

Black female athletes – rare commodity

Lumpkin:

'It's just difficult to recruit

By DAVID SQUIRES
Sports Writer

Basketball is usually considered to be a sport that is totally dominated by Blacks. The "roundball sport" has brought fame and fortune to numerous Blacks, male and female. Then, "Why," one may ask, "do we have few Blacks on the Carolina womens' basketball team?"

A brief inquiry into this subject will inform you that the Black female athlete on this campus is in fact a rare commodity.

One of the reasons, said Carolyn Hawkins is "For what the coaches want from an athlete, most Black girls don't have it to give or won't give it." Hawkins is unique in that she is the only Black female at Carolina on an athletic scholarship. The young female star who transferred to Carolina this year from Louisburg Junior College, is the only Black female on UNC's volleyball team this year. Hawkins also has a great chance of breaking the color barrier in basketball.

Are Black female basketball players hard to recruit?

When faced with this question, Dr. Angela Lumpkin, who has coached the Tarheels for three years said, "The female athlete in general is hard to recruit. It's not that much more difficult to recruit a Black than a white. It's just difficult to recruit women athletes around here."

Carolina only had one girl on a basketball scholarship last year and that number has increased to five this year. Logically, all five are white.

Recruiting is somewhat restricted, Dr. Lumpkin points out. Most of the athletes

are recruited solely by her.

"The major areas in which I recruit are by letters and by phone calls. I have attempted to recruit certain Blacks. There was one girl in particular from Kentucky that I wanted very badly but she decided to go to school in her state, unfortunately, which a lot of athletes do in spite of their race."

Only in the last three years have scholarships been available to women athletes. When this fact is considered one can understand the scarcity of Black women athletes on this campus. As Dr. Lumpkin said "Without scholarships, recruiting is almost nonexistent."

Even though the team hasn't been chosen yet, the outlook of it becoming integrated is very bright. With several Black women out for team this year, Dr. Lumpkin speaks optimistically about their chances of making the team. "I would say about three or four Black girls have a good chance of making the team this year. If not the varsity, certainly the jayvee," she added.

When Black women take the jump from the high school world of running around the gym five times, to the large campus world of running around the campus five times, pumping iron (weights), and leaping Carmichael Auditorium in a single bound, some of them just can't take it. But others, like Carolyn Hawkins and Rochelle Small, are willing to try.

So when this year's UNC women's basketball team runs onto the court there may be an air of unfamiliarity.

No, it will not be a bird or a plane. It will not even be superman. It will be a Black female superstar, certainly a limited species.

SPECIAL FEATURE

part two



Photo by Neilson Goines

Parham: "If more Black girls showed interest, there'd be more Blacks on the squad."

Pamela Parham:

A unique entity

By MIT FULFORD
Sports Writer

Pamela Parham is a junior physical therapy major at UNC who often does volunteer work at the hospital during her spare time. She attended 71st High School in Fayetteville, N.C.

Neither of these things may seem unusual but Pam Parham is a unique entity at UNC—a Black female varsity cheerleader.

Pam, however, takes the honor in stride. She thinks of it as a new experience. "I don't feel any pressure because it's something I enjoy doing, and I work my hardest to do it well. I think I'm being myself."

When Pam spoke of being herself, one question immediately came to mind. Does she feel she is compared to Peaches Hauser, her predecessor as THE Black cheerleader in any way?

"After tryouts people did compare me to Peaches mainly because I was a Black cheerleader," stated Pam.

"I was kidded by my friends, but I think Peaches was an excellent cheerleader. I don't think I could ever equal her performance."

The fact that Pam made the squad says something for her performance. Tryouts were hectic and filled with anticipation for everyone involved. Pam had been through the ordeal before so she knew what to expect. She tried out for varsity cheerleading her sophomore year, but did not make it.

"At first," says Pam, "I didn't want to go through that feeling of not making it again, but I really felt a lot less pressure this time. I knew that they were looking for the fine points. And frankly, I felt that I had a better chance this year because I figured they were looking for another Black cheerleader."

There were only two Black females who tried out for the squad this year. According to Pam, this is not unusual at all.

"I really don't know what accounts for the small number of Blacks who try out. There always seems to be interest up until tryouts. I talked to girls and worked with girls who showed the interest and had the ability but would not come out for tryouts. I think they just feel they won't make it."

"If more Black girls just showed the interest," she adds, "there would be more Blacks on the squad."

During Pam's freshman year here, four Black women tried out, and two of them made the jayvee squad. Last year two Black women tried out for the varsity, and Pam made it.

"I've heard that the situation in other sports might be a little different," states Pam. "I don't know how many girls try out, but it seems to me that if the girls are qualified and they're still getting cut (in other sports)—I don't understand the rationale behind that at all."

Concerning the lack of Blackness in the cheerleading ranks, Pam feels another possible factor is that the style of cheerleading here is markedly different from that of high school. Obviously, she notes, the number of people here limits the closeness of the cheerleaders and the audience. There is also, she says, much more organization required for things such as pep rallies.

She explains, "I did have to make an adjustment from high school cheering to cheering for Carolina. We do a lot more dancing here. I prefer this style because there is a lot more variation."

Pamela Parham has struggled and achieved success in the sport of cheerleading. Still, somewhat puzzled, she stops and wonders where the other Black female athletes are.

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