

Whirlie runners on the right track

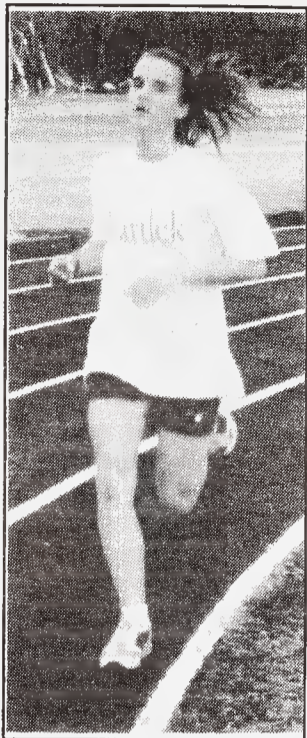
By Mark Robinson
Reporter

The Whirlie track and field team is focusing on winning track meets and practicing hard. The team has practice every school day and meets once a week.

The track team started practice in the middle of February. The practices vary depending on the event or events that each athlete competes in. The long distance runners run at least three miles everyday; they run around the park and up and down Benjamin Parkway. The sprinters practice their starts and they do wind sprints.

Most of the runners on the track team also run for the cross country in the fall and the indoor track team during the winter. "There really is no off-season, I run during eleven months of the year," Mustafa Rashid, a senior said. However, there are some members of the track team that run just to stay in shape during the off-season of another sport. Sophomore Derek White said "I started to run to stay in shape." White is a member of the Whirlie cross country team, the indoor track team, and the track team.

There are many hard parts about being on the track team. "The hardest part about running track is being the emotional leader of the team," Mustafa Rashid said. You also have to be in top physical and mental form to run track. Staying focused while running is a problem for some Whirlie track team members. "I pretend a big dog is behind me and I have to outrun it!" Chad McMurray, a junior said. Rashid said "I chant 'Whirlie pride' to myself over



Sarah Blackwood strains to finish during a recent practice.

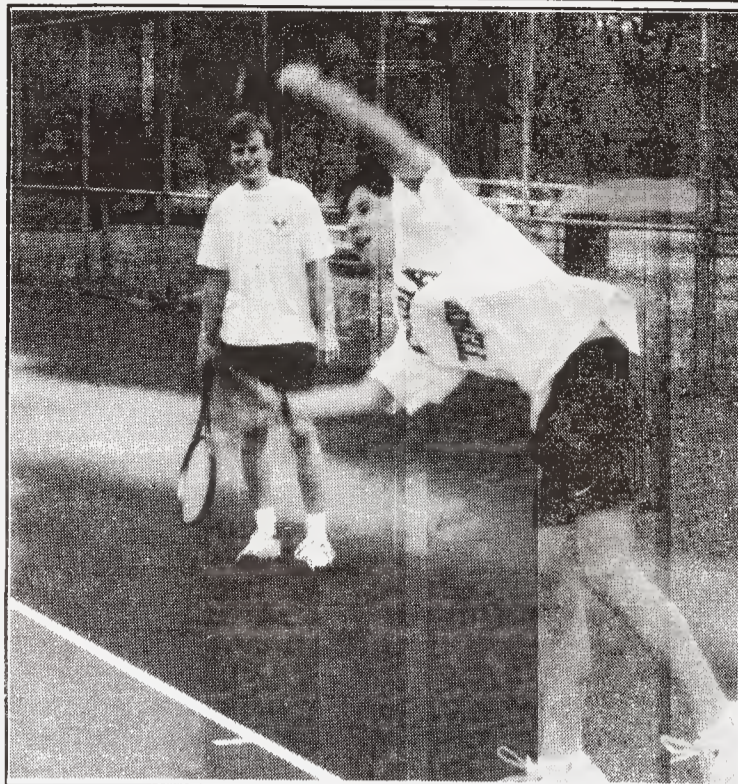
and over."

"This year's track team's strengths are the sprinters and the long distance runners we have. But the weakness is that we do not have enough athletes on the team for field events," said Coach Richardson, one of three track coaches. The other coaches are Coach Bill Walton and Coach Ryan Walton.

The track meets consists of 18 events for the males and 17 events for the females. "I think the most exciting event is the 55 meter dash," Coach Richardson said. Recently a Whirlie had great success at running the 55 meter dash. On February 26 Chris Justice set a new state record by running the fifty-five meter dash in 6.21 seconds. Justice is also a member of the indoor track team and the varsity football team.

Wham!

Mike Smith smashes a serve as John Mark Pool looks on.



Avent photo

Grimsley prepares for return to state tennis finals

By Mark Robinson
Reporter

The 1996 Whirlie tennis team looks to yet again be one of the dominant forces in high school tennis.

This year they will settle for nothing less than avenging their heartbreaking five to four loss to Raleigh Broughton in the state finals last year. The members of the team feel that this loss will motivate them this year. Devang Desai, a senior, illuminated this point when he said "This year's version will become stronger both physically and mentally because of the desire to win the state championship after losing in the finals two straight years."

The team will yet again be led by phenoms Michael Berger and Desai and coached by Coach Alexander. The next four seeds will likely be filled by Bill Harwell, Deval Desai, John Mark Pool, and

Rick Laughlin. Patrick Kinlaw, Neil Henderson, and Michael Smith will battle for the final two slots.

The squad should be even stronger than it was last year. Physically, the team appears to be even stronger than it was last year. "Our strength is that we are dedicated, and probably in better condition than most teams (because we do a lot of running). Our team will be improved from last year's, because of a lot of off-season work last winter" Kinlaw said. The team should also be improved thanks to new member Rick Laughlin. Neil Henderson, a senior, comments on the recent addition. "I think that with the addition of Laughlin we will be a much stronger team."

However, a few weaknesses may become evident as the year progresses. A major weakness that may appear is the confidence level of the team following the loss in the finals last year. If they can over-

come this, then they very likely will be one of the top contenders. Another obstacle that the team has to overcome is the loss of Josh Bledsoe to graduation. Kinlaw noted that "Josh Bledsoe's graduation is definitely our biggest loss from last year. He was a dedicated player and a solid fourth seed."

The team should continue their dominance in the conference and will likely finish the regular season undefeated, just like last year's squad. They hope to one up last year's state rank of number two with a state championship. They feel that they have a great shot at the title. Kinlaw said, "The team will again be shooting for the state championship, and this could be our best chance yet." The 1996 Grimsley Whirlie tennis team looks to be remembered for years to come by recording another championship for Grimsley.

Athletes with HIV prove that no one is 'bullet-proof'

By Simon Newman
Staff Writer

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is quickly becoming a more widespread infection in the world of sports. Four of sports' most prominent figures have now been diagnosed with the virus: basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson, tennis great Arthur Ashe, diver Greg Louganis, and most recently, heavyweight boxer Tommy Morrison.

These four have already confronted their biggest obstacle: facing the press and admitting that they had the virus that eventually would lead to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). All four realize the challenges that face them in the future and are willing to undergo them.

Still, neither Johnson nor Morrison are willing to readily give in to the disease. Johnson has already returned to the NBA and continues to astound us with his dazzling passes and shots. His numbers are just as high as they were before he was infected with HIV, and he shows no sign of letting up anytime soon. His comeback makes people won-

der how he is able to keep so healthy this deep in the HIV process. He even now hopes to join the 1996 United States Olympic Team in order to inform the whole world about the virus. People now have learned not to fear him when playing basketball with him, contrary to what people felt when he was first diagnosed. Their fear showed how misinformed people were regarding how HIV/AIDS is transmitted.

Some people thought that the diseases could be transferred just by physical contact. Now that more and more sports figures are being diagnosed with HIV, awareness is rapidly increasing. Magic Johnson has started a program that informs children of the truths behind HIV and AIDS. Now that Morrison has been diagnosed with HIV, he plans to join in Johnson's effort to alert people to the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). Some people feel that people should try to spread awareness even if they aren't infected. Jon Harmon, a senior, illuminates this with "The best way that sports stars can speak out against HIV/AIDS is to do it when they don't have it to set a good example."

Matt Kohut, a senior, also feels that athletes are not doing enough to spread the message. "If sports stars were really concerned about spreading the message, they would donate a portion of their hefty salaries to their championed cause. They aren't serious (in their campaign against HIV/AIDS), they just want the media attention." Other notable sports figures who have been infected with the disease and then tried to spread awareness are diver Greg Louganis, figure skater Toler Cranston, and particularly tennis pro Arthur Ashe. Ashe's attempts to inform people of the virus were briskly ended in 1994 with his death.

Although the media usually pictured the stars as being careful, recklessness led to some of them contracting the virus. Unprotected sex was the true origin of Johnson, Morrison, and Louganis's acquisition of the disease. Ashe got HIV through a blood transfusion. Johnson says he only had unprotected sex with one person other than his wife, but it proved to be devastating. Although Morrison has always been seen as reckless and promiscuous, the news still came as a shock to many people. He even ad-

mitted that obtaining the disease was his fault. Careless, unprotected sex is spreading fatal diseases to the once "untouchable" sports stars. It shows that, no matter who you are, you are still prone to one of the worst diseases known to man.

The attempts by Ashe and Johnson to increase awareness have been effective, but the athletes feel that it is still not enough. Johnson and Morrison both want to erase people's feeling of "it can't happen to me." Morrison painted a clear picture of this when he recently said, "I thought that I was bulletproof, but I'm not." Dr. Tim Lane, chief of the Internal Medicine Program at Moses Cone Hospital, sums up the spread of HIV in the sports world. "Sports stars have always had 'easy access' to sex and still do. How many other sports stars who have 'enjoyed' this easy access are also HIV-infected is unknown but it is likely that Magic and Morrison are only the 'tip of the iceberg' athletes." If anyone doubts that they can get the virus, just look at Magic Johnson, Tommy Morrison, and the many other infected athletes in the world of sports.