

W.S.S.U. Sports

The Thin Line

Should sports figures make public comments about world issues?

By George K. Croom Jr.
ARGUS SPORTS EDITOR

Since the war between the United States and Iraq began, many in the sports world have taken it upon themselves to bridge the gap that divides the two.

Coaches, players, owners, journalists and reporters have all jumped at the chance to add their opinions on the most public of stages.

It all began when the first reporter or journalist popped a tape recorder, microphone or notepad in an athlete's face and asked for his or her comments on the war.

The responsibility lies primarily on the outlets through which the information is being transferred. If the

medium is not provided for the sports world to comment, then all comments and opinions will remain private.

The sporting community should not make international issues a staple of conversation. Sports is sports, war is war, and international issues, similar to the prior, are international issues.

There is nothing that links the two. The only binding ties are the war's ability to stop sports or to take away from the coverage of sports.

Certain media outlets have been charged with the responsibility of covering both. Yet, in some of their attempts to complete both objectives, they have managed to run them through a collision course.

Even the specialty channels, such as

ESPN, have come dangerously close to taking sports past the boundaries that have been set.

The bridge needs to be broken down. Let the sports reporters provide sports, and the news reporters provide the news. There is enough confusion to be passed around. The last thing that is needed is the world's most beloved sports figures opinion on the situation.

Since Sept. 11, arguments have been made by many in the sporting community that sports is a sanctuary where people can find refuge from the depressions of war.

If sports begin to allow war to drive to the forefront of its agenda, then the refuge is accepting the very enemy from which it should provide escape.

WSSU guard selected for CIAA game

WSSU guard Lori Shelby has been selected to participate in the 2003 CIAA/NYCAC Senior Basketball Challenge. Shelby, a leading scorer on the 2003 Rams basketball team and first team All-CIAA selection, was selected due to her notable performance throughout her senior season. The game is scheduled to take place April 26 at C.W. Post College in Brookville, Long Island, N.Y.

Jordan: This season is his last, or is it?

George K. Croom Jr.
ARGUS SPORTS EDITOR

Remember back to a time when you were a child. Your mother would always say, "Either stay in, or stay out." The majority of your entourage understood the concept but there happened to be that one kid that could not quite grasp, constantly stirring up trouble with his comings and goings.

Enter Michael Jordan.

In his second reunion with the hard-court, Jordan has managed to boost sales, draw

crowds (home and away), and receive a second farewell tour that is fit for not only a king, but also worthy of the highest immortals sitting atop Mount Olympus.

Since being drafted third in the 1984 NBA draft,

Jordan has elevated the attentiveness and enthusiasm of the viewing public toward the NBA on his route to becoming one of the greatest and most influential players ever. But the question still remains that has lingered throughout the 2002-'03 season, "Is this truly his last go-around, or will he be back?"

In January 1999, former *News Argus* sports editor Rasheed Oluwa commented on the coverage of the second Jordan retirement stating, "It's a good thing that the Second Coming of the Messiah didn't take place in the month of January. People would've been too busy watching ESPN 2's daylong dedication of MJ highlights to even care."

My take on this, now his third retirement, would not be as strong. Although it can be said that Jordan has gained more attention for the Washington Wizards than most perpetually bad teams struggling to make the playoffs would.

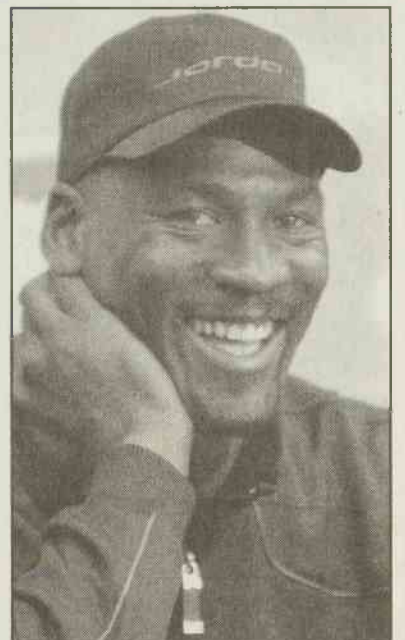
Almost all of Jordan's preconceived objectives for the Wizards and himself have failed. Showing the world that at 39 and 40 he can still play, up for discussion. Building the Wizards as a legitimate Eastern Conference contender, failed. Becoming a facilitator and teacher to the franchisees younger players, to be specific Kwame Brown and as reflected in their current relationship, total failure.

The only positively affected parties in the latest return of "Air Jordan" are the endless numbers of disciples who worship every dribble which fall from his hands.

There is a saying: "One is for the money, two is for the show, three is to get ready ..." Jordan said he has made his peace with the game. Let's hope that the unsettling urge of his disciples doesn't require a fourth time to go.

Opinion

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Jordan says that he will seek his final retirement at the end of 2002-'03 season.

Dales-Schuman stars in new role

ESPN uses Washington Mystics player and ex-Oklahoma Sooner for tournament coverage

By Mel Greenberg
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

(KRT) — At the NCAA tournament a year ago, Stacey Dales-Schuman was a star on the court.

This year, she is a rookie sensation on TV, getting attention for her part in ESPN's television coverage of the tournament.

Dales-Schuman, a two-time all-American senior guard, helped lead Oklahoma to the NCAA women's basketball tournament title game last year before the Sooners lost to unbeaten Connecticut, 82-70.

This year, she's behind a desk as a studio analyst, working with Indiana Fever coach Nell Fortner of the WNBA and host Rece Davis.

"It's a pretty neat thing," Dales-Schuman said during a recent break in the regional semifinals and finals.

"I think you get some interesting perspectives for the audience because you have a current coach and a current player," said Dales-Schuman, who plays for the WNBA Washington Mystics. "I know I'm learning a few things from Nell as a coach."

"I have such a passion for basketball, and this has helped me and my game," said Dales-Schuman, 23, a native of Brockville, Ontario, who played for the 2000 Canadian Olympic team. "Everyone has been helpful, and everyone involved is very professional in the way they go about their work. It's just a great opportunity and learning experience."

It has been a challenging job for a TV novice, especially because this is the first year that ESPN and ESPN2 have combined to air all 63 games in the tournament.

In the first two rounds, the studio team had to act as ringmasters, taking viewers in and out of games across the country.

Dales-Schuman has worked hard on her preparation.

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gym, I've spent all my time on the computer, because I want to do the best job possible, and I'm not doing anyone a service if I haven't done my homework and come to the set prepared," she said.

"I also want to get my viewpoints across and share what I feel. But I don't want to be controversial just for its own sake."

"I want to talk about as many players and teams as possible, because I want to give everyone a chance to hear themselves mentioned," she added.

"There's not a lot of TV coverage of women's basketball, and there are great stories and players who are unknown. There's so much parity out there."

Apparently, network officials have been pleased with Dales-Schuman's work to date.

"I know she's turned heads around here," said Josh Krulewitz, a spokesman for the network. "It's one thing to have a viewpoint. But in this business, timing and delivery are everything, and she's been great."

Dales-Schuman recently drew high

marks from her former college coach, Sherri Coale.

"She's every bit as talented behind this thing as she was playing for us," Coale said, motioning toward a microphone recently during the Mideast Regional in Norman, Okla.

Dales-Schuman knows a thing or two about brain power.

She was an honors student at Oklahoma as a communications major.

Oklahoma had not been much of a force in Division I before Dales-Schuman arrived in Norman to help Coale turn the Sooners into a national power.

Since the 2002 Final Four, Dales-Schuman has had quite a hectic schedule.

"Think about it," she said in quick breaths, listing all the activities. "We get to the championship. Then a week or so later, I got married [to fellow Oklahoma student Chris Schuman]. Then I got drafted [third overall] by the Mystics. Suddenly, I have to move from life on the Bible Belt to a large Eastern city and one of the cultural capitals of America."

"Then I got to help the Mystics turn their program around until I finally hit that rookie wall. But Coach [Marianne] Stanley was great. She rested me, and then I was ready to get into the playoffs, where we won the first round and then lost out to New York in the Eastern championship."

"I'm excited about this season and what we can do," Dales-Schuman said, adding that she did not know where things stood regarding WNBA negotiations with the players' union for a new collective bargaining agreement.

That's a worry for another day. Dales-Schuman was concentrating on wrapping up the network's coverage of the East and West finals, and then went to Atlanta for the Final Four at the Georgia Dome.