

SportsWeek

Scores, Standings, Columns, Features

Black College Sports

These players gave something back to their alma maters after turning pro

By BARRY COOPER
Syndicated Columnist

After two much-needed weeks of vacation, it's time to clean out the college sports notebook:

Recently this column lashed out at those athletes who sign big professional contracts and quickly forget about their roots. How easy it is for a new millionaire to not give any of his wealth to the school that helped make him great. At least two players, however, have gone against that trend.

Bethune-Cookman football players Lee Williams and Dewey Forte, who now play for the Los Angeles Express of the United States Football League, recently mailed checks of \$4,500 each to their school to help pay for a new practice field.

The Wildcats' practice facilities had become the brunt of many cruel jokes. In fact, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the NFL blamed B-CC's field for the slow development of Bucs defensive end Booker Reese, who played at B-CC.

Now, thanks in part to the generosity of Williams and Forte, the problem of fire ants and poor drainage on the Wildcats' practice field will be corrected.

If more players would follow the lead of Williams and Forte, small colleges such as B-CC would be much better off.

MEAC Moves Tourney

It will be a bold move by the MEAC, but one the league felt compelled to make. The conference's last two basketball tournaments in

Greensboro had netted just over \$10,000 each, and such a paltry total is hardly worth putting out such effort for.

So the MEAC has a new sweetheart deal in Philadelphia, where the city has guaranteed the league a profit of at least \$100,000. The event will be played March 7-9 at the Palestra.

Speaking of tournament woes, sources say the Southwestern Athletic Conference, known more for its powerhouse football, lost \$10,600 on its basketball tournament last season.

Suicide Path

When will these coaches ever learn?

An early peek at the South Carolina State basketball schedule shows the Bulldogs playing road games against at least six teams that either made the NCAA Tournament or the NIT last season.

Among the heavyweights on the S.C. State schedule are Kansas, Illinois, Virginia Tech, Georgia Tech, Alabama-Birmingham and Alcorn State.

That's an impressive array of games for a team that managed only a 13-16 record a year ago. The feeling here is that one or two games against the basketball powers is fine, but anything more than that can ruin a season.

Justice Is Just Us

Noted comedian Richard Pryor first uttered that line in an attempt to describe how justice in America is one-sided. Routinely in America, when a white man is gunned down on a city street, an intensive investigation is launched.

That apparently is not the case in the murder of a young black man, Gregory Ross, who was a basketball player at Bethune-Cookman College.

Ross was gunned down several weeks ago on a sidewalk in Orlando, Fla. Police still have no motive, no suspects. All they know is that Ross was killed by someone who fired from a moving vehicle containing black men.

Short Honeymoon

James Frank knew there would be plenty of days like this.

Hired several months ago to become the SWAC's new commissioner, Frank has taken the cold shoulder from many athletic directors around the league.

Why? Frank was apparently the hand-picked choice of Southern University President Jesse Stone and Grambling Athletic Director and football Coach Eddie Robinson; whose two schools have been at the center of controversy in the league because of their refusal to play their Bayou Classic football game prior to the regular-season deadline set by the NCAA.

The game is played each Thanksgiving weekend in New Orleans, and attracts crowds of more than 60,000 to the Superdome. NCAA rules, however, say Division I-AA teams such as Grambling and Southern must have concluded their seasons by Thanksgiving.

The breaking of the rule has made the SWAC champion ineligible for the I-AA playoffs.

And Frank, who in essence was hired by Stone and Robinson, has been all but powerless in his attempts to deal with the problem.



Overdrive

Piney Grove's Rodney Hatton drives in for two as an opponent avoids the foul in Summer League basketball action Monday (photo by James Parker).

Basketball under a clear, blue summer sky, anyone?

By ALLEN H. JOHNSON
Executive Editor

For after-five basketball stars who like to ply their trade outdoors, there's a new summer option.

It's called the Rupert Bell Summer League and it fills a vacuum in organized competition among players 18 years of age and older.

The league is the brainchild of former West Forsyth star James Edrington, a deadly outside shooter who considered 20-footers layups during his high school tenure.

Edrington took his idea to Mary G. Britt, a center supervisor at the Rupert Bell Recreation Center.

"We had thrown it around with our staff," Britt says of the idea, "but it made it comfortable when James came in."

Edrington is "out there with the guys," Mrs. Britt says of the former Central Piedmont Conference Player of the Year. "He knows how they feel."

"It was just like a prayer being answered," she adds. "Someone from the outside wanted to see this thing go over."

Edrington, a stocky, affable 20-year-old who learned some of his court savvy from good friend and former Reynolds star Larry Little, hopes the summer league will give him the chance to fine-tune his skills.

"They pay in outside summer leagues in New York," he says. "We need to bring that down here."

And he wanted to give college players a competitive means of honing their skills during the summer.

So far, says Edrington, who himself will be a player in the league, five teams have been organized for play that began Monday. In addition, a crew of volunteer referees has been recruited to officiate the action, which will involve an array of local notables.

Some of those players include Sam Kennedy, a former basketball and football standout at Reynolds, as well as former Demons Michael Thomas and Andy Hewitt.

North Forsyth alumnus Edward Coe, who plays now at Temple University, also will refine his game with summer action as will Milton Vaughn (East Forsyth, Pfeiffer), 6-9 Hairston Finklea (West Forsyth, Pfeiffer) and Eddie Jordan (North Forsyth, J.C. Smith).

Among the coaches will be Bill McClain, who has served as an assistant with Wake Forest's women's team.

The games will be played Mondays through Thursdays at the Rupert Bell Recreation Center, 1000 S. Main St., from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., says Edrington.

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The Outdoor Type

Edrington: Getting off in the great outdoors (photo by James Parker).

Black College Briefs

New Tenn. State coaches appointed

By BARRY COOPER
Syndicated Columnist

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- New Tennessee State football Coach Bill Thomas has made some changes on his staff. Fred Sumrall has been added as a new assistant and Lewis Harris Jr. has been elevated from graduate assistant to full time. Also, Craig Gilliam, son of former TSU Head Coach Joe Gilliam Sr., will serve as defensive coordinator, while Sylvester Collins will handle the offense.

Jesse James was named assistant head coach. All, including Thomas, are former TSU players and were connected with the program last year.

Another Change

ORLANDO, Fla. -- Bethune-Cookman's season-opening football game with the University of Central Florida, originally set for Sept. 1 but moved to Aug. 31, now will be played on its original date.

The date was first shifted to avoid conflicting with the University of Miami-Florida game, which also will be played on Sept. 1 in nearby Tampa.

However, B-CC and UCF discovered that Sept. 1 was the earliest they could play, according to NCAA rules.

Still Looking

ORANGEBURG, S.C. -- After weeks of trying, South Carolina State has all but given up hopes of scheduling an I-AA game with the University of South Carolina. Please see page B3

Through good times -- and bad -- Twin City Little League carries on

By SAM DAVIS
Special To The Chronicle

Throughout its young life, the Twin City Little League has had its share of growing pains. Still, the predominantly black youth baseball circuit continues to positively influence a number of youngsters in the community.

As its 23rd season comes to a close, the Twin City Little League is as strong as ever; the creation of a booster club last year helped solve many of its financial problems. Still, the league's organizers want to involve more people, especially adults.

William Westbrook Jr., president of the league, hopes that this year's All-Star Game will expose the league's young talent to the public and help rally more community support.

For the third consecutive year, the Winston-Salem Indians will co-sponsor Twin City Little League Day at Ernie Shore Stadium July 1. Coaches William Ashford of the Mets, James Johnson of the Yankees, Algefield Cain of the Twins, Charles Rice of the Dodgers, William Westbrook of the Subaru, Thurmond Edwards of the Braves, Rip Wilkins of the Cubs and Curtis Green of the Reds will each pick four players from their teams to compete in the East-versus-West game at 5 p.m.

The league's Pony League all-stars also will play at 6 p.m. as part of a Twin City League all-star doubleheader that precedes a game between the Winston-Salem Indians and the Chapel Hill All-Stars at 7:30.

Its officials hope that, by promoting the worthwhile effects participation in the program has upon

youth, the league will continue to grow.

The Twin City coaches stress fundamentals to their players and their major focus is to prepare the youngsters for participation in other organized activities.

"This is really the starting point for most black kids that go on to participate in sports," says Al Mitchell, player agent for the league. "It helps them learn to work with others to achieve a common goal."

Alexander "Rock" Woods, who has been with the league since its inception, has similar thoughts on the program's purpose. "We try to teach them above all that good sportsmanship is necessary to be successful in sports," he says.

Yet, both Mitchell and Woods agree that interest among blacks in baseball is decreasing. As a result,

they say, black people don't come out as much to watch baseball games.

"More black people are into football and other sports for recreational and entertainment purposes," says Mitchell. "Most guys can relate to football more than baseball; therefore, they don't really take as much time to watch or participate in baseball."

Westbrook, who has coached teams to seven championships during his 19 years with the program, feels the league is taking a new direction. "As far as talent is concerned, I think we can compete with the Northwest, Southwest, Mineral Springs and Winston-Salem Nationals Little Leagues," says Westbrook.

"But, with more financial support, participation and coaches," he adds, "the league would be a lot better off." Please see page B3