

Olympians adjusting to 'team concept'

by Gene Upchurch
Assistant Sports Editor

During the regular basketball season, when a Carolina player drives into the lane, appears to go up for a layup and then passes off to a teammate who has an open shot, fans take the move for granted—it's the Carolina "team concept" of play.

UNC and Olympic Head Coach Dean Smith is implementing the team concept as he prepares the U.S. team for its quest for the gold medal at the Summer Olympic Games in Montreal. But do the players, now participating in Chapel Hill, take the style of play for granted? What adjustments must they make to their personal playing styles and what, if any, problems does the concept create for them?

Indiana's Scott May and Quinn Buckner have an advantage over the other non-Carolina players in adapting to the team style of play. Hoosier Coach Bobby Knight used a similar concept in leading his team to the NCAA Championships this year.

"Coach Knight and Coach Smith have the same concept and philosophy," May said after an exhibition scrimmage against the Spanish Olympic team Saturday. "So I'm used to it."

The combination of May and Carolina's Phil Ford brought Saturday's crowd to its feet with an impressive display of Ford assists to May on fast breaks. May had 26 points against the Spanish while Ford tallied 10 assists.

"I'm used to it (the fast break)," May said. "Quinn does the same thing in Indiana."

Buckner added that the concept practiced by Smith is not that different from Knight's concept.

"I like the style, so I'm not having that much trouble," Buckner said.

"Smith is a great person and motivator. He shows us the way things ought to be done. I'm really looking forward to playing for him."

Arizona State's Mark Landsberger and



"I don't like playing center... I'm not used to playing center. I'll do anything the team needs me to do."

—Kenny Carr

Scott Lloyd are adjusting to the team concept of play.

"I like the passing game," said 6-8 Landsberger, who scored 10 points and pulled down eight rebounds against the Spanish. "I'm pretty familiar with the passing game because we played it in junior college."

"I'm adjusting to the aggressive play," he said. "International play is a lot rougher than the NCAA."

Lloyd said he is not having any major problems adjusting his style of play.

"It just takes time," he said. "I'm not having any problems with my defense. I'm still fouling too much, so I'll have to adjust there."

Notre Dame's Adrian Dantley agreed that the style takes some getting used to.

"It's a different style than what we use at Notre Dame," he said.

Kenny Carr, the 6-7 junior from N.C. State, is a very individual player, and the team concept of play is much different from the style of play he is accustomed to. But he said he is not having much trouble adjusting his style of play.

"I don't mind passing the ball off to someone else," he said. "Everyone on the team has to adjust. I'm used to playing third or fourth man (position) at State and I have to play fourth or fifth man here. But over time, anybody can make these adjustments."

Smith has played Carr at the center position during some of the practices and during the Spanish game.

"I don't like playing center," Carr said. "But that's because I'm not used to playing center."

"I'll do anything the team needs me to do. If that means playing center, I'll play center."

Phil Hubbard of Michigan said that he is not having any problems adjusting to the team concept of play, even though he admitted that he was having trouble learning the plays.

"I'm doing the best I can," he said. "We're playing good as a team and I'm adjusting to the offense."

Maryland's Steve Sheppard said he is not having any trouble adjusting to the style of play in the Olympic camp because he enjoys playing the sport so much.

"I can fit in anywhere—run, gun, stall—anywhere, as long as I'm playing," he said.

Tate Armstrong is not having any trouble fitting in to the style of play, he said, because it is very similar to Duke's style.

"It's basically the same sets of offense and defense," Armstrong said. He scored 10 points against the Spanish team.

Ernie Grunfeld, one-half of the "Ernie and Bernie Show" with Bernard King at Tennessee, said he is having some trouble adjusting because he has been switched from forward to guard.

"I'm doing well for the limited amount of time we've had to practice," Grunfeld said. "I'm trying my best. And I think I'm doing all right, but the coaches are the ones to analyze that."

Houston's Otis Birdsong scored 14 points



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—Dean Smith

against the Spanish and had two rebounds and five assists. He said he is adjusting and playing well in the team concept.

"I'm just doing what Coach Smith says," Birdsong said. "But it's difficult to learn all the changes in defense, offense and traps."

Smith is pleased with the way the players from across the nation have adapted to the style of play.

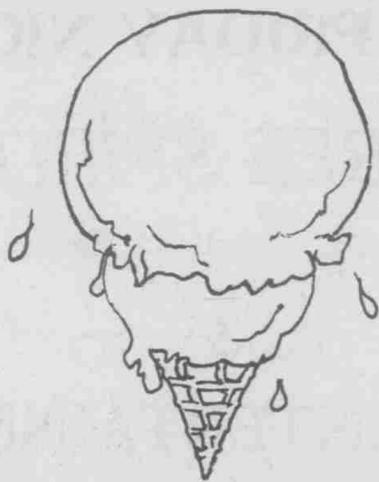
"I'm encouraged with the players' attitudes and abilities," Smith said after the scrimmage against the Spanish team. "And ability without attitude doesn't mean anything."

Smith said the players have been unselfish with their passing and have been looking for one another well.

"If we keep it up, we can be a great team," he said. "If we keep improving, we can win it."

Practice and learning continue for the U.S. Olympic team with exhibition games against the Denver Nuggets tonight in Greensboro and tomorrow night in Raleigh. But the team has its sights set on something farther off.

"Our goal is to win the gold medal," Scott Lloyd said, "and everyone is working hard to achieve that goal."



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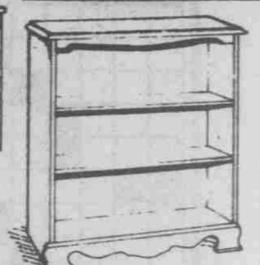
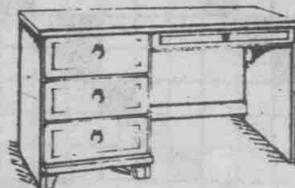


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