

SPORTS

Council ruling draws criticism from college coaches

By WARREN HYNES
Staff Writer

The USA Basketball Council made a decision on Oct. 2 that will drastically alter the face of United States basketball in the Olympic Games.

And it's raised a ruckus among some of the NCAA's premier coaches.

With the 1988 Olympic loss to Yugoslavia fresh in mind, the Council chose to allow professional basketball players to represent the U.S. in the 1992 Olympics. The squad will now consist of both pro and amateur players. It is safe to assume, however, that NBA players will make up the bulk of the team.

Several coaches, including UNC's Dean Smith, were reluctant to support the elimination of an amateur tradition that has been firmly implanted in American Olympic basketball.

"It's something that I wasn't necessarily for, because I like the amateur concept, and it was fun to see the excitement with a college player," Smith said.

Temple coach John Chaney questioned the decision's potential effects on the integrity of the sport.

"In my opinion, I think that the ethical aspect of what we have done as a country as far as the Olympics and basketball is concerned has been right, and has been good," Chaney said. "I certainly have not panicked because we've lost a couple of times, because if you're dealing with

what is right ethically for us — that is to utilize our college players in the Olympics in basketball — I find no problem with that, winning or losing. "But, if we look at it from the standpoint of racing and running toward the bottom line which is winning, then now we're going with another philosophy."

Arkansas coach Nolan Richardson echoed Chaney's concerns about a prevailing preoccupation with victory.

"In this country today, it's all about winning," Richardson said. "It's not about the camaraderie of bringing nations together — that's gone out the window."

Connecticut coach Jim Calhoun also expressed sadness with taking away the old system.

"I don't like it (the decision) personally," he said, "but I understand why we're doing it. The Olympics will lose a little of the flavor."

However, Calhoun raised the question that undoubtedly played a role in the Council's decision.

"How do we get a good team to show that we have the best team in the world?" Calhoun asked. "We're getting beaten in a sport that is, like baseball, a national sport of ours."

Smith's feeling was that amateur athletes can still hold their own at the international level.

"We usually beat the pro All-Stars in exhibition games," he said, "so it isn't

"In this country today, it's all about winning. It's not about the camaraderie of bringing nations together — that's gone out the window." — Nolan Richardson

like we were that far removed from winning the gold medal. I thought that was still a real possibility."

N.C. State coach Les Robinson disagreed.

"I'm sort of a traditionalist, but also a realist," Robinson said. "We need to put more experienced players on the court as the other countries do. Age is a big factor. Because of that, I think we should put our best players out there."

Alabama coach Wimp Sanderson agreed with Robinson's sentiments.

"I think it's fine," he said. "I think it puts us on a level with the other countries."

Michigan State coach Jud Heathcote, assistant U.S. coach in the 1975 and 1987 Pan American Games, agreed with Robinson and Sanderson. But Heathcote expressed hopes that the Council will honor its promise to retain some amateur players on the squad.

"I feel that the day has passed when we can send an amateur team over and still hope to win," he said. "If I had my druthers, I'd opt for a mixed squad,

where there would be three or four or five college players that would see some action but might not be the nucleus of the team."

Richardson believed that, in reality, the team must go entirely one way or the other.

"I think it's either going to be all college, and continue the way it is, and give us more time to prepare the kids, or go all professional," he said.

Now that the decision has been made to include the pros, the question many coaches ask is: Will NBA players want to commit to a summer of international competition? Playoffs included, many of the league's top players play over 100 games from October to June. Will they want to go on for another two months?

Also, what does a gold medal mean to a player with a multi-million dollar contract?

"I think the jury's still out as to the number of pros that will want to make that kind of long-term commitment," Robinson said.

Chaney also cast serious and legitimate doubt.

"You might get a commitment from a Jordan. You might get one from a Magic here and there, but sooner or later, those great players are going to say 'No,'" he said. "They're just not going to participate all summer long and put forth the same kind of effort."

Smith, going a step further, questioned whether the pros who do participate will go for the gold with the same effort as amateurs have in the past.

"I just hope they don't feel like they're slumping," he said. "Like Stefan Edberg, the tennis player from Sweden. He played in Seoul, and he just took it as a vacation. So I hope the pros that do go have the same excitement and team morale and enthusiasm that a group made up of college players would have."

Are we dealing with winning here, or are we dealing with ethics? Will the decision bring better results in 1992, or will the outcome be worse?

"I just don't know, at this point, which would be the best solution," Richardson said.

Such confusion has plagued several of college basketball's top coaches.

"Nationalistically, we have pride in what we do," Calhoun said.

Therein lies the basis for the Council's decision. The dilemma, however, is whether the decision will help or hurt American pride.

The Council's Decision

The USA Basketball Council decision states:

- The team will consist of professional and non-professional players;
- The same team will participate in both the Olympic qualifying tournament and the Olympic Games;
- The team will be chosen by a committee and a coaching staff;
- The head coach of the team must have at least eight years of experience as assistant or head coach at any level; must have at least three years of experience as an NBA head coach; and must have coached two of the last three years in the NBA;
- The coaching staff will be chosen by a committee and will have one NBA coach and two collegiate representatives.

It ain't easy being Air Jordan every day

By SCOTT GOLD
Assistant Sports Editor

Michael Jordan has it all. Even the ultimate T-shirt.

Unlike Bo Jackson, whose talents are qualified with slogans like "Bo knows baseball," "Bo knows hockey" and "Bo knows cycling," Jordan's slogan is simple and to the point: "Michael knows."

He just knows. Jordan sure knows awards. In his six seasons in the bigs, the UNC grad has been named the NBA's rookie of the year, Most Valuable Player and defensive player of the year. This season, his sights are pinned on his fifth straight scoring championship, and he will undoubtedly be an All-Star for the seventh season.

At Saturday's Bulls-Nets game in the Smith Center, Gov. Jim Martin announced that Oct. 20, 1990 was "Michael Jordan Day" in North Carolina, citing him as a "great humanitarian."

Yep, he knows it all. Unfortunately, he doesn't know a life anymore.

It's hard being Michael Jordan every day.

"How he's kept his head I don't know," UNC coach Dean Smith said. "Everybody wants a piece of him. We go play golf and they're coming out of the houses to get a look at him. I've never seen such charisma."

"I feel sorry for him, really."

At first glance, it's hard to empathize with someone like Jordan. His fan support — almost cultish at times — is the stuff that young hoopsters dream of. His recipe is an incredible combination of revolutionary basketball and a sheepish grin peering from the front of 15 million boxes of Wheaties, along with Nike Air Jordans and countless other items that might happen to catch the fancy of one of his millions of fans.

Where Michael goes...people flock. Saturday's game drew 18,470 fans — 10,624 more than the Oct. 13 matchup between the almost-hometown Charlotte Hornets and the Philadelphia 76ers. In 1983 — Chitown's pre-Jordan era — the Bulls drew 7,000 fans a game. Since Jordan's introduction to the league, that number has grown to more than 17,000.

When Michael talks...people crowd around. Jordan's arrival in the Smith Center Saturday sparked a rush of energy. "He's here," people whispered. Who? Dean? No, Jordan is the one person on earth who can show up Chapel Hill's version of God. Prior to the game, hundreds of fans lined the stands, hoping to catch a glimpse of their man. Those who realized it was fruitless asked reporters and staff members who had seen him for their autographs.

When Michael plays...the Bulls win. Not all of the time, and not as much as the Detroit Pistons have re-



Michael Jordan, who scored 21 points against the Nets Saturday, continues his quest for an elusive NBA title

cently, but the fact is, Jordan's baptism in the Windy City has legalized the words "playoffs" and even "championship" on the streets. Last season, the Bulls made it to the Eastern Division playoffs and took the Pistons, the NBA's eventual champion, to seven games before falling.

Here, though, lies the bizarre paradox of Michael Jordan. With all of the accolades, all of the fan support, he has never won a world championship. This

is the root of Jordan's frustration, and the root of his perpetual search for solitude.

"That's my main goal, my main focus," he said. "Individually, I could care less about winning anything else. I'm team-oriented. To win a division title or a world championship is it. You want to get closer to that goal."

"Naturally, when you don't achieve it, and you lose that game or you don't perform well in a pressure situation,

you get frustrated for that moment. But when you put it all together, we're getting closer to the objective of winning the world championship."

Jordan has matched his quest for an elusive title with an equally important quest for privacy, a luxury that has been washed away by the tidal wave of universal popularity. Recently, he built a fully-equipped

See JORDAN, page 7

Tie with Tech leaves Heels wanting more

By JAMIE ROSENBERG
Sports Editor

Members of the UNC football team may still be trying to figure out the events of last Saturday.

Sure, they didn't lose to No. 11 Georgia Tech.

But they didn't win either, ... st weren't quite sure how to take a 13-13 tie.

"It leaves me a little confused," linebacker Tommy Thigpen said. "It feels like I've kissed my sister through a screen door. It doesn't mean anything."

Linebacker Eric Gash said, "I really don't know how to feel about a tie, because I've never tied before."

One thing seems certain: The Tar Heels can no longer claim to be the Rodney Dangerfields of college football. Saturday's effort against the Yellow Jackets, if nothing else, may have put UNC firmly into the competitive picture for the first time since Mack Brown came to Chapel Hill three years ago.

Whether or not Brown has brought UNC back to the level of national prominence it once enjoyed won't be seen for some time. But Saturday's performance showed that the 4-2-1 Tar Heels may have finally shaken the stigma of ridicule that hounded them through the last two 1-10 seasons.

"I think we proved a lot," cornerback Doxie Jordan said. "It shows that we can play with basically anyone, and that's what we want. We were really going for respect. Coach Brown said before the game, 'Men, we're playing for respect out there. We have to go out there and show everyone that we can play with the big teams, play the big games — especially at home.'"

The Yellow Jackets were favored by 14 points entering Saturday's contest, a margin taken lightly by Tech and UNC players alike. The hapless Tar Heels had played Tech tough each of the last two years, winning 20-17 in Kenan 1988 and losing 17-14 in the last minute in Atlanta last season.

"We always had respect for Carolina," Jacket tight end Tom Covington said. "We never downplayed Carolina. We never ridiculed them. We never thought they were a garbage team or anything like that."

Quarterback Shawn Jones added, "All week long people have been saying, 'It's going to be an easy game for you.' No, it wasn't an easy game. North Carolina is a good team. They have some momentum going for them."

UNC seems to have so much momentum, in fact, that, spreads aside, players seemed a more than a little disappointed with the tie. After all, UNC did hold a 13-10 lead until Tech's Kevin Sisson kicked a 27-yard tying field goal with 1:01 left in the game. A quick path to national recognition seemed to have

slipped away. "It (the tie) kind of hurts a lot," Jordan said, "because we knew toward the end of the game we had a chance to win, and it would have really helped us out in the rankings, hopefully put us in the Top 25."

Just a short year ago, with UNC mired in the midst of its second straight 1-10 season, a tie would have been welcome, if not celebrated. Now, with legitimate chances at beating three of its last four opponents, Jordan and the Tar Heels don't want to settle. For that matter, reborn Tar Heel fans may not want to settle, either.

"I think toward the end of the game when the final gun went off and it was 13-13, the crowd really didn't explode," Jordan said. "They kind of wanted a win, too, and I'm kind of glad about that."

"They want big things from us, and we want big things from ourselves."

This, sports fans, is not the Tar Heels of old. Call it faith. Call it greed. Call it hope. Just don't call it impossible.

"This has been a different group of young people," head coach Mack Brown said. "They have set their expectations so high that unless they win the game, they're not going to be pleased."

"It was the same way with N.C. State (in UNC's 12-9 loss). Some people came in here and said, 'Was that a moral victory?' They can't have a moral victory."

AP Top 25

	Record	Pvs
1. Virginia (45)	7-0-0	1
2. Auburn (4)	5-0-1	5
3. Notre Dame (5)	5-1-0	6
4. Nebraska (5)	7-0-0	4
5. Illinois	5-1-0	8
6. Houston (1)	6-0-0	9
7. Washington	6-1-0	13
8. Miami, Fla.	4-2-0	2
9. Brigham Young	5-1-0	12
10. Colorado	6-1-1	14
11. Tennessee	4-1-2	3
12. Florida St.	4-2-0	7
13. Texas	4-1-0	19
14. Florida	6-1-0	17
15. Iowa	5-1-0	22
16. Georgia Tech	5-0-1	11
17. Mississippi	6-1-0	18
18. Wyoming	8-0-0	21
19. Clemson	6-2-0	22
20. Michigan	3-3-0	10
21. Southern Cal	5-2-0	15
22. Oklahoma	5-2-0	16
23. Arizona	5-2-0	—
24. Texas Christian	5-1-0	—
25. Oregon	5-2-0	—

Others receiving votes: Louisville 77, California 62, Indiana 55, Texas A&M 39, Michigan St. 33, Penn St. 31, S. Mississippi 23, Alabama 13, Ohio St. 13, South Carolina 10, Minnesota 7, Central Michigan 3, LSU 2, Fresno St. 1.

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