

Yesteryear's Tar Heels bring memories

by R.L. Bynum
Sports Editor

Nostalgia was the word of the night as Big Four basketball stars of yesteryear gathered for a reunion at Raleigh's Reynolds Coliseum. The Big Four Alumni Basketball Bonanza was the event.

As Lennie Rosenbluth drilled a 20 footer to begin Carolina's game, it brought memories of the great 1957 NCAA championship team.

Lee Shaffer, star of the early 60's, showed he still had it by scoring a team high 17 points. "He looks like he could play pro ball now, the way he played," remarked Bobby Jones.

However, most of the older alumni playing in the event could only make token appearances. A few of the former stars looked as if the only team they had been on recently was a drinking team.

Olin Broadway, a 1959 Wake Forest graduate, could barely dribble the ball,



Staff photo by Allen Jernigan

Miller—lines up a shot

and fought for rebounds like he was playing football. Broadway had his moment though, as he popped in a 25 foot shot.

For most of the players, a game like this was just a lot of fun. Organizers tried to avoid embarrassing match-ups by putting the older players in one group and the younger players in another.

"It always feels good to get out and play," said Rosenbluth in the dressing room after Carolina's 103-86 win over N.C. State. "I like being able to see some of the great ball players of years ago from other teams, like Sam Ranzino and Dick Dickey."

Lenny Chappell, a '62 graduate of Wake Forest, had not played in a real game since he played for the Dallas Chaparrals five years ago. Following his squads 100-95 victory over Duke, the big 268 pounder said he didn't mind just making short appearances. "Sure the younger players get most of the playing time, but I feel like a young man. I could have played more, but we had to play a lot of people to get the right combination. We just played enough to keep everybody happy."

The game reminded fans of the changing styles of players. Wake's Al Deporter of the '54 squad knocked in a one-handed baseline set shot and Duke's Ray Cox (1964) pumped in an underhanded free throw. Then Monte Towe sank a 25 foot jumper and Walter Davis threw a between the legs pass in mid air.

"There are a lot better shots now," observed Rosenbluth, "but everything is jump-shooting and layups. When we were

playing, you'd have a two-handed set shot (like Vic Moladet and Tommy Kearns) and I had a standing one-handed shot."

Rosenbluth started the game for Carolina along with 1957 teammates Joe Quigg, Bobby Cunningham, Danny Lotz, and Ken Rosemund.

With that line-up against State alumni of the early 50's, the Heels built a lead they never relinquished. It reminded fans of their game against Kansas, when they surged to an early 19-4 lead, only this time the opponent didn't come back. Instead, the result was one that the '57 team saw more often, a big win.

What was the key to that season? Rosenbluth believes that the psychological factors helped them. "We won them when we hit the court because the other teams were awed by us. Here comes the number one team, undefeated, and by the time they knew they could beat us, the clock ran out."

That year the team was undefeated going into the ACC Tournament, and faced a possibility of being shut out of the NCAA tournament. Rosenbluth says that they were still glad to play.

"We wanted to play, we felt that if we won it, we were the best. We enjoyed it, and just wanted to play. The extra three games is where it's all at. The coaches don't like it, but the way they've got it set up now (the regular season champion going to the NCAA's) is great."

In comparing that squad to present teams, he's honest about the real chances of success against them. "If we played like we played in '57, we wouldn't stand a chance. But with the years added up, if we are as physically superior to the other teams as we were in '57, then of course we'd jump and run faster. It's all relatively speaking.

"I don't think we would win any championships. I think we'd have a winning season, but certainly not the caliber of a Carolina or a State team.

When I was playing, we just about dunked the ball. Now the guards go up and stuff it with two hands. They are just that much tougher as the years go by. Twenty years from now, the teams of this era will not be able to compete with those teams."

Trade rumors were flourishing throughout the night, most concerning the Denver Nuggets. The most prominent of these was the one that would send star forward Bobby Jones to Philadelphia for, possibly, George McGinnis.

"Something's in the works," said Jones. "I don't know really what's going to happen. I guess I'll know something this week about Philadelphia or Denver. I don't know really where I stand now."

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Staff photo by Allen Jernigan

Rosenbluth—hasn't lost that touch

It was also rumored that Kansas City might send Richard Washington to Denver for an unknown player.

In jest, Tate Armstrong leaked a rumor that he would be sent to Los Angeles for Kareem Jabbar, and that the Lakers would also send cash to Chicago.

On the serious side, Armstrong revealed one of the frustrations he encountered in his initial season at Chicago. "I thought I would play a little more than I did. It seemed like my playing time was not contingent with my

performance, which is not what should happen.

"If you play poorly, you shouldn't play as long. The opposite is true at Chicago. No matter what you did, you had the same amount of playing time. Once you realize that, it's a matter of coping with it in your own way, and I did manage that in the middle part of the season. That's why I enjoyed the season so much."

The former Duke hotshot says that he has no problem getting motivated for 82 games. "It's a job, and if someone can't play 82 games, maybe they ought to quit."



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