



Staff photo by James Parker

Howard dominates: while white students complain, seventh-ranked Bisons methodically outmaneuver Carolina.

Howard U. soccer squad— a proud, talented crew

By LONZA HARDY
Sports Editor

An atmosphere of tension engulfed Fetzter field. It was not just any soccer game. It was not just UNC vs Howard. It was Black vs white.

In the midst of this tension, and weary of Carolina defeat, one white student complained, "I don't think that's right. I don't think it's fair that Howard should be recruiting from foreign countries any more than other schools."

That student had a good reason to be fearful, for the Howard squad, minus its six best players who were on probation due to disciplinary problems, handily demolished the UNC attack in a 2 to 0 winning effort. It employed rhythmic movements of the head and feet that could have won first prize on a Soul Train dance contest.

Lincoln Phillips, the Bisons' head coach, who is from Nigeria, later commented, "People keep hopping on me about local players (all Howard's squad are foreigners except for one) but I have never played against a team with a Black American on it. The soccer game in this country is geared for the affluent, the whites, and the suburb dwellers. But what about the Black kids in the city who don't ever get exposure?"

Phillips says the reason Howard University started soccer in the U.S. was to accommodate the foreigner because he

could not relate to basketball and football. He contends the Howard team is helping Black players in America.

"As a matter of fact one of our players is James Sansom who is from Raleigh, and he is the first brilliant Black soccer player I've seen in my eight years in this country," Phillips said. "He earned a starting position and it's the first time in the history of Howard that an American has 'earned' a position on our team.

Howard's victorious journey in soccer hasn't been an all easy one even though in the last six years, the team has won two national championships and were runners-up three times. The team and the coach still are harrassed at many schools they play.

"Some of the places we go people curse at us and call us names," Phillips said. "Even the referees give us a hard time."

The obvious reason for such hostility is that Howard is the only Black university in the nation with a soccer team. It created soccer in the U.S. more than 100 years ago, and the squad is coached by the only Black man in American history who has ever coached a professional soccer team.

Many whites feel the reason the Blacks cheer for Howard is solely because it is a Black school. But Phillips wholeheartedly rejects this idea. "Many of the people who cheer for us don't do so because we're Black or because they're really hard-core fans," Phillips explained. "They just like to go with a winner."

Phil Ford: 'It's just my personality'

Off-court just a student,
'like everyone else'

By SKIP FOREMAN
Assistant Sports Editor

After two years, one might think that all they do is put a key in Phil Ford's back and say, "Here, Phil, shoot and dribble and play good." As of yet, no one's found the key—and they probably won't. Simply put, Ford is just as human as anyone else on this campus.

Unusually enough, the guy that wears no. 12 on the court is not the same one who has to walk to class, or to the library, or anywhere else. It is almost a Jekyll-Hyde transition.

"Really, I'm not that outgoing a person," Ford said. "If I wasn't around a lot of people, I probably wouldn't get to know that many anyway. It's not that I don't want to. I enjoy talking to people more than anything else. It's just my personality."

His associations are primarily with the people he will spend the most time with, names like LaGarde, Davis, Kuester, Smith, and the rest. Combine that with the "very personal" interior of Granville Towers, and a business major, and you will have to crane your neck most time to see Phil Ford, much less get him to speak.

Thus rises another issue from the rubble of gossip. Now that an ACC title and Olympic gold medal have come to the Rocky Mount junior, there are those who would wish to perceive him as being above the rest of the crowd, especially the Black populace at UNC. How does he respond?

"That's the kind of thing that is being stereotyped. It doesn't bother me because I know how I really am. I can see how some people would think that way because during a game, I think that a person has to believe in himself.

"If you looked at me on the court during a game, you could say that I am a cocky person. But off the court I don't think that's how a person should be. That's not a

true athlete who believes he's better than anyone else."

Ford says he considers himself a student just like everyone else here. The exception is that he doesn't have to wait in line for tickets as do the other 3,000-plus students. "I have to go to school just like everyone else."

One more aspect of Ford's life that has become the business of the world is his social life. He says the team is one big family, and that there are no problems, athletic or social. He credits part of his own philosophy to what his high school coach taught him.

"A teammate is a teammate no matter what color he is. Those are the foundations of a good athlete that I try to exemplify. I think athletics apply to life anyway. Everything is not going to be a bed of roses, sometimes it's going to be tough."

As far as the female perspective goes, Phil is apparently not any more different than the mid-day girlwatcher on Greenlaw wall. Needless to say, the dating issue has been broached time and time again.

"I see a lot of different girls. I date a lot of different girls. But then again, I don't have that much time. I think that it would be hard for girls to understand that right now I'm interested in sports.

"As far as girls are concerned, I don't care what color a girl is, if she's very pretty, I'll go out with her."

Maybe there are those who question a lot of things about Phil Ford, with probable cause. Then again, a lot of his own philosophies are worthy of merit, whether they were instilled by his high school coach, or from head basketball coach Dean Smith. For certain, he will settle any issues about his basketball ability—and maybe his life—out on the Carmichael hardwood. And whatever color they may be, someone will be there to cheer.



Ford: "As far as girls are concerned, I don't care what color a girl is—if she's very pretty, I'll go out with her."