

SPORTS

ACC rule change may not be too hot

JAMES ALEXANDER JR.
Sports Editor

The most significant rule change for the 1978-79 Atlantic Coast Conference basketball season is the elimination of the jump ball following the opening tipoff, in conference games.

Not as much controversy as expected has surrounded the change, but there still remains plenty of room for a good argument.

Thus far, no ACC contests have been decided directly by the new rule and no coaches or players have publicly refuted it.

As a matter of fact, it has been rather well accepted by all involved in basketball, from the most devoted fans to the conference officials who see it as a convenience, now that they no longer have to toss up the ball between the much taller players.

Despite the seemingly satisfaction and the zero amount of controversy, the rule is still destined to have some detrimental far-ranging effects, and probably around tournament time when play is usually fierce and games count toward the conference and national titles.

It seems somewhat illogical to alternate jump shots throughout a basketball game, and especially in the ACC, where tossup situations have had a knack for being especially crucial in the closing minutes of play.

Most jump ball situations are created as the result of a tie-up between players battling for the ball, or when offsetting penalties have been assessed, and to award the basketball by turns rather than by a tossup would defeat the purpose.

Picture an ACC contest with a team ahead 60-59, with five seconds remaining in the game. The leading team has the ball and the only chance that the team trailing (on defense) has of gaining possession is to force a tossup by tying up a player on offense.

However, such a situation could have a totally different perspective if the offensive team was due the ball according to the new rule, and the efforts of the defense would be in vain.

Some have defended the new rule by saying that the jump balls have evened out anyway, but what they fail to realize is that regardless of how many times each team gains possession of the ball, there are going to be key situations that should not be determined by merely "whose turn it is."

In other words, no matter how hard you work defensively and force a jump ball situation, unless it's your turn for possession, you've battled a lost cause.

An alternative would be to alternate possession of jump balls in the first half (like the current new rule) and return to the tossup method in the second half, where most crucial situations occur.

If the only reasons the ACC has instituted this new rule are to save time and keep the officials from having to "strain their backs" to get the ball up between two very tall players, then its hardly been worth it.

The only reason rules should be changed are for strategic purposes or as safety precautions only.

That's right, no one has complained as yet, but that's no reason at all to believe that regret is not forthcoming.

ACC basketball...you may be sorry for this.

Reflecting back on the Super Bowl...there's no better way to play a championship game than the way Dallas and Pittsburgh played two weeks ago in Miami, Fla.

Both teams were supposed to be the epitomes of pro sports organization at its best, having made their respective teams contenders through the draft system and not through the trading block as so many teams try to do today.

Players such as Lynn Swann, John Stallworth, Franco Harris, rookie Ron Johnson and Mean Joe Greene of Pittsburgh and Tony Dorsett, Tony Hill, Drew Pearson, Aaron Kyle and Thomas Henderson of Dallas were products of each team's superior scouting systems.

But, the Dallas "computer complex" system for playing football didn't quite stand up to the Pittsburgh "blood and guts" brand of playing, and therefore the Cowboys succumbed by the score of 35-31 in the highest-scoring Super Bowl game in history.

It only goes to prove once again... the American Football Conference is still a lot stronger than the National Conference, and will continue to be so as long as there is Pittsburgh, New England, Miami, Denver, Houston, Oakland and the up and coming Seattle Seahawks.

There's no way that the NFC's always "terrible trio" of Dallas, Los Angeles and Minnesota can stand up to the power of these teams.

The National Basketball Association should adopt a name change if possible, to the "post-ACC pro league," because of the outstanding former league that is now gracing the pros.

Over at Washington, Mitch Kupchak (North Carolina) is the most valuable sixth-man in the league, providing forward and center relief for the league-leading Bullets.

Walter Davis (North Carolina) is only in his second year and has turned the Phoenix Suns from a team of inconsistency to a perennial contender.

Hard-working Bobby Jones and coach Billy Cunningham (both North Carolina) are still trying to give Philadelphia that long-promised championship.

David Thompson (N.C. St.) is the superstar money forward-guard who has given Denver its title as a contender as well as head coach Larry Brown (North Carolina) who is still looking for a title for the Mile High City.

Center Tommy LaGarde had gotten Seattle off to a lightning-faststart until he was injured.

John Lucas (Maryland) is running the show over at Golden State, and is the NBA's assist leader.

However, the biggest ACC success story this season may be in Kansas City, where rookie sparkplug Phil Ford (North Carolina) has turned the Kings around from a perennial doormat to a division-leading highly-contending NBA squad.

The Kings now have just as good a chance as anybody to win a NBA title, with their fold of some of the league's best talent.

INSIDE SPORT
with
James Alexander

Tom Burleson (N.C. St.) is also doing a respectable job as the Kings' backup pivotman.

When the playoff season gets underway in late spring, look for Kansas City to be right in the thick of the race, and if Ford continues with his fantastic playmaking, he could wind up as the league's Rookie-of-the-Year.

Wouldn't it be nice to have two former North Carolina teammates to win the award two years in a row? Phoenix's Davis did it last year.

Plaudits go to unheralded track stars Wayne Miller, E.J. Clemons, Broderick Bennett and Sam Brown, who according to head coach Hubert West have been running very well in the mile relay for the Tarheels.

The Heels ran against Duke and N.C. State last weekend in the New Tin Can and will go against NCCU, Appalachian St. and Richmond this weekend.

The women ran against N.C. St. and Virginia Tech last weekend and will participate in the N.C. St. Invitational on Feb. 10.

Plaudits also go out to women's team members Karen Stevenson, Lauren Lewis and Annetee Woods.

New Yorker Black could be UNC's future gem

By **THERESA ANN WILLIAMS**
News Editor

When Phil Ford left the Carolina basketball squad after last season, the hearts of many people sank in grief because they wondered where Coach Dean Smith would ever get another guard.

Little did Tarheel fans know that Smith would be successful in his quest to fill void left by Ford, and come up with Jimmy Black.

Black, an 18-year-old freshman from the Bronx, New York attended Cardinal Hayes High School. He won all-city honors last year, and led the voting in the All-Catholic league in New York.

The six-foot-two New Yorker has played organized basketball since seventh grade. In high school, he played on the freshmen team and on the varsity team for three years.

Upon coming to Chapel Hill, Black admits that he had no trouble adjusting to life in Chapel Hill. He stated, "When I first visited here, the people were very nice and everyone got along so well that I just decided that I'd like to spend four years here."

Black, a psychology major admits that he has no complaints or gripes about the university. Although he enjoys life at Carolina, he said he misses his mother's home cooking and his friends back home.

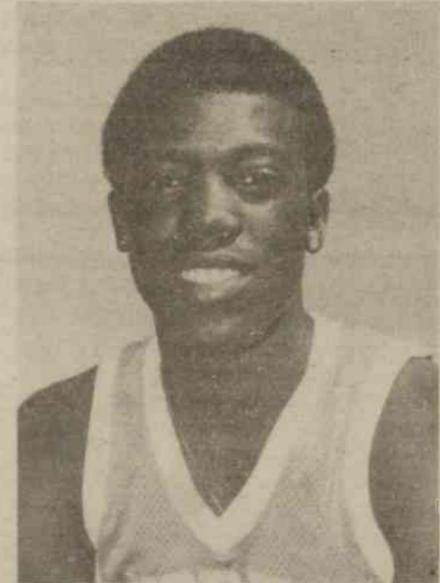
Black, who has played in most of Carolina's basketball games, admits that he has learned a lot from the other players on the team. "Mostly," he stated, "I have learned about the intensity of the game itself, the fact that we are playing and practicing day in and day out."

So far, one of his most memorable games is the one against Duke. He stated, "The Duke game was the first time that I had been part of a very emotional game."

When he's not playing or practicing with the basketball squad, Black enjoys listening to music, disco dancing, and playing backgammon.

Black has no thoughts about playing professional basketball at present. His goal right now is "to get a job and be able to live comfortably."

Black's quickness and speed in the games against Duke and Arkansas, helped to earn him the title of Rookie of the Week in the Atlantic Coast Conference.



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