



BILL CURRIE

Mouth of the South

Curry Reflects On Year

Whew!

It is summertime again. Of course, I know that officially it is still spring, but in the lexicon of my year it is summer. By definition summer is a season when there is no basketball, no football and no conferences about either. It is about a time when I can lie down in my own bed and sleep the sleep of the innocent.

Of course the fact that there are no games to cover means that one has a great deal of time to reflect on the past year. (A year to me runs from September to September.)

Probably the greatest disappointment in the area was the University of South Carolina's failure to capture the Atlantic Coast Basketball title. If you are a Gamecock rooster you will argue with a good deal of vehemence that the Chickens were robbed of their rightful perch atop the league. But that isn't really what happened. They just had one lapse when the big chips were on the table.

Cougars Were Surprise

To me the most resounding surprise of the year was the Carolina Cougars. When somebody told me that Jim Gardner had bought the Houston Mavericks and was about to move the team to North Carolina I was certain beyond any reasonable doubt that he was at once bereft of reason.

Moreover, I was certain that neither Jim nor all his associates could cook enough hamburgers to balance the loss. How wrong I was about that is history. The Cougars were not only an emotional success in the hearts of the fans; they were a box office sensation, and apparently Mr. Gardner & Company possesses another vein of pure gold.

The misjudgment of the year was the professional appraisal of UNC's Charlie Scott. Of course, Pete Maravich is a show boat and will, for a time, drag in thunderous herds through the turnstiles. But Scott is the best basketball player ever to come down the road.

His real strength lies in his total ability. There is no weakness in his game. Maravich, Mount, oh you name the big scorers. Most of them can't spell defense, let alone play it, but Scott can.

One day when the dust has settled and the hysteria of many points is forgotten, Charlie will be helping his team to win. I believe that is the purpose of playing, and while Charlie is a take charge player, he knows how to play on a team.

Bunting Was Disappointing

Individually I have been disappointed that Bill Bunting did not do better as a professional player. With a heavy money contract, the former UNC star was expected to cut a wide swath in the ABA. He did not. He may never. But I have hopes.

Remembering that Bunting was not a tiger in college until he got his confidence as a senior, I was not surprised when he failed to show up his real ability in his first season. If he works hard enough, and puts in enough extra hours before and after practice, and never misses a day working in the summer, he can yet be a force in the ABA.

Gene Littles who never had a scholarship offer anywhere but at High Point College, roared into the Cougar starting lineup and stayed there. At six feet he gave away both height and weight to virtually everyone he faced.

Yet he proved his ability and also proved that there are many superb ball players in the Carolinas Conference. What a pity the league is run by such a fuddy-duddy bunch of old moss backs that most of the time nobody ever hears about the excellence of the athletes and teams. But with Littles doing the job he did, not even High Point College's lack of public relations could keep this guy a secret.



RECORD MAKER — James "Jingles" Ijames of Davie County set four new North Piedmont Conference track records at the NPC meet last Friday at

North Rowan. The 6-5 Rebel star will lead Davie into the North-South Piedmont meet this week.

Record-Setter

Ijames To Lead Davie Into N-S Track Event

James Ijames, who set four new records in the North Piedmont Conference track meet last week will lead Davie County's trackmen into the North-South Piedmont Conference meet at North Rowan on Friday.

The Rebel star registered four victories in record-times at the NPC meet, and teammates Alan Barger and Jerry Goodlett also scored wins.

Barger set a new shot put record, and Goodlett won the triple jump, but the threesome was not enough to overcome the balance of East Rowan.

In the North Piedmont meet at North Rowan, East Rowan led the way with 152½ points. Davie County was second with 100. Other scoring included, North Rowan, 97; West Rowan, 63; North Stanly, 25½; Mooresville, 19; South Iredell, 18½; North Davidson, 16½ and Central Davidson, 3. The scores for North Rowan and South Iredell were corrected after a recheck of the team totals.

East built up a comfortable margin with a first and second in the 880, the 14th event on the agenda. East outscored Davie County by 24½ to 14 in the final three events to increase its lead from 42 points to 52½.

Only three events appear to be in the "safe" category as far as possible records are concerned—the pole vault, broad jump and mile run.

If athletes match their performances in last Friday's two conference meets, nine records will fall and another would be tied. Based on regular-season performances, three more records are in danger.

Nine records were broken in the NPC meet, while seven marks were topped and another was tied in the SPC meet.

In the North Piedmont, Davie County's James Ijames broke records in four events — the 100-

220 high hurdles and low hurdles. East's Eddie Price broke the 880 mark, Davie's Alan Barger topped the shot put mark, and North Rowan's Buddy Lowery set a new standard in the discus.

East's 440 and 880 relay teams broke records, as did West's mile relay unit.

In the South Piedmont, Boyden's Roger Jackson snapped records in the high and low hurdles. Lexington's Jerry Miller topped the 880 mark and Boyden's Robert Pulliam broke the shot put mark. Boyden broke the 880 and mile relay marks, while Kannapolis topped the 440 relay record. Kannapolis's Hugh Cline also tied the high jump record with a 6-2 leap. His height was originally recorded at 6-1½, but a remeasurement late Friday afternoon proved it to be 6-2.

Kannapolis and Davie County were defending champions, and the victories by Boyden and East Rowan were the first ever in a Piedmont championship meet by the two Rowan County schools.

The top six finishers in each conference meet qualify for the bi-conference event, but only three relay teams will advance.

Ties for third place in the NPC relays will add an extra team in those events.

The final track meet of the season is set for Saturday, May 16, at North Rowan. It will be the Western North Carolina High School Activities Association championship meet. Davie County is the defending champion in both the bi-conference and association meets.



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