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Morty Buckles moves from the Dodge Weekly Series to ARCA in NASCAR's ladder system.

# Buckled up for race promotion

Driver diversity program grad Morty Buckles moves up to ARCA series

By Herbert L. White  
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The Charlotte-based Drive for Diversity has its first graduate.

Morty Buckles has moved up from Belnavis Motorsports' National Guard team in the Dodge Weekly Series to the ARCA Series with Victory Motorsports, a team owned by former Atlanta Falcons receiver Terence Mathis.

"Morty has been a member of the Drive For Diversity program from the foundation of the initiative and

we are thrilled about this great opportunity for him with Victory Motorsports," said Greg Calhoun, president of Access Marketing and Communications, which oversees the program.

"I would really like to thank Sam Belnavis, Belnavis Racing and everyone at the National Guard for giving me such a magnificent opportunity to drive for their team during 2004 and 2005 in the NASCAR Dodge Weekly Series," Buckles said in a statement. "Also

I would like to thank Access Marketing and Communications for giving me the opportunity to have participated and advanced from the Drive for Diversity program."

Belnavis Racing, owned by Charlotte marketing executive Sam Belnavis, was one of five teams to support Drive for Diversity. Belnavis is chief diversity officer at Roush Racing and owns teams in NASCAR's Craftsman Truck Series and

Nextel Cup series.

Brianne Cronrath, one of 18 drivers to try out in a driver combine, will replace Buckles at Belnavis Racing.

"I am so excited about this opportunity to get behind the wheel of a great car with a team like Belnavis Racing and I am really happy for Morty," Cronrath said. "He is such a wonderful person on and off the track. I hope we can continue to transition smoothly and get some good finishes under our belt."

## Caught in NBA draft and more

Just a few random thoughts about what's going on in the sports world, while wondering whatever happened to Vince Evans ...

Despite the national applause that took place after the NBA and its players union agreed to adopt a minimum age requirement recently, don't expect college seniors to become the new flavor of the NBA Draft.

Underclassmen and foreign players still will dominate.

Here's the unfortunate truth for players who aspire to play in the NBA. If you've played four years of college basketball, chances are you weren't a top-tier player. Shoot, these days, if you've played ball as a college JUNIOR, you're going to need your degree almost immediately.

Consider the list of college seniors who were bypassed in last week's NBA Draft:

Notre Dame point guard Chris Thomas, who had considered leaving school after his sophomore season before being convinced to stay; Jawad Williams, the starting power forward for the national-champion North Carolina Tar Heels; Eddie Baisden, the Charlotte guard who was Conference-USA's player of year last season.

And so many others.

The bottom line? College seniors generally are perceived by NBA coaches and general managers to be closer to being finished products than, say, a 19-year-old kid who exhibited a propensity to be spectacular at times (see: Williams, Marvin).

Basically, since Tim Duncan left Wake Forest in 1997, there aren't any more players who are in college simply because they want to be there ...

Speaking of NBA draftees, the most intriguing pick of the draft was former North Carolina star Rashad McCants, who was taken with the 14th overall pick by the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Look, I've been one of the biggest critics out there of the incendiary McCants, who once compared playing at North Carolina with being in prison. But it doesn't mean I was against McCants; I just thought he lacked maturity, and I never quite understood why he felt the whole world was against him - especially when 20,000-plus fans were screaming for him in the Dean E. Smith Center.

Well, none of that matters anymore.

I'm cheering for McCants now.

Loudly.

Whatever problems McCants has, I hope he has put them behind him, now that he's become a millionaire. I hope he's finally able to find some peace.

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Charlotte Sting point guard Dawn Staley earned her fourth WNBA All-Star game appearance despite Charlotte's 2-12 record.

## Shining star

Staley an All-Star starter despite Sting struggles

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The Charlotte Sting's on-court troubles haven't dimmed Dawn Staley's All-Star power.

The Charlotte point guard will make her fourth All-Star appearance Saturday in Connecticut, her third as a starter. Staley topped all Eastern Conference guards in voting by fans.

A six-year veteran, Staley averages 6.3 points, 5.8 assists and 2.2 rebounds in 29.8 minutes per game. She is second in the WNBA in assists-to-

turnover ratio (3.45-1), third in assists and fourth in three-point shooting percentage at 47.8 percent.

Staley has been durable in Charlotte, never missing a start in her WNBA career, playing in 210 straight games going into tonight's game against Minnesota.

Other East starters include New York guard Becky Hammon, Indiana forward Tamika Catchings, Detroit forward Swin Cash and Detroit center Ruth Riley.

## Livingstone honors athletic standouts

SPECIAL TO THE POST

Livingstone College inducted 13 into its fourth annual athletic Hall of Fame June 17 at the University Hilton in Charlotte.

Inductees included former coach, instructor, and athletic director Fred Ponder, football athlete and interim president Roy Hudson (Class of '55), football and basketball athlete Charles Kirk, Sr. ('60), football

and tennis athlete James Talley ('63), football athlete and former coach Thomas "Rudy" Abrams ('64), football and golf athlete Judge William "Pete" Hunter ('66), contributor William Bunch ('69), football athlete John Farrar ('73), football athlete Horace Ballard ('74), softball and track athlete Jacqueline Kendall ('81), basketball athlete and former coach Antonio Davis ('87), volley-

ball, basketball, and track athlete Sherie Bell ('93), and volleyball and basketball athlete April Hawkins ('97).

Ponder excelled at Livingstone as a tennis coach from 1973 to 1985. His teams won seven CIAA Southern Division titles and was conference runner-up six times. Ponder also served as track coach, assistant football coach,

See LIVINGSTONE/3C

## Go West, young Bobcats

Felton, May going to Salt Lake revue

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The Charlotte Bobcats are preparing for summer basketball, and they're taking first-round draft picks Raymond Felton and Sean May with them.

Original Bobcats Bernard Robinson and Melvin Ely will also play out in the Rocky Mountain Revue in Salt Lake City.

The team will begin its mini-camp today at the Bobcats Basketball Center in Fort Mill. From Thursday through Saturday, the Bobcats will hold two-a-day practices from 8:30-10:30 a.m. Afternoon practices will last from 3-5 p.m. Practices are closed to the public.

Following an off day on Sunday, the mini-camp will continue with one-a-day practices on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. On July 14, the team will leave for the Rocky Mountain Revue, which will run from July 15-22. Charlotte will open against Seattle at 8 p.m. on July 15. Other participating teams include Atlanta, Dallas, San Antonio, Seattle and Utah.



Felton

## NBA rookies have no passion for fashion

So North Carolina made history at the NBA Draft with four lottery picks, eh?

Big deal!

The real question is how did they look doing it. Did they - Rashad McCants, Sean May, Marvin Williams and Raymond Felton - and the other draftees represent, or did they resemble leftover cheese?

When it comes to fashion, the NBA wannabes have nothing on the NFL.

NFL prospects set their own fashion rules. No color is off limits, no style is too daring, and no athlete is too big. Of course, when you're that big, nobody is going to say otherwise.

NBA draft picks, on the other hand, tend to go more towards the conservative route as evidenced by last week's draft. Navy blues, blacks and browns permeated the affair.

Even with those colors, however, it is possible to still go wrong. Let the Fashion Police tell you how.

• I haven't hired a tailor yet. Utah center Andrew Bogut might be the No. 1 pick, but he was middle of the road in making a fashion statement. Height - tall or short - is no excuse for elephant legs. (Get a needle and some thread, and hem those pants son!) Or better yet, get your mama to do it.

• You can borrow my tailor. On the other hand, Felton, who looked quite dashing in his brown pinstripe suit and multicolored tie, had his pant legs tailored at just the right spot - a tad below the shoe. Ditto for teammate Williams, who cut a fine and tall figure in Navy blue pinstripe with Carolina blue tie, shirt and handkerchief.

• Not so heavenly Carolina Blue. Only



BONITTA BEST

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