

1B

SPORTS

Frontcourt shows muscle

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte Sting coach Marynell Meadors knew she had good frontcourt players at the start of the season.

Now they're starting to play like it. Rhonda Mapp, Vicky Bullett and Andrea Congreaves make up Charlotte's revamped lineup, and their improved play is a major factor in the Sting's run toward one of four WNBA playoff berths.

"They're outstanding post players. We knew that when we selected them," Meadors said. "We didn't know they would be the best in the league, but I really truly believe that we've got three of the finest post players."

It took a while for the trio to pull it all together. Mapp, a center, was in the start-

ing lineup at the beginning of the season, but was benched briefly when she struggled on offense. Congreaves was promoted to the starting lineup just as Mapp's production improved and Bullett reeled off a string of solid games. Together, they've helped push Charlotte into a battle with Cleveland for second place in the Eastern Conference.

"Putting Andrea and I in the starting lineup, (has) had an impact on our team," Mapp said. "It was a matter of Andrea and I having time to play so we can get our flow. I don't think we were getting it in the beginning, but now we have it. I just feel confident, especially when I'm playing with Vicky and Andrea."

"The chemistry is finally flowing and

See FRONT on page 2B



PHOTO/WADE NASH
Rhonda Mapp has come on strong of late for the Charlotte Sting, who have improved its frontcourt play.

Jasmine Corbett



Forget wanting to be like Mike. What about being like Andrea or Rhonda?

After attending a Charlotte Sting home game, it's obvious that Andrea Stinson, Rhonda Mapp and their teammates have more than chemistry. They have true fans, something people who doubted the WNBA's existence here underestimated. During the second half of last week's Charlotte-Sacramento Monarchs game at

the Charlotte Coliseum, the Sting played with confidence, and it was evident these women were taking no prisoners. The crowd appreciated the home team's effort and showed their gratitude after each basket by trying to raise the Coliseum roof. The faithful were at their hand-clapping, foot-stomping best, shouting words of encouragement such as "Put it in," "Way to go," and "One more time," which is what the Sting did.

With that kind of crowd support, it's hard to believe some people think the WNBA won't last. Obviously the nay-sayers have not seen our women play. The Coliseum was an electric place Friday night with fans young and old, male and

See STING on page 2B

Olympic dream is a kick

By Karl Petraroja
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

It's never too early to start dreaming about the Olympics.

For 9-year-old Arlysa Ferguson of Charlotte, the karate competition at the AAU Junior Olympics is the first step toward realizing that dream. She's already won a basket full of medals, including a gold Tuesday and bronze at the nationals in Orlando last month. Not only does she compete against older juniors, she regularly beats boys, too.

"That's one of the reasons I'm so proud of her," says Eloise Ferguson, Arlysa's grandmother. "She wants to succeed and she doesn't disqualify herself because she's a girl. She's hung in there with the boys."

While karate may not be the first sport of choice of most girls, it's Arlysa's favorite.

"I like a lot of sports, basketball, softball, tennis, volleyball, soccer, gymnastics," she said. "My grandmother says I'm too athletic but karate is still my favorite."

Arlysa started practicing karate when she was 6 years old because she wanted to protect herself and her grandparents.

"If a fire happens, I want to be able to rescue them," she said. "If someone wants to kill my grandmother, I want to save her."

Arthur Ferguson, Arlysa's

See KARATE on page 2B



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON
Arlysa Ferguson, 9, won gold in the AAU Junior Olympics at UNC Charlotte.

Experimental model



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Walter Rasby will play an expanded role in the Carolina Panthers offense as fullback and tight end.

Fullback shuffle puts Rasby into mix

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Walter Rasby never expected to have a football formation named after him.

But if "Raz Regular" works for the Carolina Panthers, the fourth-year tight end will have a place in the offensive terminology.

Rasby, who played college ball at Wake Forest, will be tried at fullback in some running situations to take advantage of



Rasby

his blocking. After being all but forgotten as a receiver in the shadow of all-pro tight end Wesley Walls, Rasby has a new lease of NFL life.

"I feel confident enough that I can do it," he said. "They've been doing it the right way, starting me off with base plays

See RASBY on page 2B

Jamison glad to be headed back to school

By Karl Petraroja
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Antawn Jamison is happy being a college basketball player for now. Jamison, a junior forward at North Carolina, said he has no regrets about not entering the June NBA draft as an underclassman. Though he admits it was tough watching on TV, he figures his day will come.

"As a junior, I'm just going out there playing basketball and if the opportunity is there next year you never know," he said. "But then again, my mind set is four years, so I just want to go out there and play basketball and hopefully get a championship ring."

One NBA veteran who's eager to see Jamison in the league is Pepsi Bottling point guard Muggsy Bogues. The Charlotte Hornet feels Jamison would be good as a professional.

"He's a talented player," Bogues said. "I'm looking forward for him to come in and do what he feels he's capable of doing. It's going to take him sometime but that's how young players do."

The Pro-Am league wraps up its season this weekend with the semifinals Saturday at Queens College, followed by the championship final Sunday at 2 p.m.

Jamison, who plays for first place 5 Star Auto, is looking for another successful college season. Last season he helped the Tar Heels advance to the Final Four before losing in semifinals to eventual champion Arizona. He wouldn't mind another shot at the top.

"We learned a whole lot last year, not only against Arizona but a whole lot of teams," Jamison said. "But Arizona definitely taught us a whole lot. We came in there kind of cocky. We knew we lost to them the first game (of the season) and we thought we were going to just blow them out, you know just continue playing the way we had been playing during that 16-game winning streak."

"It was their destiny, they did everything right...we definitely want to play Arizona again."

The Tar Heels will be very good. The only significant loss is center Serge Zwikker but the Heels could have their center of the future in 7-foot Brendan Haywood of Greensboro Dudley High. Jamison expects an even better season ahead.

"We pretty much got the same team coming back so we definitely want to kind of build on what we had last year," he said. "As long as we go out there and work night in and night out, everyday in practice before the season starts and get that team chemistry down, we should be all right."

The man making sure the Tar Heels get everything they can from their talents is coach Dean Smith, who set the all-time record for wins by a Division I coach, passing Adolph Rupp of Kentucky. Jamison was

See JAMISON on page 3B



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Antawn Jamison (33) doesn't regret staying at North Carolina for his junior season.

Bell tolls for Central's new quarterback

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

N.C. Central football coach Larry Little remembers a meeting he had with quarterback Warren Bell during spring practice.

Bell insisted that no one could feel a game's pace like he. So Bell gave Little a suggestion: Give him more autonomy over the offense. It didn't really surprise the coach, who was amused by the sophomore's request. After all, the Eagles went 8-3 last season with Little calling the shots.

"He wanted to call his own plays," Little said with a chuckle. "I told him he must've lost his

mind."

Bell, a former



Bell

standout, was

spot on the all-rookie team, Bell is looking forward to a new role.

"It's nothing I'm not ready for,"

Olympic High serious. The starter's job is his as fall drills open, and no one could be happier about leading an offense that led the CIAA in scoring last year. After a successful stint of limited playing time and a

said Bell, who completed 26 of 49 passes for 397 yards and a touchdown in 1996. "It's something I've been waiting for. I'm ready now. It's just getting out for myself instead of watching somebody else."

Bell did well when he substituted for starter Brad McAdams, but his best attribute is a take-charge attitude. No situation, it seems, is too difficult to overcome.

"The thing I like most about Warren is he is very confident," Little said. "He won't do anything to hurt us."

Naturally, Bell would rather have control over the offense because it allows him to make

decisions according to the game's flow.

"It seems I can call plays easier because I can see what the defense gives me," he said. "I know what I like to run better than anyone else."

Bell was a solid quarterback at Olympic, leading the Trojans to the N.C. 4A playoffs in 1994. He was recruited by James Madison and several CIAA schools, but after visiting Central and talking to his father, Warren Sr., decided Durham was the best place for him.

"A couple of schools told me I could start as a freshman, but my

See BELL on page 4B



FILE PHOTO

Former Olympic High standout Warren Bell is entrenched as N.C. Central's starting quarterback. Despite limited playing time last year, he was named to the CIAA's all-rookie team.