

Hank Gathers' legacy lives

by Scott Holmes
Clarion Sports Editor

"Alley-opp to Gathers! Oh My! What a slam!"

Now, I could tell you all the facts and little details of the Hank Gathers story, but this is just a commentary on an incredible, shocking tragedy, and besides, that's what the big papers are for.

For me, this is the second athlete/idol I've lost. Len Bias was the first. I say "I've lost" because it seems that part of me has gone with them. The realizations of what I could not do and what I had always wanted to do were blown away, first with Bias and now with Gathers. They had a presence about them, graceful yet powerful, stylish but rough. Both players had that infectious smile, the one that you couldn't help but notice.

When I was living in the Philadelphia area a few years abck, I had heard about Gathers and a few of his friends, Bo Kimble, who played with Gathers all through high school and college, Lionel Simmons, and Doug Overton.

Simmons and Overton play for LaSalle. All three -- Gathers, Kimble and Simmons made the All-American team this year. Of course, you never really realize who these players are until they're in college, as I did, but yet I remember hearing about them on TV, and reading about them in the papers, still never realizing what he future had in store for them. If you really think about it, you never fully realize

someone for what they are, a regular ol' human being, or a superstar basketball player, until they're gone.

Hank Gathers was 23 when he died. He was a senior at Loyola-Marymount University and he was the father of a 6-year-old. Gathers worked extremeley hard to get where he was. He kept his grades up and practiced basketball constantly, especially rebounding..

He used to tell his teammates that he was sorry, but that every rebound was his. He did just that. His junior year inb college, he became the second player in NCAA history to lead the country in scoring AND rebounding. Xavier McDaniel was the first. But Hank was determined and he did it.

Hank Gathers didn't deserve to die. He had a heart condidion and he took care of it. Len Bias was asking for his death. He was, and is, one of my all-time favorite players, but he was asking for it. This isn't a Just Say Not to Drugs Campaign. That's up to you. This is just the plain and simple truth. Gathers worked on his rehabilitation. He saw his doctors frequenuy and took his medication. He worked out constantly and stayed in excellent shape, but the man upstairs works in mysterious ways and has done it once again.

"He always seemed to be smiling," said teammates and coaches. "I'm the strongest man alive. No one can stop me!" said Gathers to Kimble. "That was a favorite phrase of his," said Kimble. It seemed to be too prophetically eerie to believe. It just didn't seem possible. How could a man who was so strong, so powerful, so physically fit just be extinguished and

crushed so quickly. If you saw the news reports on the night of his death, you saw the solid, muscular stature of Hank Gathers waste helplessly away. He ended his life just like the way he played basketball, fighting until the end. His legs kicked and pounded, his fists clenching, and he even managed to sit up one last time until he could no longer hold on.

Yet, with all the kicking and straining, you could see on his face the helpless expression of death. He looked weak and depleted, deprived of the great energy he used to thrive on. There was no power and desire left in his eyes. Just panic and chaos, something never seen on Hank's face before. There was no smile on his face.

The most heart-wrenching scene of this tragic play was back in Philadelphia when Lionel Simmons heard the shocking news. It was during the first half of La Salle's tournament game. Someone informed Simmons of the news and Simmons broke down on his knees and cried on the court.

Hank Gathers worked hard at everthing he did, especially on basketball. He called the basketball court "his home". "This is where I live." And that is where he died. According to Bo Kimble, his best friend, "This is where Hank would have wanted to leave us." Gathers left a legacy of hope and inspiration to sports fans everywhere. Kimble also added, "If you knew Hank at all, you would know that he ended it all the way he wanted to, with a huge slam."

P.S. Chuck, the dream lives on!



Troy Smith

Troy lifts to success

by Angela Williams
Clarion Reporter

On March 10 and 11 Brevard's Allen Troy Smith competed in the Professional Power Lifting Championships in High Point, North Carolina. Troy, who is the supervisor in the weight room, placed third out of 40 men in the 198 pound class.

In preperation for the competition, he trained six days a week, from five to six hours a day. During his training, which consisted of squats at 615 pounds, bench press at 405 pounds and the dead lift at 600 pounds, his weight dropped from 220 pounds to 198 pounds.

When asked what his diet consisted of he said, "I ate only a can of tuna, over-boiled rice and drank spring water every day." Troy has won many power lifting competitions. He won the Southern U.S. Championship, Olympic State Gold Medal Championships, Palmetto State Championships and the Polk County Powerlifting Championship.

He missed going to the Power Lifting Nationals in California last year because of a knee injury from doing squats in running shoes. Steroids are a part of some powerlifters' careers, but Troy says there is no room for them in his life. Set high goals and believe in yourself is the advice Troy gives to students. He says he dedicated this competition to Kim White and her family.



Katie Trexler has again been named to the All-Region X women's basketball team.



BC's intramural men's basketball champs and friends pose for a group shot after the finals: left to right, Marc Garren, Kenny Gallagher, T.J. King, BooBoo Lucas, John Kennedy (on basket), Mark Robbins, Referee Marcus Allen (down front), Scott Jenkins, Nick Powers (friend) and Coach Nate Ferrington.