

# Gymnastics axed at Carolina

by Jim Thomas  
Asst. Sports Editor

(First in a three-part series.)

The gymnastics program at Carolina died last week. It was a quiet, unemotional death, no tears were shed, no flags were flown at half-mast, there wasn't even an obituary notice from Sports Information. Nobody seemed to care, gymnastics' burial was almost unnoticed, his closest friend knew nothing about the funeral.

The date: May 24; the time: 12 a.m.; cause of death: The Athletic Council dropped gymnastics from a varsity to a club sport.

Gymnastics had not been with us long; it was only five years ago it was elevated to varsity status. It was a struggling club sport then; former coach Fred Sanders attempted to build a men's program from scratch. There were no scholarships for gymnastics; Sanders had to fight tooth and nail for everything he got from the athletic department.

The hours were long, the work was hard, recruiting almost impossible, the pay was meager (Sanders had to work privately to feed his family) but he did not mind because he could see the program had potential. Now, tragically, that promise can not be fulfilled. There is no future for gymnastics and one wonders... Why?

Gymnastics, behind soccer, is the second largest participant sport in the world. It is the fastest growing sport in the nation with the possible exception of wrestling. It has been able to draw more spectators than half the sports at the University. It made over \$2,000, even with the German and regional meets not charging students for admission.

Gymnastics has developed from a nothing sport six years ago to one which ranks fifth in the Southern Intercollegiate Gymnastics League, and was in the top 30 nationally this year out of 200 teams, most of which spend five times as much money.

So, why would the University cancel a program which has the lowest athletic budget at \$10,000 a year, has demonstrated student support, has made a lot of money, has one of the best coaches in the nation and a winning record to boot.

The answer is gymnastics is not a Carmichael Cup sport. No other school in the conference has a varsity gymnastics team. "The athletic department felt the money being spent on gymnastics could be better spent elsewhere," said Sanders.

"They are trying to build up the wrestling program here. Wrestling is an ACC sport Carolina has done poor in, it was hurting us in Carmichael Cup competition. Also, Homer Rice, the athletic director, is from Oklahoma, which has a strong wrestling tradition. It is a preventive measure to keep wrestling

from costing UNC the Carmichael Cup as it has in the past.

"It depends on where your priorities are," Sanders said. "The Carmichael Cup is very important to the university, it is a prestigious thing, but it has no importance nationally. How many people have ever heard of the 'Little Brown Jug' that Michigan and Minnesota fight over every year?"

"It is ludicrous that just because gymnastics is not an ACC sport the athletic department will not support it," he said. "The University is supposed to be a progressive institution of higher learning. The University should be able to rise above things like this. It is a very narrow minded, local approach. If anything the University is behind the times."

North Carolina should be leading the battle for conference recognition of gymnastics as a varsity sport; instead they have essentially given it the axe. "The thing that is upsetting," said Sanders, "is that we can spend six years of hard work and see it go down the drain because the other ACC schools would not pick up the sport."

Gymnastics was buried with the stipulation that when the other ACC schools had varsity teams or local competition, gymnastics would be dug up and revived as a varsity sport. But once you lower gymnastics to club status it can never be raised again.



Fred Sanders

## UNC inks tennis star

Earl Hassler of Jackson, Miss., top-ranked junior player in the South, has signed a grant-in-aid with the University of North Carolina. Tar Heel tennis coach Don Skakle announced this week.

In addition to being the top 18-year old player in Mississippi, Hassler is also ranked second in the state among all men's players. He is ranked 22nd nationally among juniors. "Earl should be a big asset to our team," says Skakle. "He has the potential to be one of the great players in the Atlantic Coast Conference."

The signing of Hassler ends the Carolina tennis recruiting season. Earlier, Skakle signed his son, Cliff, the 1973 North Carolina high school champion and Junius Chatman of Richmond, Va., to grants. "This was a key recruiting year for us," says Skakle. "We're losing two outstanding players, Rich McKee and Rich Hardaway, to graduation. I think all three of the players we've signed are capable of helping us immediately next spring."

The Tar Heels return four starting singles players off this year's team which swept UNC's 18th ACC title in 21 years. All four—Billy Brock, Tommy Dixon, Joe Garcia and Dave Oberstein—won ACC flight championships this spring.

Brock was the flight two champion, Dixon captured flight four this year to go with his victory in flight six a year ago. Garcia and Oberstein were flight five and six champs, respectively.

Bill Kay

## A look at pro golf

The new rule on the PGA tour this year has designated three events in which all of last year's top 30 money winners are required to play. The three include the Colonial, the Kemper and the World Open at Pinehurst.

Imagine all of the greats playing in the same tournament at the same time, excluding the big ones such as the U.S. Open and the Masters. This prospect was simply unheard of until the PGA decided on the "designated" concept.

In the past, Nicklaus probably would have passed up the Kemper to play in next week's Philadelphia Classic in order to tune up for the U.S. Open the following week.

But things are different now...

The new rule, by bringing together golf's best, cannot help but improve the attractiveness of those tournaments which are designated, but it has already caused a stir among some of the more respected names in golf.

Jack Nicklaus has said, "We're not on salary, so I disagree with the concept." Arnold Palmer objects to the new concept because he feels golfers should have the choice of which events they want to enter. "If they want to sign me to a contract and give me a cash guarantee, then they can tell me when and where to play," he argues.

Palmer explains a major difference between golf and other professional sports. Golfers get no salary. They must fight on their own in each tournament in order to earn enough money to live on and gain recognition. In other words, their earnings depend on how they finish. Since the players are owned by and obligated to no one, their freedom of choice seems fundamental to the nature of the sport.

It cannot be argued that combining all the great names together for four days of competition will enhance the popularity of an event. But, the rule has no effect on the majority of tour stops because stars forced to play in designated events are going to skip other minor orphan tourneys (such as next week's Philadelphia Classic) they might otherwise consider.

The chief reason for the new rule was low ratings in golf telecasts. The presence of all the big names, it was resolved, would pull those ratings back up. Tournament sponsors have been unable to control who would play in their events. If none of the leading stars wished to play in their event, they were faced with the prospect of attendance problems due to lack of drawing cards.

However, the new "designated" rule does not seem ready to tackle this problem. The majority of the orphan events will still have the problem of attracting the name stars. In an attempt to satisfy tourney sponsors and raise the standards of the smaller tourneys, tour commissioner Deane Beman wants to gradually increase the number of designated events to ten.

Television has a way of changing theories in sports. Looking at the issue from this standpoint, pro golf comes closer to being pure entertainment and the rights of golfers become secondary to the primary aim of attaining popularity.

# Rainbow Soccer means spirit

by Frank Randolph  
Sports Writer

The word "rainbow" in "Rainbow Soccer" gives a hint to the spirit of the organization. It is an intricate offensive soccer move, and yet also is the image one sees when the 32 teams that compose the organization play or practice.

Rainbow Soccer has approximately nine hundred members from the Chapel Hill area. These members are divided up into eight clubs or "family units." The membership of these clubs is determined partly by location and partly by the days the members wish to practice (Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays). The clubs are further broken down into four teams based on age: Tinnie Weenie (up through 8 years of age), Time Big (9-12), Middy (13-17) and Wisely (18 or older).

The program has been running since the Spring of 1972. It features two eight to ten week seasons: one in the Spring and another

in the Fall.

Plus the program runs a Rainbow Soccer camp that will go from August 4-11. The style that it will teach is the "short pass, control-type soccer" which will guide the individual toward playing soccer as a team sport.

It will last all day long and part of the evening. Some of the things it will offer are: exercises, drills, team play and films (showing Pele coaching and international matches). In the process the camp will hope to develop the individual's lightness, strength and grace as well as general soccer skills.

Rainbow Soccer claims to offer an alternative to competitive sports. It does not keep statistics of won-loss records, nor does it offer any kind of championship.

Its players, coaches and referees are strict on its "no violence" rule. It maintains a policy of "dance around your opponent instead of run over him."

Because of its "free" atmosphere, Rainbow is able to maintain diversity within its teams. It is open to both males and females and has no minimum or maximum on age.

But by no means does this discourage excellence. For example, from its ranks this year came two players, Bobby Propster (High School All-American) and Mit Carothers, who will be playing here at Carolina next year. The program emphasized individual skill improvement and development with its "no first string" and "equal playing time" policies.

It still remains that a lot of people are having fun. Soccer games become real festivals. Members make and bring their own food for picnics; younger members have found May poles with bubble gum attached to the streamers on their playing fields, and the Wiselies have a fast growing tradition of two or three cases of beer after the games.

Kip Ward is the current director of the

## McGeachy goes to Wake

Former Duke University head basketball coach Neil McGeachy has accepted a position as an assistant coach at Wake Forest.

McGeachy replaced Duke coach Bucky Waters last fall when Waters suddenly resigned. Waters reportedly felt the heat from a student body which was frustrated because Duke failed to fashion a winning slate.

Many players on this year's Duke squad agreed that McGeachy had been given unfair treatment when news he had been fired got out, and was not given a fair chance to show himself as a winner. Duke standout Bob Fleisher led the player outburst and was very critical of Duke authorities. Unfortunately, Duke thought McGeachy was not in a winning mold, even though he put together a determined group of young men in the short

time he had.

Duke cannot wait for a winner and McGeachy was shafted.

Duke officials hired Utah coach Bill Foster at the end of the season, leaving the 31-year old McGeachy without a position.

McGeachy is delighted about his new job and thinks it's a tremendous opportunity for him to remain in coaching.

The former Duke coach is looking forward to contributing to the Wake Forest program. He thinks very highly of Wake coach Carl Tacy both as a person and as a coach and feels that the Wake basketball program is on the upswing.

McGeachy said he will work with scouting and with Tacy on the bench as his assistant.

He was disappointed about many things that happened at Duke, but now he is looking forward to the future and sees his past experience as valuable.

Channel 28 sports director Lou Bello confirms that the station will televise World Football League games each week beginning Thursday, July 11, with New York vs. Jacksonville (where former UNC star Terry Taylor signed). Games will be aired at 9 p.m. each Thursday night through August via

**Tar Heel Sports Reminder:** there will be two home games this weekend featuring Carolina's summer basketball team. On Saturday night, beginning at 7 p.m., UNC hosts Appalachian in a doubleheader. Sunday Wilmington is here starting at 7:30 p.m.



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TVS. 28 dropped popular "Ironsides" for the deal. The play-by-play will be handled by either Merle Harmon or Chris Schenkel, who lost his college football job at ABC to Keith Jackson this fall. Also, Bud Wilkinson, Schenkel's color man for years, will be relegated to regional colorcasts. ABC will go with a big-name coach to work with Jackson on the nationally televised games. Bear Bryant will do the Monday night (Sept. 9) Notre Dame-Georgia Tech game. Ara Parseghian will do the Coaches' All-American game in Lubbock in two weeks.

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Bill Kay, Sports Editor