

SPORTS

How much are the opinion polls really worth?

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Sports Editor

During this topsy-turvy college basketball season, much controversy has centered around who is really the number one team in the nation.

Both opinion polls, Associated Press (AP) for writers and the United Press International (UPI) for coaches, have alternated between Duke, Michigan St. and Notre Dame (currently top-ranked), while North Carolina, Illinois and Indiana St. have come all but close enough to the top spot.

In addition, no team remains undefeated at the season's halfway mark, and the days of undefeated or one loss records are probably gone...forever.

All of this hoopla has been created by the increased intensity in conference play this year, such as in the Big Ten where Michigan St. and Illinois have been constantly rapped by the improved play of former doormats Iowa (Big Ten leader), Purdue and Ohio St.

In the ACC, it has been no rougher than usual with Duke and North Carolina managing to hold on, but you've got to think that an upset is always in the offing when you're in the ACC.

Notre Dame, by the benefit of being an independent has maintained the top spot longer than anyone else, with no intense conference schedule to deal with.

However, when one looks at the overall poll situation, it must be noted that the AP and UPI polls are merely opinions of a group of "experts" who have no concrete basis to rank a team other than personal preference.

On most occasions, the teams that win on a given week usually move up in the polls, while the ones that suffer at least one loss drop down, except when they happen to lose to a team that was much higher ranked.

It's all mechanical.

The polls provide no concrete means of telling who is really good and who is not, it only makes basketball fans open their papers on Tuesdays to see what others think of their favorite team.

The bet thing that could happen to this poll baloney would be for it all to go straight down the drain, and install some type of national ranking system formula that would combine a team's record, average winning margin, shooting percentage and other important factors.

Extra points should be given to teams that win against a competitive opponent, as opposed to subtracting points from teams that win against lesser opponents.

That should solve the problem of distinguishing between the Indiana States and the Notre Dames.

This method would present at least a fairer and more accurate picture of college basketball's top teams, and would offer a clear and direct formula for ranking.

The AP and UPI polls are fine, but let's not take them beyond what they really are worth. Too often fans take the opinions of the polls as "sacred truths", but what good is one person's opinion over another?

North Carolina has gotten a big jump on the rest of the ACC in basketball recruiting, having signed 6-8 James Worthy of Gastonia Ashbrook (the state's top-ranked team according to the AP poll) and 6-1 Jim Braddock of Chattanooga,

Tenn.

One rating service has both players listed in the top 50 high school prospects in the nation, and Worthy is thought by many to be the best high school player in the state.

Coach Dean Smith will probably groom Worthy to replace All-America Mike O'Koren, while Braddock may be vying with young Jimmy Black for the future point guard spot.

Stay tuned folks...there's probably more to come.

When the ACC basketball coaches were polled as to whether or not they welcomed the new jump ball rule change, it was interestingly concluded that the group is split on the issue.

Smith, Terry Holand (Virginia) and Bill Foster (Clemson) were in favor of the change, while Lefty Driesell (Maryland), Norm Sloan (N.C. State) and Carl Tacy (Wake Forest) were against it.

Duke's Bill Foster was the lone undecided coach, who commented he had "mixed emotions about it."

When tournament time comes and passes, let's take another poll and find out how many are ready to dump the new rule.

Former Marquette guard and first round NBA draft choice Butch Lee was recently traded by the Atlanta Hawks to Cleveland, in exchange for former Michigan St. star Terry Furrow.

Lee was only averaging around seven points per game, and was splitting playing time with such "greats" as Armond Hill, Charlie Criss, Eddie Johnson and Rick Wilson.

However, Carolina's Phil Ford (also a first round pick) is out in Kansas City averaging better than 15 points per contest and is ranking second in the entire league in assists, which are the true measurement of any good point guard.

Ford has also turned a perennial loser into a division winner and a playoff likely, and is an integral part of the NBA's best young backcourt.

The experts who argued last year that Lee was a better guard than Ford should have eaten all of their words by now...wouldn't you say?

Pity the poor Denver Nuggets, they have really had it bad this season.

They have barely kept their heads above the .500 mark, have not received the consistent playing ability of David Thompson, and have not seen the light of the George McGinnis-Bobby Jones deal (but Philadelphia has).

The Nuggets had always had the NBA label of not being able to win the big ones since their inclusion into the league because they have had some super teams.

Add this to the Nuggets list of woes; Head coach and former Carolina standout Larry Brown has resigned because of health reasons.

Brown really made the Nuggets what they once were, the best young team in pro basketball.

Now that the young Nugget empire has fallen, there's but one thing left to do, and that's to start all over again.

INSIDE SPORTS

with James Alexander, Jr.

Juggy

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Hill than Durham or Raleigh," he said.

So he came to Chapel Hill and worked for another Black Hair care shop. "The fellow whom I was working for failed to follow through on an agreement that we had made, so I was forced to go into business on my own."

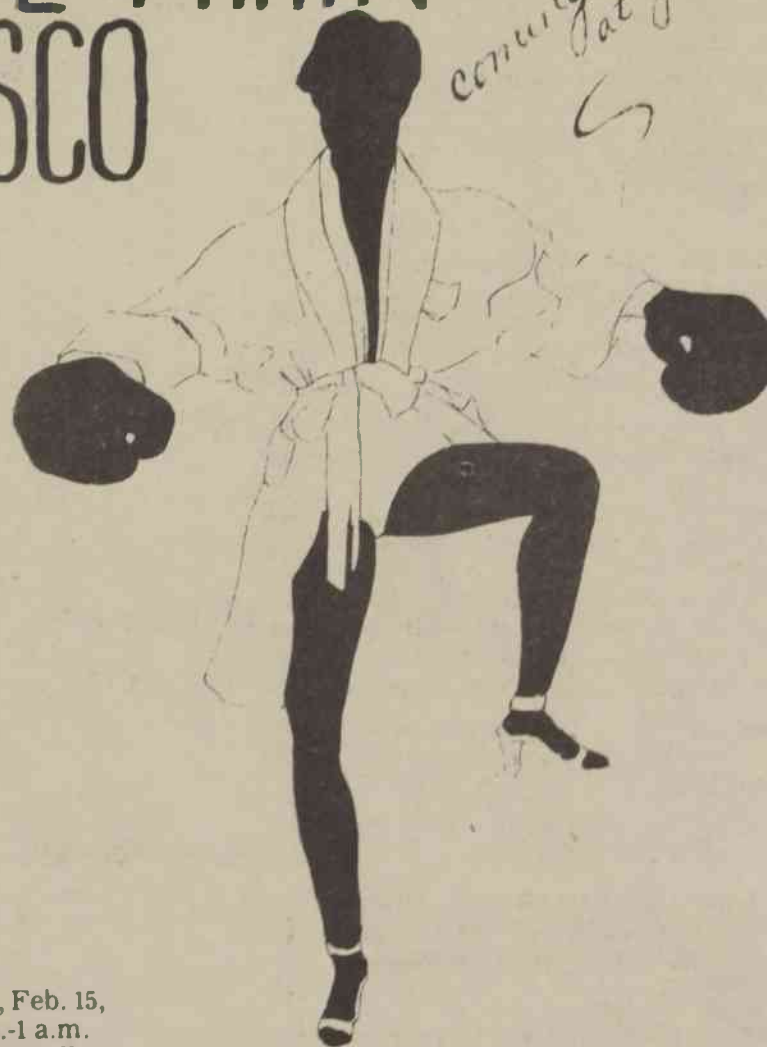
So in January 1977, "Juggy, the Bush Master" as he was called opened up his own place. "I maintained many of my same customers and in a few months, I was able to hire another hairstylist.

"I plan to own my own building by this time next year," he said.

What's his key to success?

"Just logic and common sense."

To have logic and common sense, one must have a good head. And one Juggy advertisement pleads: "Let us help you get your head together."

SOUL TRAIN
DISCO

Thurs., Feb. 15,
9 p.m.-1 a.m.
Great Hall
Carolina Union