

Bobcats can't win

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After the Cleveland loss, Bobcats head coach and general manager Bernie Bickerstaff appeared visibly exasperated.

"I'm disappointed because of our inability now to evaluate our basketball team," he said when asked if this was the most disappointing stretch the team has faced in its brief existence.

"I'm not disappointed in the commitment of the group that we have and how they compete and how they maximize what they have. I have no complaints there. Looking ahead, though, to objectively evaluate our basketball team, we can't do it at this point because of the injuries. We have guys who are (basically) redshirting this year.

"Tomorrow, when you wake up, the reality is that the teams we are playing are better basketball teams than we

are, with how we are composed I do think, with all our components, we'd be a pretty (darn) good basketball team. I have no reservations about that. That's the thing that keeps you sane."

Because of the injuries, the Bobcats were forced to play lineups Monday featuring undrafted rookies Alan Anderson and Kevin Burleson and seldom-used back-up center Jake Voskuhl.

And while Anderson led the Bobcats with a career-high 14 points and Voskuhl was the top rebounder with a season-best 12, it clearly is not a good sign when Charlotte must rely so heavily on those two.

"When you lose 12 in a row," Voskuhl said, "you try to change it up to see if you can get something going."

But at the rate the Bobcats are losing personnel, there might not be many more players to allow changing up

the lineup.

Point guard Brevin Knight reminds Charlotte fans to not feel sorry for the team. This is the NBA, he said. And as professionals, they have to do better.

"Some of it can be injuries because you have people playing out of position," Knight said. "The nature of this game is injuries, though. You're going to get injured, you're going to get hurt, and people are just going to have to step up."

"We don't have a team where we get the ball to one guy and he gets it done, no matter what is going on. Depth has been a big part of our team this season, and we need all of our pieces to win. So we have to find it within ourselves, fight night in and night out, and we'll get it turned around."

One thing's for certain: Things can't get much worse.

Teen aspires to top divisions

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(W.Va.) Raceway and Hickory Motor Speedway, where he won the Super Unlimited Division road course championship. In June, when he turns 16, Davis will graduate to late model cars with JGR, which also backs 2005 NASCAR Nextel Cup champion Tony Stewart.

"It's a new experience," said Davis' dad, Harry. "They're both class organizations. We're looking forward to the opportunity that Gibbs Racing provides."

JGR, which is fielding a Drive for Diversity team for the first time, isn't a stranger to diversity outreach. Gibbs partnered with NFL great Reggie White to reach out to prospects through a jointly-owned team. Drive for Diversity is another step in opening

more doors to women and people of color in the sport.

"We are thrilled with the opportunities that the Drive for Diversity program has created for diverse drivers and crew members over the past two years," said Tish Sheets, NASCAR's director of diversity. "It is through the support of the entire industry that programs like this can succeed in helping to further diversity of NASCAR."

Davis' first foray into racing was as a 6-year-old on BMX bicycles, where he finished second in the U.S. At 8, he moved to quarter-midget cars and emerged as a national champion in road course and dirt competition in 2003.

"I've been at this for five or six years," he said. "I've had a lot of experience."

Davis has a racing lineage. His father raced F1 power-

boats, the most powerful of water racing vessels. His older brothers were also bike racers. It was inevitable that young Mark would follow.

"Ever since then, I've liked going fast," he said, although his career got off to a slow start. "My first BMX race, I went around the bumps instead of over them," he said. "My dad had to tell me to go over the bumps."

Davis has been on the inside track since then. This year, he's looking to gain more experience in late-model cars and impress enough people to keep moving up the stock car racing ladder.

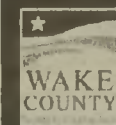
"It's hard to say you have certain goals when you're moving into new series," Davis said. "I'd like to be in the top five in late model."

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