By James Cuthbertson

PREP Chatter

James

Juan Antonio Burke is a rising freshman at North Carolina A&T State University.

The West Mecklenburg High School graduate was a terror on the football field his junior year at the Tuckaseegee Road campus.

Because he had played varsity in ninth grade, he was ineligible to play his senior year.

To stay in shape, he played for the semi-pro Charlotte Eagles.

All-Conference as a junior at West, he became "Most Valuable Running Back" for the Charlotte Eagles, a team playing Anderson and Rock Hill, S.C., Greenville and other area teams in North and South Carolina.

"I enjoyed the experience," he said. "It was great. The men in the league had heard that this little young running back was going to run through the league. Therefore, they keyed on me and tried to keep me from getting any yardage. My longest run was 90 yards. I learned to survive."

Burke plans to walk on at North Carolina A&T and coach Mo Forte has already assured him that he has a good chance of making the Division I-AA Aggies of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference.

"I have been training every day and running every night," he said. "I eat the right foods and keep mentally and physically healthy."

Juan recently won the Weightlifting Award at West Mecklenburg, beating out Clemson's highly regarded recruit Mark Drag, who at 6'4" and 240 pounds, was one and a half times the size of the 5'1", 185 pound Burke.

To win the award, he bench pressed 300 pounds, dead lifted 450 pounds, squatted for 475 pounds, and clung for 260 pounds.

"I received a necklace for winning that honor," he said. "It required intensive training throughout the year."

Burke believes that weight training helps your football ability because it makes you thicker and stronger.

"It gives you a form of mental toughness,'" he revealed. "And it is a good way to blow off steam when you are mad.

"There is nothing like being upset and going into a weight room to tear it up."

Let's hope they don't make Burke too upset in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference. He could help bring the Aggies of N.C. A&T back to respectibility.

With an 8-3 win over North Forsyth, the Independence Patriots moved into the finals of the state playoffs against New Hanover of Wilmington.

The Patriots, in the playoff to be played at Independence, held off until the sixth inning when they scored eight runs to beat the Vikings. The Patriots are 21-5 on the season and are looking forward to the best of three series.

Riding along with a 3-0 lead which looked comfortable, North Forsyth was awakened in the sixth inning when Tom Malchesky hit a line drive to left field and Mark Withers homered to center.

With Jeff Biddy being hit and David Short on via walks, North Forsyth pitcher David Carlyle was received by David McGunigal who wild-pitched the runners to second and third and walked Robbie Kistler to load the bases.

Forrest Hager's sacrifice fly scored the tying run and with one out, West Black singled to put the Patriots in front 4-3. Jeff Atkins then singled to right on a check swing to score a run and Malchesky ripped a three-run homer to left to complete the scoring.

The Patriots who won the tough Southwestern 4A Conference are more than worthy state playoff representatives.

Congratulations to Charlotte Latin school for winning the Wachovia Cup North Carolina Independent Schools competition.

The cup, symbolic of having the best overall NCISAA athletic program is awarded annually by Wachovia and the N.C. Independent High School Athletic Association. It is also presented to winners on the 1A, 2A, 3A and 4A levels among public schools.

Latin earned 350 points to finish ahead of Durham Academy and 1983 winner Charlotte Country Day.

Latin gained 190 of its points in spring sports.

The Hawks won state championships in girls' basketball, girls' tennis, boys' tennis and were runner-ups in girls' track, third in boys' track, and fourth in boys' golf.

SHOP THE POST'S FOOD PAGES AND SAVE

For Rodney Fitzgerald Rivers

Football Season Is Step Away

By James Cuthbertson

For Rodney Fitzgerald Rivers, North Carolina Central University's football season is only a step away.

To aid in his stepping from the tailback position that he covets, Rivers stepped onto the wooden and rubber indoor tracks of colleges and universities in the Carolinas this winter and on the asphalt tracks outdoors in the spring to keep himself in shape.

With the full blessings of his coaches, he ran track.

"Coach John Lattimore and Coach Larry McDonald encouraged me to run indoor and outdoor track," Rivers said.

He ran the 100, 200, 400 relay and 800 relay.

"To do this meant I had to skip spring football season," he said, "but I believe that I made the right decision."

His 400 relay team was third in the conference meet.

In his first season of indoor track, Rodney said that he enjoyed the travel and the camaraderie that he developed with other indoor track participants.

"I was with several Charlotte tracksters at the meets," he said, adding that high jumper Shelton Boyer and speedster Steve Griffin, both of Clemson, were a few.

Haywood Smith of Western Carolina was another, he said.

Rivers has begun his summer repertoire with weight training at North Mecklenburg and running in the morning and afternoons.

He is really excited about the 1984 opener with the Blue Bears of Livingstone College.

He is also excited about the homecoming game with the Golden Bulls of Johnson C. Smith University.

The coaches at North Carolina Central expect Rivers to start.

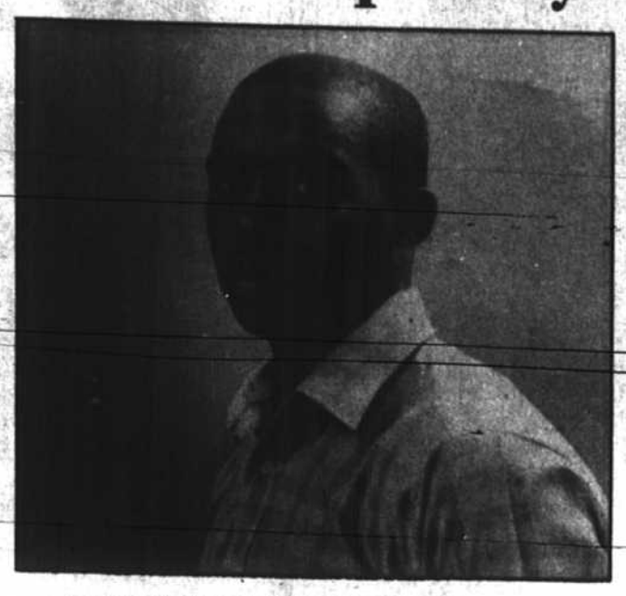
After all, he lettered as a freshman and was the newcomer of the week for talent displayed in one of the 1983 CIAA Football games.

Rivers led Division II of the NCAA and the NAIA

He also intends to better his grade point average.

"It was all right," he said, "but I can do much better than I did."

"That is one of my most important goals," he said.



RODNEY FITZGERALD RIVERS

Versatile athlete

To better their 8-1-1 record, North Carolina Central would really have to have some horses.

And one they expect to ride on is Rodney Rivers, former standout at North Mecklenburg.

"We were disappointed last year when we didn't get a bowl bid," he said. "We intend to make sure that we go this year."

Camp starts August 11 and school starts August 27.

The first game is September 1st.

Rivers is confident that the Eagles will improve on last year's near perfect record.

McCrorey Y

The McCrorey YMCA is currently holding registration for its summer programs. Included are Camp Tomahawk Junior and Senior, for boys and girls ages five through 12, infant, youth and adult swim classes; SMART-a teenage learning adventure camp; boys' and girls' basketball camps; tennis class and a summer basketball league. Most programs begin on June 11.

For more information or to register for an activity, call the YMCA at 394-2356.

Address Assigned

The County Engineering Department now has responsibility for assigning street addresses within the city of Charlotte, in the unincorporated areas of the county and in Cornelius, Matthews and Mint Hill. Residents needing a street address verified or assigned should call the County Engineering Department at 374-2713. County Engineering is located in the County Services Building, 700 North Tryon St., the same location of the Building Standards Department, thus making the building permit process more convenient.

★ IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY, READ THE CHARLOTTE POST EACH WEEK!!

With 24-18 Upset

Onus Embarrass Rangers

The Rock Hill Onus took some of the sails out of the high-flying Queen City Rangers' wings last Sunday, with an embarrassing 24-18 schellacking that sent the Rangers reeling to their second defeat in their last three contests.

The contest, which was played in Rock Hill, S.C., provided an opportunity for each team to flex its offensive muscles. The Onus belted 30 hits, including six homeruns, while the Rangers were putting together a 20-hit assault.

Tim Funderburke slammed a pair of round-trippers for the losers; Bobby Thompson poled his ninth; and Marcus Velesquez added a homerun and a triple.

"We mounted enough offense to win three games," mourned Herman Thomas, who thought playing conditions led to his team's setback more than over-confidence. "We just couldn't adjust to such terrible playing conditions," the long-time manager explained.

The Rangers performed better on Saturday. They edged the Charlotte Red Birds, 11-7, at Plato Price. The game proved a mild slugfest compared to Sunday's outing. The winners had 11 hits and the losers came through with seven.

The Red Birds, however, knocked two Rangers' hurlers out of the box before Henry Houston came to the rescue in the seventh to chalk up his third straight win.

Bobby Thompson led the attack with two homeruns and three RBIs. He was followed by Rudy Falls, who drove in the go-ahead runs with a homerun in the seventh inning, an uprising that produced seven runs for the winners. Velesquez contributed a triple, single and three RBIs.

"They have an outstanding ball player in their young catcher Sam Williams," Thomas praised, pointing out that Williams kept the losers in the contest with a homerun, two singles and a double which accounted for four runs.

The Rangers will return to action on Saturday, facing the Statesville Twins in a league encounter at Plato Price, starting at 3:30 o'clock.

Thomas couldn't make his mind up as to who would be the starting pitcher.

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