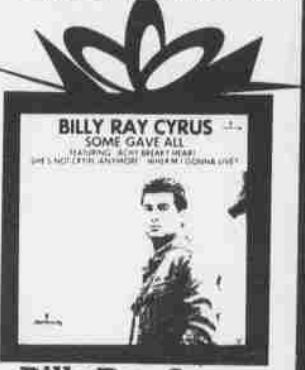


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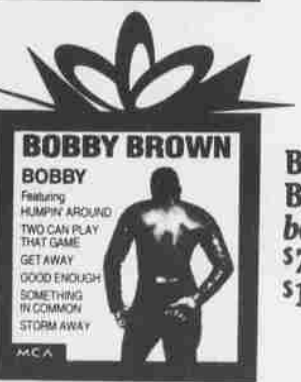
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TRAVIS STEPHENSON

The sporting life

Stephenson may be UNC's most underpublicized 3-sport athlete

By Mary Lafferty  
Staff Writer

When most students reach UNC, they try to get involved in lots of activities. But there are a couple of individuals who might be labeled overzealous.

One, in particular. Travis Stephenson, fifth-year senior forward on the 1992-93 basketball team, has dipped his fingers into more than one dish of UNC sports programs.

Tastiest? Varsity basketball, of course.

The 6-foot-6 Angier native has played just about every sport at the University. Well, maybe not, but he has been on four teams during his college life.

As a freshman, Stephenson chose UNC for its track program. "Track was one of my loves," he said, "and that's why I ended up coming here, in a round-about way."

In his freshman year, Stephenson was also encouraged to go out for the football team. He made the team and was redshirted as a quarterback.

As a sophomore, he gave up track for the chance to try JV basketball.

"I did it as a sort of last-minute thing," he said. "I was supposed to be on the track team, and a friend of mine said, 'Why don't you come out for JV?'"

"I fell in love with the program." Stephenson's junior year was relatively quiet, as he stuck with the JV program.

As a senior, Stephenson tried out for the varsity basketball team, and he made the squad. This year, his last, he will remain on the team as a reserve.

Four teams in five years. "It was kind of a hairy ordeal," Stephenson said. "I don't know how I did it. Somehow, I ended up playing basketball. I'm not sure how — I was just real lucky."

Stephenson's high school sports life was not much different. He played (surprise, surprise) track, football and basketball.

He describes his role on the UNC basketball team as "basically trying to make everyone better."

As a senior, Stephenson could be seen as a team leader. But he isn't worrying about the spotlight.

"We've got a lot more guys on the team than last year. I'm not worrying about or concerned with the amount of playing time, my role being to practice as hard as possible and do what the coaches say."



Travis Stephenson

After this year, Stephenson plans to stick with basketball. "I want to go to Australia for a year and get involved with basketball over there," he said. "I don't want to go to graduate school right away."

After which he added with a smile, "I don't want to get a job."

But when the subject of graduate school does become a reality in Stephenson's life, he wants to go to law school. A political science major, he is considering Campbell University.

Eric Montross, UNC's junior center, is Stephenson's roommate. Last year, they met after Stephenson had moved onto the hall in which Montross lived. This summer, they lived together.

"We found we had a lot more in common than we realized," Stephenson said. "He's a big nature person and he loves country music. We have become really good friends."

Montross said the fact that Stephenson was not one of UNC's starters meant nothing to him. "A lot of times, those are the people you can have the best friendships with."

Stephenson enjoys outdoor sports such as fishing and bow hunting. "I spend a lot of my free time at home," he said.

It's a sports thing, one would suppose. Four teams in five years, moving on to Australia for basketball, most likely something else after that.

"I play because I love the game, and it's a lot of fun to be on court."

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