



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Johnson C. Smith defensive end Justin Jackson (middle) bears down on quarterback Donja Goodson during practice last week.

Up front, and on side Bulls' DE making transition to OLB

By Herbert L. White
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Johnson C. Smith defensive end Justin Jackson has the speed to play linebacker. So he's doing both.

Jackson, a junior, is the latest in a line of two-position players at Smith, adding linebacker to his duties in spring drills to add an extra element to some schemes. After recording 66

tackles (37 solo) and seven sacks for the Bulls last season, Jackson hopes to benefit from the move.

"Coach (Tim Harkness) wants me to work at linebacker a little bit so I can go either or to help the team," Jackson said. "It's regular end and regular linebacker, I'll blitz at linebacker and get regular drops (into pass coverage). I'm just trying to get to know

two positions and switch it up a little bit."

It helps that Jackson, 6-2, 230 pounds, has the versatility Smith coaches are looking for. Without the depth other programs take for granted, the Bulls look for athletes like Jackson who can play multiple positions. Although the change has been challenging, Jackson is encouraged by his spring

Please see JACKSON/3C

NCAA eyes new recruiting standards

By Michael Marot
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS — College recruits could face curfews, limits on off-campus activities and fewer paid visits next fall, if recruiting changes are approved by the NCAA next month.

An NCAA task force on recruiting debated all three changes Monday in its first face-to-face meeting in Indianapolis. A formal proposal is expected to be submitted to the NCAA's management council by April 20.

"We discussed all those kinds of things," said David Berst, the task force's chairman. "We're trying to come up with a principle-based approach."

Berst declined to discuss which specific changes may be in the task force's draft proposal, which he expects to complete within 10 days.

Berst, an NCAA vice president and former head of enforcement, said there was unanimity among the task force's 18 members that changes were needed in the wake of several highly publicized recruiting scandals.

In the most prominent case, three women are suing Colorado University after claiming they were raped during or just after a December 2001 off-campus party for football players and recruits.

At Miami, Willie Williams, the team's top recruit this year, has been arrested 11 times since 1999 — a record school officials said they were unaware of when he signed a national letter of intent.

Hurricanes coach Larry Coker said this month he was partly aware of Williams' criminal past. The school has suspended the processing of Williams' admissions application leaving his future with the Hurricanes clouded.

Those cases prompted NCAA President Myles Brand to form the task force in February, hoping new recruiting rules could be in place before next fall. Brand attended the first part of Monday's meeting to explain his thoughts about what Berst described as appropriate approaches.

Brand has called the actions in some cases "morally reprehensible"

Berst said he believes the task force will meet Brand's timetable by submitting a formal proposal next month.

"I think we can get it done," he said. "It will not be without some effort and some extreme effort."

Berst also acknowledged that Monday's wide-ranging discussion included the possibility of eliminating paid visits entirely although it was unclear if that would be among the proposed changes.

If paid visits were eliminated, Berst said, there was concern it could hurt opportunities for athletes with families who could not afford to pay for trips.

"That's something that has been said by those thinking it's not a good idea," he said.

Among other possible changes are shortening campus visits from 48 hours to 24 hours, reducing from five to three or four the number of visits a student can take and capping university spending on travel, meals and lodging.

CHARLOTTE NATIVE HOPES FOR SAN FRANCISCO TREAT



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

Charlotte native Ray Durham (right) shares a laugh with San Francisco Giants coach Luis Pujols before batting practice in Scottsdale, Ariz. Durham, the Giants second baseman is healthy after an injury-plagued 2003 season.

Durham bullish on '04

By Karl Petraraja
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — For the first time in his nine-year major league career, Ray Durham felt the sting of the dreaded injury bug.

The Charlotte native, playing his first season with the San Francisco Giants in 2003, was limited to 110 games after two stints on the DL. The second baseman sprained his right ankle on a slide May

10 in Atlanta, then pulled his right hamstring against Pittsburgh in August. Now with the 2004 season about to start, Durham is ready to put the nagging injuries behind him.

"Health has never been a problem except for last year," Durham said, before his Giants faced the Colorado Rockies in a Cactus League game last week. "After not going on the DL my whole career and to go on the DL for sliding the same way that I

have slid for years, it was really frustrating."

Despite the injuries, Durham put together an impressive season in his first stint in the National League. He hit .285 with 8 homers and 33 RBIs. Durham had a career-best 16-game hitting streak from May 27 to June 14 when he batted .371. To prove his value to the Giants as a leadoff hitter, San Francisco went 43-9, an .827 winning percentage when Durham scored at

least one run in a game.

"He brings everything, he's a leadoff guy, he handles the responsibility very well," Giants veteran third baseman Edgardo Alfonzo said. "Every time he's in the lineup he always makes something happen...he's a great player. I always heard about him but never had the opportunity to play with him and last year I did. He's different in person, he's a much better player than I thought."

Please see DURHAM/2C

Charlotte golf organization looking for members

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Les Birdies Golf Club of Charlotte is looking for new members.

The club, organized in 1999, provides exposure to the sport for girls through teaching sessions and tournaments as well as golf and social activities for members.

Last fall, Les Birdies treated golfers from the Police Athletic League to a round at Sunset Golf Course as part of its outreach efforts. This year, the group will sponsor a tournament at The Divide June 26. Registration is \$75 per player. For information on Les Birdies or the June tournament, call Evelyn Mercer at (704) 341-9155; Grace Chambers at (704) 399-7729; Minnie Maxwell (704) 392-2562 or Annie Jones (704) 867-1319.

• Greenville, S.C., won the IGA golf match March 20 at The Creek Golf Club in Spartanburg.

Greenville's team of 31 players shot 57 to top Chester-Spartanburg by one shot, while Charlotte's Par Busters crew of 14 players finished third at 59.

Charlotte-Par Busters was led by Phil Neely with 69, followed by Bob Jones' 78 and Donald Littlejohn with 80.

Results from the IGA Match in Spartanburg, S.C.

Team standings:
Greenville 57; Chester-Spartanburg 58; Charlotte-Par Busters 59; Columbia-Ridgewood 62; Asheville-Shelby 64.

Charlotte-Par Busters results:
Phil Neely 69; Bob Jones 78; Donald Littlejohn 80; Aquil Shamsid-Deen 82; Otis Worthy 83.



PHOTO/LES BIRDIES

Members of Les Birdies sponsored a golf outing for members of the Police Athletic League last fall. The Charlotte group is dedicated to providing opportunities to girls and women through golf instructions and tournaments. New members are also sought as are participants in a June tournament.

Athens Olympics headed into red

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATHENS, Greece — Olympic preparation costs have exceeded the \$5.6 billion budget, and still more projects could be trimmed to reduce spending, a top planner for the games said.

"A first inventory shows there are overruns," said Deputy Culture Minister Fani Palli-Petralia. "I cannot give a total estimate this minute."

The final price tag for the Aug. 13-29 games is a highly important issue in Greece. Some critics complain that the rush to overcome construction delays has escalated costs and the nation will be saddled with crippling debt for decades.

The former Socialist government, which was knocked from power by the conservative New Democracy party in March 7 elections, had repeatedly promised the budget would not increase. But Palli-Petralia claimed the Socialists "lost control" of Olympic spending. Most of the budget was to build or refurbish sports venues. It also includes more than \$800 million for security.

According to figures released by Palli-Petralia, Culture Ministry projects alone have increased by \$263 million in this year's spending. Palli-Petralia also sent a letter to all ministers involved in Olympics preparations for an itemized accounting of their budgets.

"We must know how much all this Olympic endeavor will cost," Palli-Petralia said.

The Athens 2004 Organizing Committee - managed as a private company - has a separate budget of nearly \$2.4 billion, with more than 80 percent of revenues coming from TV rights, sponsors, ticket sales and commercial use of the 2004 logo. The state is to cover at least 14 percent of the committee's budget.

Palli-Petralia also suggested the government could trim back some nonessential projects such as landscaping. Earlier this month, officials canceled a much-delayed plastic roof for the swimming venue. Another delayed work - the steel-and-glass roof of the main Olympic stadium - will be ready by a late June deadline set by the International Olympic Committee, she promised.

The entire stadium complex is scheduled to be ready on July 20 - just three weeks before the games. The work, however, will overlap with vital inspections and competitions by the International Association of Athletics Federations, or IAAF.