



NEW YORK—Leonard E. (Truck) Robinson, the newest Knick and an excellent muscleman under the boards at 250 pounds, meets the New York media recently. Robinson claims he is tired of changing uniforms after eight years as a pro. Robinson, a 6-9 power forward, was acquired from Phoenix for Maurice Lucas. Robinson vowed, "This is my last stop." He previously played for Washington, Atlanta, New Orleans and Phoenix.

Bulls Slump, Victims Of Minor League Famine

By Elson Armstrong, Jr.
Durham's baseball team, the Bulls, won the first half of the Carolina League's Southern Division but flourished in the playoffs. Now they are stumbling around in the waning weeks of the second half of the season looking more like tame cows than raging bulls.

As August opens, the Bulls are in third place, as many eight games behind the front running Peninsula Pilots.

In the league's Northern Division, Alexandria, the first half champs, is currently only about a game out of first place, but they are playing less than .500 ball. But then the northern division is the weaker of the league's two divisions.

But why have both first half champions found the going so tough

in the second half of the season? Why does it sometimes seem that minor league baseball fluctuates between feast and famine?

The answer boils down to the practices, the philosophy and the politics of minor league baseball.

Philosophically, a minor league team, like the Durham Bulls, is locally owned. Durham's owner is Miles Wolff, Bulls' General Manager — but as a practical matter, the team is owned by the parent organization, a major league baseball team. The Durham Bulls team is affiliated with the Atlanta Braves.

What that means is that the players are actually contracted to the Braves, as is the Bulls' manager, Bobby Dews.

And thus enters the

politics. Obviously, winning baseball is a combination of talent and chemistry. All baseball managers, and coaches with other sports, for that matter, agree that you have to have people who can do the job, and these people must "click" well together. But, of course, all this must be molded by an efficient organization.

The Bulls appear to have it all, so why aren't they winning?

The politics in minor league baseball generally and within the Atlanta organization specifically, keeps moving players in and out of the Bulls' team throughout the season. This causes the talent to fluctuate and often upsets the chemistry needed to win consistently.

In the Atlanta

organization, Durham is their upper echelon class-A team. Atlanta has two class-A affiliates. The other one is Anderson, S.C. This team, though, is considered a step below the Bulls.

Savannah is the Atlanta organization's double-A team, and Richmond of the International League is the triple-A club which is one step below the major leagues.

Minor league ball is a learning process. Minor league players in such cities as Anderson, Durham, and Richmond are not yet seasoned enough to make the parent club. Therefore they are sent to the minors to sharpen their skills and each player dreams of quickly making the big time.

In minor league ball, players are promoted or demoted according to their performances and evaluation of the parent ball club. Hank Aaron, who currently directs player personnel for the Braves, said during a spring visit to Durham that "the hardest part of my job is to tell one of these kids that they are not going to make it and to give him his walking papers."

Since Atlanta has an investment in Durham players, Hank Aaron decides who will play consistently for the Bulls. Team manager, Bobby Dews, has to abide by the parent club's decision.

Former Bulls' Manager "Dirty" Al Gallagher disagreed with the policy. "I like to win. I'm going with who I think are my best players. After all, I see them everyday". Gallagher's philosophy eventually led him into disfavor with Atlanta and he was fired after the 1981 season.

Fans face this dilemma with mixed emotions. They want to see their heroes on the Bulls perform well but then the fans have to find new heroes because good players are moved to either Savannah or Richmond often before the season is over.

With players constantly being promoted or demoted it is difficult for minor league teams to maintain that delicate chemistry needed to win.

In the Carolina League, the Peninsula Pilots are a notable exception. Their parent club the Philadelphia Phillies, unlike most major clubs, don't take players from their minor

Elson Remembers: The Night Three Cage Teams Were "Massacred"

By Elson Armstrong Jr.
Have you ever wanted to be in three places at once? That's right not two but three!

Even now, almost 17 years after the fact, I wish I could've made myself appear at three different Durham sites on the night of December 10, 1965.

It was basketball season and the Bull City quaked with excitement. On the collegiate scene Duke's powerful Blue Devils were hosting that legend of legends UCLA. At that time, UCLA had won back-to-back NCAA titles.

Duke and UCLA had met for the national championship in March, 1964 and UCLA embarrassed the proud Dukies 98-83. The win gave John Wooden his first of what would eventually become 10 national crowns. UCLA beat Michigan 91-80 in the 1965 NCAA Final.

When it was announced that UCLA was coming to Durham, all the tickets to 9,000-seat Duke (now Cameron) Indoor Stadium for that game were sold before the season began.

Duke with the likes of Steve Vacendak, Jay Buckley, and Bob Verga were a tall and talented bunch that had designs on the 1965-66 NCAA crown. Duke entered the big blast ranked No. 3 and unbeaten. UCLA likewise was unbeaten and naturally No. 1.

Local television was

forbidden broadcast rights to the spectacular because it was Tuesday night and, honoring agreements with the N.C. High Schools Athletic Association, the game was blacked out.

Even with that, a number of us at Hillside were not that disappointed because our Hornets also had Durhamites stirring.

In March, 1965, Hillside had won the State 4-A Championship with an awesome comeback over favored West Charlotte in the title game. HHS had trailed 43-19 at the half and was still down by 30 in the third stanza. The comeback was so great that West Charlotte had to catch Hillside in the fourth quarter to send the game into overtime! Hillside emerged the victor 80-78.

The Hornets had opened the 1965-66 season against arch-rival Little River of Durham which had won the 1965 State 1-A Championship. The big surprise in that game was Hillside's easy dismantling of the Busy Beavers to the tune of a 138-70 blow out — the worst beating ever for Little River!

On Dec. 10, 1965, Stephens Lee, a Western N.C. 4-A power from Asheville made a visit to the "Nest" (Hillside Gym) and they brought quite a contingent of fans who eagerly let us know that Hillside wouldn't be playing a

1-A school this night! Stephens-Lee was much taller than the Hornets and they wore the colors of N.C. Central (maroon and gray) and we joked that Hillside was so good that NCCU had decided to play us that night.

Hillside was led by George Outlaw, John "Goat" Bullock, June Harris, Mike Hayes, and others who formed what many of us still consider as Hillside's best-ever-basketball team.

Across town, there was yet more excitement as Merrick-Moore, which had won the State 3-A Championship (Yes, Durham made a clean sweep in 1965), was getting prepared to take on Henderson Institute. Merrick-Moore was favored but nobody had envisioned what a whipping they would lay on the Bulldogs.

Incredibly, all three of these tilts got under way at about the same time. I was attending the Hillside game but friends brought radios to listen to the Duke game.

The evening started a little slow for Duke and Hillside as UCLA jumped out front 6-0 and Stephens Lee was up 6-4 in the early goings (I didn't know what was happening over at Merrick-Moore but boy, would I find out later!).

Hillside and Duke seemed to explode with vengeance at the same time. The Hornets scored 30 in the first quarter. By the second,

the Asheville visitors were so confused by the Hillside press that they were constantly hitting the overhead gym lights as they attempted to lob passes over the lightning quick Hillside.

Over at Duke the normally poised UCLA Bruins were getting humiliated as Duke, with the crowd going crazy, had rallied and taken over a 20 point spread. By halftime UCLA was behind 42-21 and Stephens Lee had "held" Hillside to 54 points.

The two locals made it worse for the visitors in the second half as Hillside scored 76 points to smother Stephens Lee 130-70 (we all gave a 'Bronx' cheer when the Asheville quint matched Little River's total points).

As I was leaving the gym I heard that Duke had dumped UCLA 82-66 and it would've been worse if the 'Devils' had substituted with ten minutes to go in the game!

Later on in the evening, while watching local sports on TV, I heard that Merrick-Moore had just plain leveled Henderson by a score of 117-27!

Geez, if I could go back in time (as the current hit song says) to that '65 love affair, I would definitely try to be at Hillside, Merrick-Moore, and Duke all at once.

NEWS OF SPORTS



Winner of four Olympic golds, Jesse Owens.



Winner of award, Sebastian Coe.



Jesse Owens Trophy Award



Edwin Moses

When most Americans think of Jesse Owens, they remember a man who was a superb example of the spirit of athletic achievement and comradeship among nations. It seems fitting, then, that a prestigious award to amateur athletes should bear his name.

The first amateur athlete to be so honored was Sebastian Coe of Great Britain, the world's fastest at the classic distances of 800 meters, 1,000 meters and the mile.

The 25-year-old student of social history and eco-

nomics surged to a rush of 50 first-place votes with the five continent blue ribbon jury. Coe easily outdistanced Edwin Moses, America's top 400 meters hurdler, who was runner up with six firsts. In third place was Evelyn Ashford, the U.S.A.'s peak women's sprinter, who had the same number of firsts but was outscored on second votes 26 to 9 by Moses.

Interestingly, Jesse Owens once told Herb Douglas, vice president of Schieffelin & Co., importers of Hennessy Cognac, and founder of the Award, to "pursue track and

strive for your Olympic teams, but stay in school and get a good education. Track was only a means to an end." Douglas kept this in mind. As a result, Schieffelin & Co. has become the original corporate sponsor of this event.

Other finalists in the competition to memorialize the name of Jesse Owens were Mary T. Meagher, No. 1 swimming star of the U.S., who was fourth, and Olga Bicherova of the Soviet Union, women's all-around gymnastic performer, who was fifth. They each received one first place vote.

Elson's Pro-Grid Predictions

Some players, despite outstanding statistics, are not moved upward and in frustration they quit or are traded to another organization.

While some of the current Bulls were frustrated when they were told that they had to play class-A ball another season they were quick to add that it's no reflection on Durham.

Miguel Sosa the popular short stop who is in Durham for the third straight year, said, "Sure we want to move up but we also love Durham and the fans here, it would be great if Durham would become a Double-A or Triple-A club so that we could play here and advance too."

Sosa, a native of the

(Continued on Page 7)

AFC East	3. Atlanta
	4. New Orleans
AFC East	1. Buffalo
	2. Miami
	3. New York (Jets)
	4. Baltimore
	5. New England
AFC Central	1. Cincinnati
	2. Pittsburgh
	3. Cleveland
	4. Houston
AFC West	1. San Diego
	2. Los Angeles (Raiders)
	3. Denver
	4. Kansas City
	5. Seattle
NFC East	1. Dallas
	2. New York (Giants)
	3. Washington
	4. Philadelphia
	5. St. Louis
NFC Central	1. Tampa Bay
	2. Detroit
	3. Minnesota
	4. Chicago
	5. Green Bay
NFC West	1. San Francisco
	2. Los Angeles (Rams)

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