

Sports

Washburn going professional — you really shouldn't be surprised

Chris Washburn is going pro. The 6-foot-11 sophomore decided Tuesday to go hardship and bypass his final two years of eligibility at N.C. State in favor of the National Basketball Association.

"I spoke Monday night with ... Chris' mother, and again this morning," Wolfpack basketball coach Jim Valvano said, "and Mrs. Washburn indicated his intention to bypass his last two years of college and turn professional."

The decision shouldn't surprise you. For Washburn to be concerned with a college education or have some sense of loyalty to N.C. State would be out of character. If you have ever talked to Chris, you get the impression that he is a nice guy. A little immature, perhaps, but nice.

But I don't think he is very concerned with things other than basketball and material satisfaction. In fact, it is rumored that Washburn has not been attending class since the Wolfpack's loss to Kansas in the NCAA

Scott Fowler The Far Sideline

Tournament. Witness:

• Washburn has said he answered only six questions and did not take the SAT seriously because he had been told by some basketball coaches that the test would not matter. What kind of attitude is that? If a basketball coach told you that finals weren't important, would you blow them off?

• Washburn's well-chronicled legal problems. The stereo thing was not as serious as it got blown up to be, but it did speak of a definite immaturity.

• Washburn's turnaround. He said last month that he had no plans to join the NBA. Now, he's doing it. Why? He'll get to play more basketball, and he'll have all the money that he can spend. He surely doesn't lack the confi-

dence. "I think I can play with anyone, one on one," he has said.

So, do you hear sighs of relief emanating from around the campus? This news will help the Tar Heels out, of course, meaning that N.C. State won't have the inside tandem of Charles Shackelford and Washburn. That fact should be enough to establish UNC as a favorite for next season's ACC title. And isn't it ironic that after all the time Valvano had to spend defending his budding superstar he only got to have Washburn for a year of actual playing time.

On to other things: In softball, the Tar Heels split a double-header with Winthrop College on Tuesday. The splendid Virginia Augusta was the winning pitcher in the first game, in which the home-standing Tar Heels won 3-1. That win put Augusta's overall record at 18-4.

In the second game, however, the Eagles scored early and held on to take a 7-2 victory. Regina Finn of the Tar Heels was the losing pitcher. Her record is now 11-6.

Overall, the UNC softball team has 29 wins in its 39 games this season, while Winthrop has a season mark of 30-9.

The North Carolina team, by the way, was coming off an impressive showing this weekend at the George Mason Invitational. The team played nine games in three days and walked away with the team championship.

'Vitale' previews conference track meet

By BOB YOUNG
Assistant Sports Editor

(Writer's note: With the ACC Track and Field Championships being held the next couple of days at Fetzer Field, I thought it was my duty to give this campus a shot of track & field fervor. So without further introduction, I give you my impression of Dick Vitale getting excited about track.)

Thanks, Bob. And you know I really am excited about that ACC meet this week. I'll tell ya why.

First, I gotta say that some of those athletes out on that track are really PTPs — Prime Time Performers. Let me run through some of the bluer of the blue chippers that will be competing for the team in Carolina Blue.

• Kevin McGorty — an athlete, folks, pure and simple. He was second in the ACC decathlon last year, finishing just behind N.C. State's Fidelis Obikwu, who has graduated. (And just ask Billy Packer what he thinks about those foreign athletes.)

• Brent Walker — here's a guy who's really had to deal with the Big A — Adversity. He had a broken leg as a freshman and knee surgery as a sophomore. But he's come back to make himself one of the strongest 400-meter hurdle runners in the conference. And he's a flashy dresser, too.

• George Nicholas — this guy gets my Brad Daugherty Award for a fantastic senior year. He's qualified for the NCAAs in cross country and indoor track. He's already qualified for the outdoor championships in the 5,000-meters. I just love the guy.

• Holly Murray — you can take everything I said about

Nicholas and transfer it right here. She hasn't qualified for the NCAAs as of yet, but when you get her in a competitive situation, it's an M-and-M'er — a Mismatch.

• Jill Irizarry — last year she was in the heptathlon competition, but this year she's putting on her hurdler's hat. She'll be getting points in the 400 hurdles and should lead a couple of relay teams to high finishes.

• Shunta Robinson — she's going for it all in the women's shot put in her final collegiate year. She can pull the ol' hat trick in that event because she's taken the ACC title the past two years.

I know what you're sayin'. You're sayin', "Vitale, we know they have some horses in Chapel Hill! But quit rootin', will ya? Tell us some of the other athletes that will shine."

Okay, okay. Also look out for sprinters Harvey McSwain (N.C. State), Greg Moses (Clemson) and Jennifer Dunklin (N.C. State); high jumper Victor Smalls (Clemson); hurdlers James Purvis (Georgia Tech) and Michelle Johnson (Virginia); middle distance stars Ken Cheeseman (Virginia) and Suzie Tuffey (N.C. State); and distance runners Peter Van de Kerkove (Clemson), Pat Piper (N.C. State), Janet Smith (N.C. State) and Ellen Reynolds (Duke).

I tell ya what, I wouldn't miss all this action for all the food in Jimmy V's cookbook. So whatta ya waitin' for? Do you hear me, UNC?

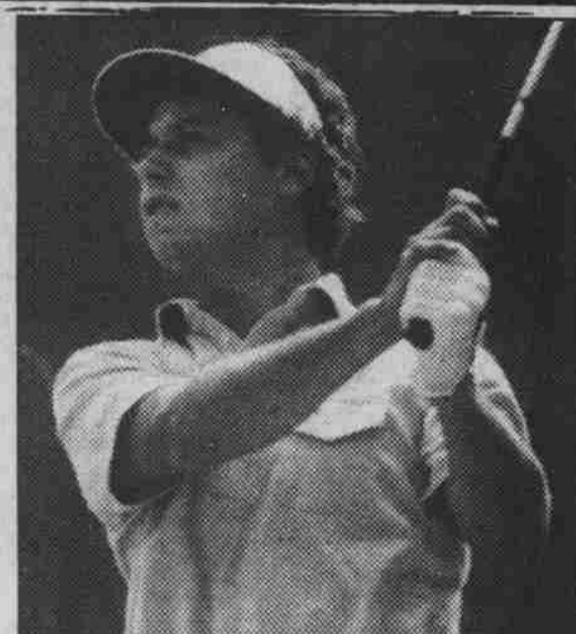
The ACC Track and Field Championships begin late this morning with the decathlon and heptathlon events. All other events will begin Friday afternoon and will run through Saturday.

UNC Athlete of the Week

This wasn't the week to be a member of the upper echelon of the DTH sports staff, especially if you had to decide on this week's Daily Tar Heel Athlete of the Week. We left the decision to the Fates (read: flipped a coin), and they summoned us to choose the golf team's Kurt Beck as the DTHAOTW.

Beck, a senior from Pittsburgh, Pa., scorched UNC's Finley Golf Course on his way to the individual championship at the sixth annual Tar Heel Invitational. His final-round score of 65 led to a three-day total of 205 (11-under par). That broke the tournament record of 208 set by South Carolina's Webb Heintzelman in 1984. His performance also helped the Tar Heels set a team-scoring record of 837, a mark 18 strokes better than UNC's 1984 record.

But we would be less-than-fair if we didn't bestow equal praise upon left-fielder Scott "Hawks" Johnson, who was the irresistible force against the immovable objects of Georgia Tech and Clemson this weekend. Johnson's three-run homer against then-league-leading Tech capped a five-run rally that put



Kurt Beck

UNC in the lead to stay as the Tar Heels took an 8-6 win Saturday. Then came his dramatic three-run double against Clemson in the bottom of the ninth, which led to a 9-8 UNC victory. Of such late-inning heroics, legends are made, but unfortunately, not DTHAOTWs. But that's the Fates for ya.

KURT VONNEGUT

Author of *Slaughterhouse Five* and *Cat's Cradle*

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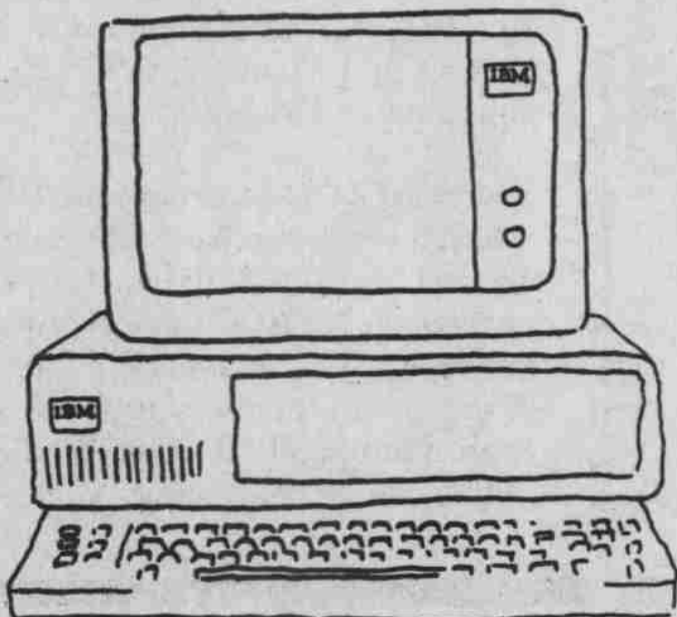
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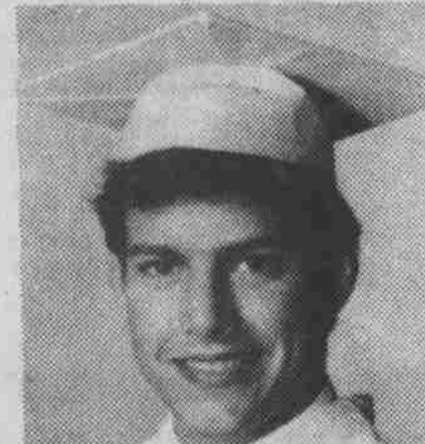
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