120 athletes is not for everyone. But for Dr. John Wells, UNCA's new supervisor of sports medicine, it's a great way to earn a living.

Wells is the type of person who really enjoys his work.

"I'm doing exactly what I want to do; I enjoy doing it; and I'm getting paid for it," he said.

His wife tells friends that her husband has not worked for years because "he just plays at the office."

After working (playing) at Mars Hill College for six years as an Athletic Trainer, Wells came to UNCA to fill the vacancy of supervisor of sports medicine.

He praised former UNCA trainer, Linda Murray for setting up the present facilities.

In comparison to previous places of employment, UNCA "ranks far superior," he said. He also likes UNCA's expansion.

"Working for a school that is growing allows sports medicine to grow with it," Wells said.

Wells has been practicing sports medicine for 34 years and has physical therapy licenses for four states: North Carolina, Louisiana, Illinois and Indiana.

Wells became interested in sports medicine by accident, literally.

While playing football his freshman year in high school, Wells suffered a knee injury. He wanted to stay involved with the team so he asked his coach if he could be student manager.

But the coach needed a trainer, so Wells employed his Boy Scout experiences and took care of the injuries.

He held the position throughout his four years of college, and earned a scholarship to study sports medicine at Butler

University in Indianapolis, Indiana.

His job here at UNCA may not be enough work for Wells. He averaged 29 students an hour at Mars Hill, but now sees about 45 students a day.

"We can treat more of the student body and faculty with no problem. A heavier work load would not be very taxing," he said.

Wells has two student trainers, Nancy Young and Nathan Rickman helping him cover all the fall sports: soccer, volleyball, cross-country, women and men's tennis, and women and men's basketball.

The staff must be present at all practices and games. Wells is grateful for Young and Rickman's help, but still feels they can handle more.

Whenever Wells returns to his home town of Mars Hill, he proudly tells friends of his new position at UNCA.

"My wife thinks I brag too much, but I say, if you've got it, flaunt it," he added.

Wells said being able to tell his neighbors about UNCA is part of the enjoyment he gets from his job.

In addition to directing sports medicine at UNCA, Wells is the Abstract Editor for "The Journal of

the National Athletic Trainer." He writes and edits articles for the journal, which has a circulation of 10,000.

He is also a member of several organizations which promote health and sports medicine.

Next year he hopes to teach sports medicine classes. He proposed a plan that would entail 15 hours of classes to complement the established internship program for students interested in sports medicine.

Although sports medicine will probably never be offered as a major at UNCA, Wells said the 15 hours of classes would almost guarantee jobs as high school trainers.

"To work (as a trainer) for North Carolina high schools you also have to teach. So you should major in something else other than sports medicine," he said.

"There are 135 vacancies in North Carolina for high school trainers. We really need to offer these classes," he added.

Wells really enjoys what he does, even though he has a busy schedule. "The day I quit enjoying it is the day I quit," he said.



Staff photo by Sylvia Hawkins

BEING SUPERVISOR OF sports medicine is a great way to earn a living for UNCA's Dr. John Wells. His wife tells friends he "just plays at the office."



men vs. Furman at UNCA.
Nov. 17, 7:30 p.m. UNCA men vs. Coastal Carolina at UNCA.
Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m. UNCA men vs. Pembroke.
Nov. 21, 6:30 p.m. UNCA vs. Winthrop; 8:30 p.m. UNC-Chapel Hill vs. Marathon Oil at Asheville Civic Center.

Sports trivia

1. Who has scored the most touchdowns in a career? How many?
2. Who has the most touchdown passes in a career?
3. Which quarterback has passed for the most yards in a single season?

Answers on page 5

This Week

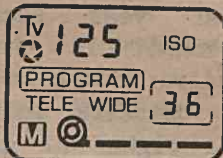
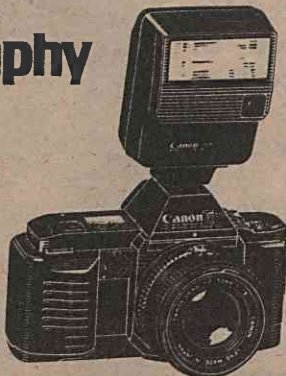
***Basketball**

Nov. 16 & 17, 7 p.m. UNCA women in basketball tournament at Tennessee Wesleyan.

Nov. 19, 6 p.m. UNCA wo-

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