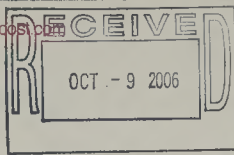


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SPORTS

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Section

Panthers' receivers adept at giving

By Herbert L. White
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The Carolina Panthers held their collective breaths when New Orleans linebacker Scott Fujita crashed into Steve Smith's legs Sunday.

So did Smith - for a few anxious moments.
The Panthers receiver clutched his lower left leg in the first half of Carolina's 21-

18 win at Bank of America Stadium before hobbling to the sideline. He sat out a few plays, but came back to finish with 10 catches for 87 yards and a touchdown to help hand New Orleans its first loss of the season.

"I ran a little pivot route and the next thing I know, I kind of fell or whatever," Smith said. "It kind of scared

me a little bit but that's football. I'm healthy, I'm fine and that's all that matters."

It does for the Panthers, who started the season 0-2 while Smith battled hamstring issues. When he went down against the Saints, an impatient hush fell upon the 73,392 in attendance, wondering if Carolina's best offensive player would get up.

Once Smith was up, he and Fujita cleared the air about the play in which Fujita hit Smith on a pass that wasn't throw his way.

"I don't know what I did," said Smith, who also missed all the preseason with strained hamstrings. "I didn't say anything to him. He apologized. I didn't take it personally. I didn't take it personally."

See WIDEOUTS/2C



PHOTO/WADE NASH

After going 0-2 without Carolina wide receiver Steve Smith, the Panthers are now 2-0.

Bobcats eager for fresh start

By Erica Singleton
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Charlotte Bobcats are looking to maintain their health and consistency.

Expectations are up for the Bobcats in their third season with the addition of first-round draft choice Adam Morrison and the return of forwards Sean May and Emeka Okafor from injury. As a team, Charlotte needs to develop chemistry, starting this week at training camp in Wilmington.

"First of all we've got to sustain the way we play, and I think we've got to get a little more consistent in our skills," coach Bernie Bickerstaff said. "I think we have to improve defensively, as a basketball team, and we've got to improve our rebounding, but we're not afraid to reach out and compete. So I think we should improve as a basketball team, and that's the goal, to get better."

After having to lead the team night in and night out, some nights with only seven players able to play, Guard Raymond Felton is more specific about where he thinks the team will be at the end of the regular season, his prediction is that the team will make the playoffs, the same prediction he made last year. "We have a lot of great talent. I think this season is going to be a great season, you know Sean is back, Emeka's back, we've got a healthy Gerald Wallace," Felton said.

"We stay healthy, I can see us in the fifth or sixth slot in the Eastern Conference. You know that's how confident I am in my team, that's the talent that we have here."

Felton's predictions as team spokesman don't disturb Bickerstaff. As a matter of fact, he's all for it.

"That's why we drafted those types of guys," Bickerstaff said. "Guys who have been in the winning environment, guys who want to win."

Please see BOBCATS/2C



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

Charlotte Bobcats forward Sean May poses for photos during the team's media day Monday.



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Johnson C. Smith linebacker Ed Wilson (52) is one of three Golden Bulls linebackers atop the CIAA in tackles. JCSU's switch to the 3-4 defense has allowed the linebackers to flourish during the Bulls' 4-1 start.

The enforcers

Linebackers, scheme beef up J.C. Smith defense

By Herbert L. White
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Fred Williams and Ed Wilson are always in the middle of everything.

Johnson C. Smith's linebackers are first and second in Division II in tackles, evidence that the Golden Bulls' switch to a 3-4 defense is paying dividends. Despite missing a game each, Williams has 56 tackles for the 4-1 Bulls; Wilson has 53. Outside linebacker Omar Bizzell isn't far behind with 46.

"I've got to give props to the D-line," said Williams, the SAM, or strong-side linebacker. "They take on blocks so I can do more roaming, so I can get to the ball. I feel like I'm the 12th man."

Williams, 6-1, 215-pound junior, initially had reservations about the 3-4 after play-

ing a traditional 4-3 scheme. He became a believer in the season opener when he led Smith with 15 tackles against Edward Waters to snap a school-record 24-game losing streak.

"It convinced me in the first game," he said. "Wilson, a 5-11, 290-pound senior who plays inside, was eager to make the switch."

The 3-4, requires inside linebackers to stout run defend-

See J.C. SMITH/2C



Williams

"We just meet at the ball."

J.C. Smith linebacker Ed Wilson

Goodbye to an era, hello to baseball's good times

Longtime stalwarts gone after topsy-turvy season

By Tim Dahlberg
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A season ends with goodbyes to one baseball great and one great baseball guy. And, no, unfortunately neither is Barry Bonds.

Frank Robinson hit 586 home runs, was an MVP in both leagues, and won the triple crown one year. Then he made baseball history by becoming the first black manager when he was hired to lead the Cleveland Indians 31 years ago.

Robinson never had the success in the dugout that he had on the field, but you had to feel for his proud Hall of Famer when he had tears in his eyes after being told that, at age 71, his services would no longer be required by the Washington Nationals.

Across the country, Felipe Alou was getting ready to leave, too. Today's fans know him better as the father of Moises, but Alou was one of three brothers - Felipe, Matty and Jesus - who all played in the majors. Alou had a steady 17-year career and another 14 as a manager, the last four with a job no one his age should have - coddling Bonds in San Francisco.

The game goes on. But it will be poorer without both.

Baseball, meanwhile, is apparently still stuck with Bonds after a season that included:

- A renaissance in Detroit, where the Tigers

Please see SEASON/3C

Media's job is facts, not PR

I don't know Driadonna Roland, but I could kiss her - figuratively speaking of course.

Roland is a journalist on the staff of The Pamuan, the student newspaper of Florida A&M University. Two weeks ago, Roland and another reporter broke the story about the FAMU Marching 100 getting caught stealing from a hotel during their stay for the Detroit Football Classic. Band members reportedly were stopped from boarding the bus while their belongings were searched by hotel officials. After recovering most of the "souvenirs," the hotel management decided not to press

See MEDIA'S/3C



BONITA BEST

POINT AFTER

Nothing certain for Independence

CARDIAC PATS: Who would've thought Independence High would be this good at pulling out close games? Better

yet, who'd figure the Patriots would be in so many of them?

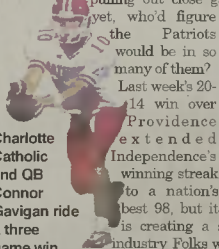
Last week's 20-14 win over Providence extended Independence's winning streak to a nation's best 98, but it

is creating a small cottage industry. Folks who have little more than a passing interest in high school ball are going

games on the chance that they'll actually lose a game. Either way, the Patriots are great box office, to use a show-biz term.

Can they make it to 100 wins? Victim 99 is all

See COUGARS/3C



Charlotte Catholic and QB Connor Gavigan ride a three game win streak.



HERBERT L. WHITE