

# Triangle bands vie for the Rock 'n' Rollin' King Hoops Crown SWEATFEST

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It began as an idea born out of a conscientious sense of civic responsibility — a way to serve the more unfortunate members of the community. And a way to have a bit of fun.

Early Sunday afternoon, Billy Warden brought together four area bands and their friends for the first basketball Sweatfest. The bands spent the afternoon playing basket-

ball for the coveted Rock 'n' Rollin' King of Hoops Crown and for the right to play the last set at a benefit show that night at the Cat's Cradle for UNC's Handicapped Student Fund.

It seemed a trifle incongruous: rock 'n' rollers sweating in the hot sun. But in Chapel Hill, hoop fever infects even the most aloof rockers.

At the invitation of Billy Warden and the Floating Children, The Bad Checks, UV Prom and Light in

August competed for the title of Rock 'n' Rollin' King of Hoops at the Chi Psi fraternity house. The bands, along with about 40 supporters, milled around before the 1:30 p.m. tip-off. With the familiarity of employees of the same firm getting together for an annual company picnic, they talked about local bands, basketball and the previous night's exploits.

Warden had managed to bring the group together by hook and by crook

for the benefit. They looked like any other group getting together on a warm spring day, except for the obligatory trappings of rock 'n' roll: long hair, pale late-night skin, dark sunglasses and the bleary-eyed expressions of people not used to seeing the low side of noon on a weekend.

The Bad Checks and UV Prom stood with the referee on the concrete half-court, which had been newly spray-painted with an electric-green three-point line, waiting for the first of three contests to begin. Meanwhile Warden, mustering up all of his organizational skills, searched Chi Psi's trash dumpster looking for a suitable trophy for the Rock 'n' Roll Final Four winner. After re-discarding a damaged oscillating fan, he emerged with a suitable trophy

a Budweiser longneck bottle topped off with a torn kaleidoscope cylinder and ornamented with a red, white and blue basketball net.

Joe Wolf, of Tar Heel basketball fame, arrived at Warden's invitation to serve as the official ref. The game plan Wolf presided over was simple. Three men on a team — substitutions allowed — with the game ending when the first team racked up 30 points. All other rules were determined by the referee, the crowd's reaction and the "rules committee," a panel composed of only one member — Andrew McMillan of the local band Snatches of Pink.

Someone asked if participants were required to take drug tests as athletes do in NCAA championship play. "Yeah," someone yelled, "But, they have to fail 'em to play."

The first game pitted the Bad Checks (skins) against UV Prom (shirts). The Checks were helped out immensely by their last-minute recruit, big man Billy Johnson, a former UNC fullback who used his advantage in height and bulk to intimidate opponents when he grabbed defensive rebounds and drove his huge frame toward the basket.

But Johnson's efforts were mitigated by UV Prom's ace-in-the-hole, Joe Romweber, who stayed around the perimeter and put up uncontested three-pointers. UV Prom took the contest by three points while the bleacher section cheered them on.

Throughout the action, the referee made only sporadic calls of "Hack! He hacked 'em," to denote fouls which were punished, not by foul shots, but by an automatic turnover.

Wolf seemed so amused by the amateur competition that he didn't have the heart to make the few rules really stick.

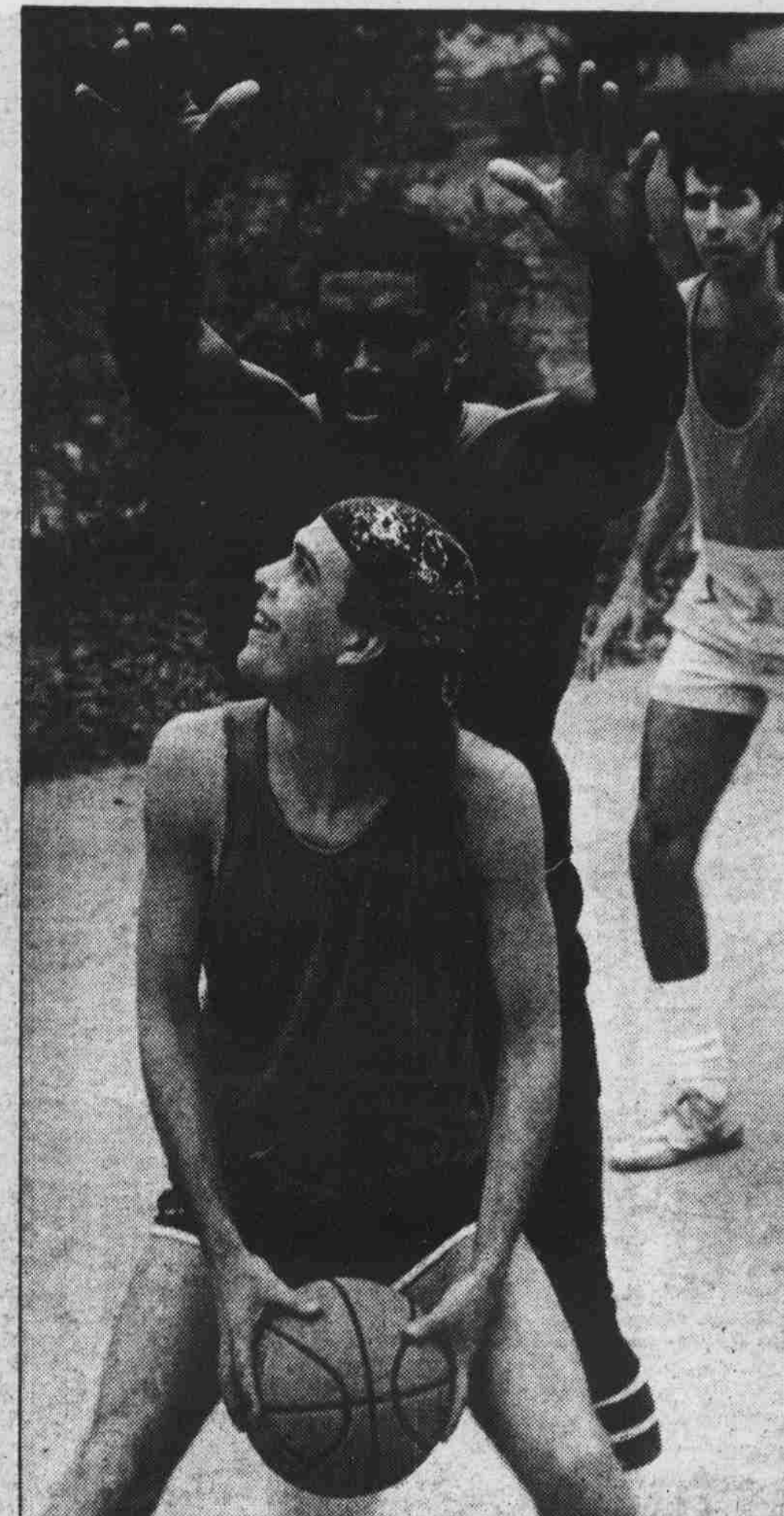
Then the Floating Children took the court against Light in August for the day's most controversial contest. Halfway into the five-minute game, shouts of "Ringer, they've got a ringer," erupted from the crowd. Light in August recruit John Paul "the Pope" Zahner exhibited an inordinate amount of basketball ability by pouring in more than half of the band's points.

McMillan, carrying out his first duty as the rules committee, bounded across the court ordering "the Pope" out of the game. But Warden, who was having fun delighting the crowd with Chapel Hill Globetrotter antics, told the committee that an ejection was unnecessary.

Light in August, the winner of that game, went on to meet UV Prom in the close championship contest, which was unmarred by controversy. Joe Romweber was named Most Valuable Player and accepted the coveted Bud trophy and the right to headline that night's show.

The UV Prom band members, who found out they would be playing Sunday's benefit by reading the Sweatfest announcements in local newspapers, got their revenge by winning the contest outright, 30-27. Warden had included the participants in press releases without consulting anyone in UV Prom.

Most people stayed and watched a consolation game between the



Bad Check recruit Billy Johnson guards Frank Heath of UV Prom



Billy Warden sings "Underwear" after heaving his trousers onto the dance floor



UV Prom drummer "Gordon" sleeps while his band wins the tourney



Hunter Landon sings up close during the Bad Checks' set

losing teams, which the Floating Children also lost. Then they watched a pick-up game between a loosely assembled rock 'n' roll all-star team against a Chi Psi pick-up crew. But no one kept score in either contest. Light in August members headed back to Raleigh, saying they would miss that night's show.

After going home to wait out the early evening rain, the Floating Children set up a stage composed of their own equipment and the Checks' amplifiers and P.A. system. Warden kicked off his band's show by summing up the day's events. "We're here tonight to forget all the conflicts which have arisen. We'll erase the memory of all those bad calls with the power of the rock 'n' roll sensation."

The band played an energetic hour-long set, highlighted by Warden smashing a borrowed acoustic four-string guitar onstage. But Warden seemed to forget his proclaimed purpose of the concert when he performed a new song called "Once Retarded" in the style of Barbara Streisand and Neil Diamond.

The Bad Checks were more successful in getting the crowd to dance,

but less successful in getting them to laugh. The highlight of their set, aside from an excellent rendition of "Lookin' for a Love," came later, when the band was joined on guitar by the day's MVP (Romweber) and UV Prom's drummer.

The two UV Prom members played together with the four Checks because the rest of the UV's couldn't make the show they won the right to headline. Together the players performed their own songs and covers, including an extended version of Led Zeppelin's "Rock and Roll."

The Floating Children plan to play another benefit, this time for the South African Scholarship Fund, with the Pressure Boys and the Smokin' Phones this weekend. The Cat's Cradle is also planning an afternoon benefit for Nicaragua featuring five area bands. And local groups are already talking about making Sweatfest an annual event.

Photos by  
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