

49er missed NBA boat

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ing high school. But he instead chose to come to Charlotte and suit up for the 49ers.

It was a mistake. A huge mistake. Instead of going in and dominating Conference USA - as a player who is 7 feet tall with a ridiculous wingspan should - Iti went to college and got exposed.

He had very little athleticism. He had no quickness. He wasn't an effective shot-blocker, and he couldn't out-rebound smaller players.

Sure, he had been a very good player in high school, but that's a whole different thing from Conference USA. Iti averaged a paltry 6 points and 4.7 rebounds per game for the 49ers. He scored in double figures just four times and, even worse, hauled in at least 10 rebounds on only three occasions.

He never looked comfortable, and he seemed to get frustrated easily. You saw him play against Southern Mississippi, and you wondered: "Is this the guy who was thinking about coming out and going into the League as a high school senior? That's him? Wow."

Back when former 49er Rodney White was in college, you could tell he was an NBA prospect. White was the leading scorer among freshman in the whole country. He was the first freshman ever to be named Conference USA tournament most valuable player. He was arguably the best player in the conference. And he was chosen ninth overall in the 2001 NBA draft.

It won't work that way for Iti, even though he's 7 feet tall with a ridiculous wingspan.

The good thing: Iti said he would not hire an agent. Most people think he will go to the NBA's pre-draft camp in Chicago, and then return to Charlotte to try and improve his professional stock.

That would be a good idea.

And since the NBA no longer is a guarantee, Iti also might want to work on all those things that really make college worthwhile. Even Rudy from "The Cosby Show" made the most of her college experience.

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REFORMING SPORTS

A call for a cultural change

By Steve Wilstein
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

School's out soon at colleges and another season of scandals will be in the books.

At Colorado, a Board of Regents panel investigating whether the football program used sex and alcohol to entice recruits is due to issue its report at the end of May. Coach Gary Barnett's job and the school's reputation are on the line.

The state attorney general is conducting a separate probe into allegations that at least eight women were raped by Colorado football players since 1997.

Accusations that other schools used sex and alcohol-fueled parties to lure star high school athletes led the

NCAA to draft strict new recruiting standards that will be reviewed in July.

Academic frauds, small and large, continued as usual this year. Coaches fired for various violations a year ago were rehired at different schools.

Abysmal graduation rates persisted at many major uni-

versities, embarrassing the NCAA once again during the Final Four and leading to passage at the end of April of a broad package of reforms.

NCAA president Myles Brand called the package "landmark legislation" adding that "the academic reform movement has now come to fruition."

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