N.C. State

"If 'Wash' had been here, we would have definitely gone undefeated and won the national championship hands down," Valvano said, knowing his statement could never be verified.

The 6-11 center is now wearing a Golden State uniform, and Coach V

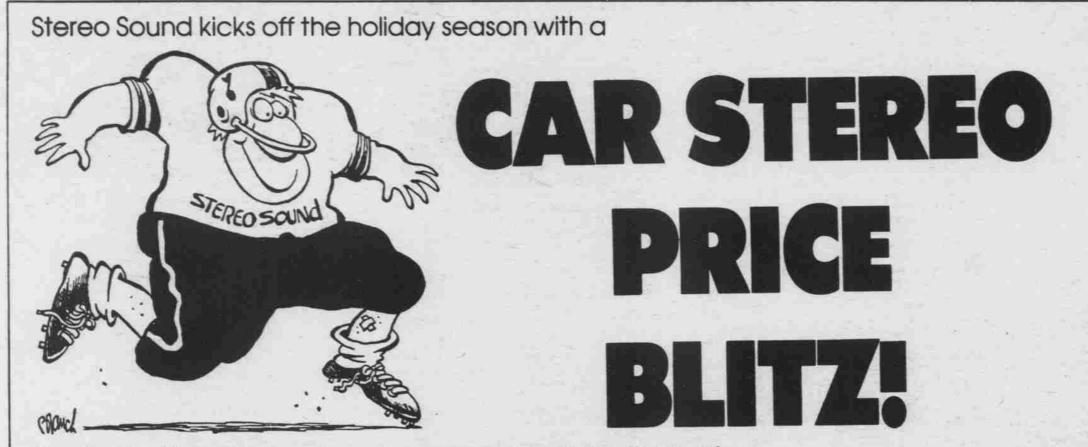
is looking to Charles Shackleford to fill the vacancy in the paint.

Valvano also finds himself looking for another point guard. Aside from Washburn, the N.C. State basketball team also lost both their starting guards: 6-5 Nate McMillan and 65 Ernie Myers. The inexperience at the point is a question mark with the

Wolfpack going into this season. Kenny Drummond may be the answer to this question. The transfer from Sacramento City College was voted California junior college

player-of-the-year last season.

"He shoots well, plays excellent defense," said Valvano. "He'll be a key." The 5-10 junior averaged 21.8 pts., 5.9 assists, and six steals per game last year, and led his team to the California state championship.



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However, the position is by no means filled, and junior Vinny Del Negro is a strong candidate for the spot when State begins its season Nov. 22 in the Tip-Off Classic against Navy.

"It's my mother's dream for me to start an Italian," said Valvano, "I may do that."

Sophomore Walker Lambiotte, the 6-7 swingman, should start at the second guard, although Valvano has indicated he will use one point guard and four other players - two inside and two wings.

"We'll use a variety of combinations," he said, "Hence, the point is a critical spot for us."

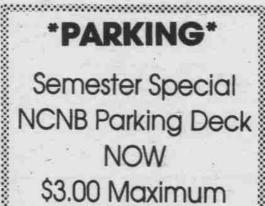
Some critics have been skeptical of Shackleford's concentration and effort, but Valvano says the mistakes were just from inexperience.

"Shackleford mastered the art of shooting without looking, I'm not going to change that," joked Valvano. The coach added, "He had a great year."

Shackleford averaged 10.3 pts. and 6.1 rebounds as a freshman. He will be the focal point of this year's squad, and needs a good season if the team will be competitive in the ACC.

However, the 6-10 sophomore does have help. Indiana transfer Mike Giomi should add a great deal to the front line, and will probably start at strong forward. Senior Bennie Bolton, a returning starter, will round out the front three.

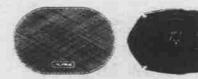
Overall, the team has the depth and potential to be very competitive. However, three starters are gone, and this adversity will be the big test. If the team can adjust to this lack of experience, they have the potential to contend with any team in the ACC.

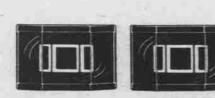


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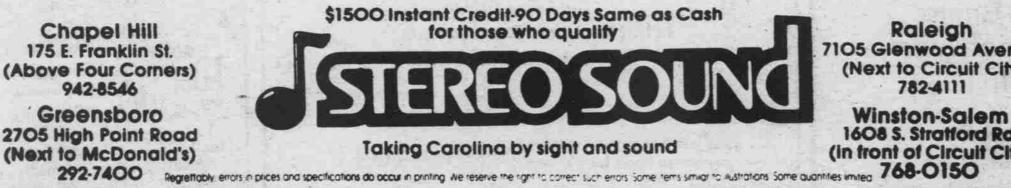
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