

Uqdah is No Couch Potato When it Comes to Baseball

"When you love the game like I do and spring rolls around, the blood boils."

By JEROME RICHARD
Chronicle Sports Writer

Abdul Uqdah was so eager to talk about baseball that he chatted excitedly as he cradled the phone between his ear and shoulder while giving his three-year-old son a bath.

Uqdah isn't a couch potato (baseball fan that munches peanuts and slurps beer while watching America's pastime from the comfort of his Lazy Boy. No, Uqdah pulls himself out of the recliner every Saturday and Sunday and heads to the ballpark, not to watch a baseball game, but to play. At age 41 that is no small feat.

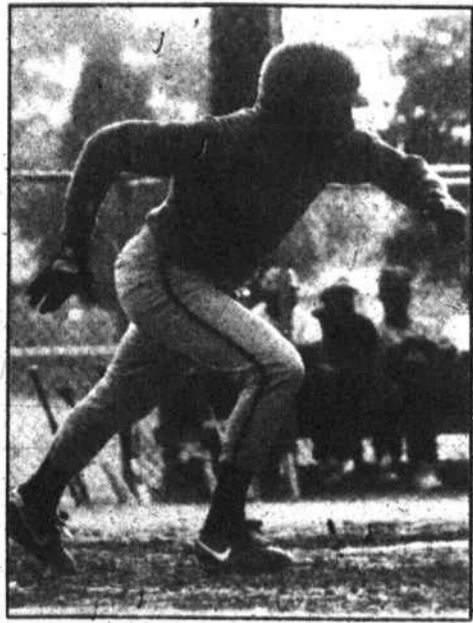
"Why do I play? That's a good question," Uqdah said with a chuckle and in a tone that you could almost picture his aching body screaming the question to his heart like a scene out of a cartoon. "I think I'm one of the oldest players in the league and the aches and pains are there, but I've never had

an injury that incapacitated me until I injured my foot this year.

"You would think that someone who has been playing baseball since the age of 10 would have had enough by now. But when you love the game like I do and spring rolls around, the blood boils. I just love baseball."

Injuries, aches and pains, oppressive heat and competitors half his age do not discourage the Winston-Salem resident from enjoying the game he began playing as a day-dreaming fifth-grader at Kimberly Elementary School. Years of Little League and college and semi-pro baseball have given way to pitching and playing first base for Winner's Circle of the National Adult Baseball Association. As a testament to his talent and love of the game, Uqdah was selected to play for the Triad Travelers, a traveling all-star team that will represent the Triad in the NABA national tournament in Phoenix next month.

"The NABA is Little League for adults," said Triad Traveler general manager and coach David Jones, noting the organization operates in over 200 cities nationwide offering over 20,000 players an outlet to pursue the game they love. There are 22 teams playing in men's



Abdul Uqdah heads for first base.

and women's leagues in the Triad with teams in Winston-Salem, Thomasville, Lexington, Burlington, Greensboro, Kernersville, and High Point to name a few.

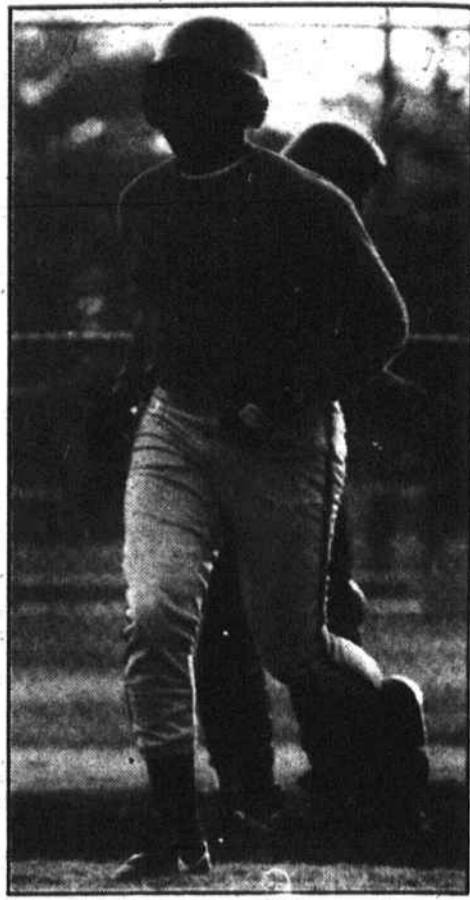
"It's traditional, nine-inning baseball for amateurs and people that love the game," Jones said. "It is designed for players from 18-65. We have former minor league players, people that played baseball in college and high school, and people that just love the game. We have people that work second and third shifts that play in the league and we have a cardiologist, lawyer, truck driver, nurse and unemployed people playing."

And government workers like Uqdah, who works for the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department in Greensboro. He plans on going to Phoenix with the Triad Travelers to continue playing the game that is "part of my soul, and that I can't seem to get rid of." Playing keeps alive memories of

yesteryear for Uqdah.

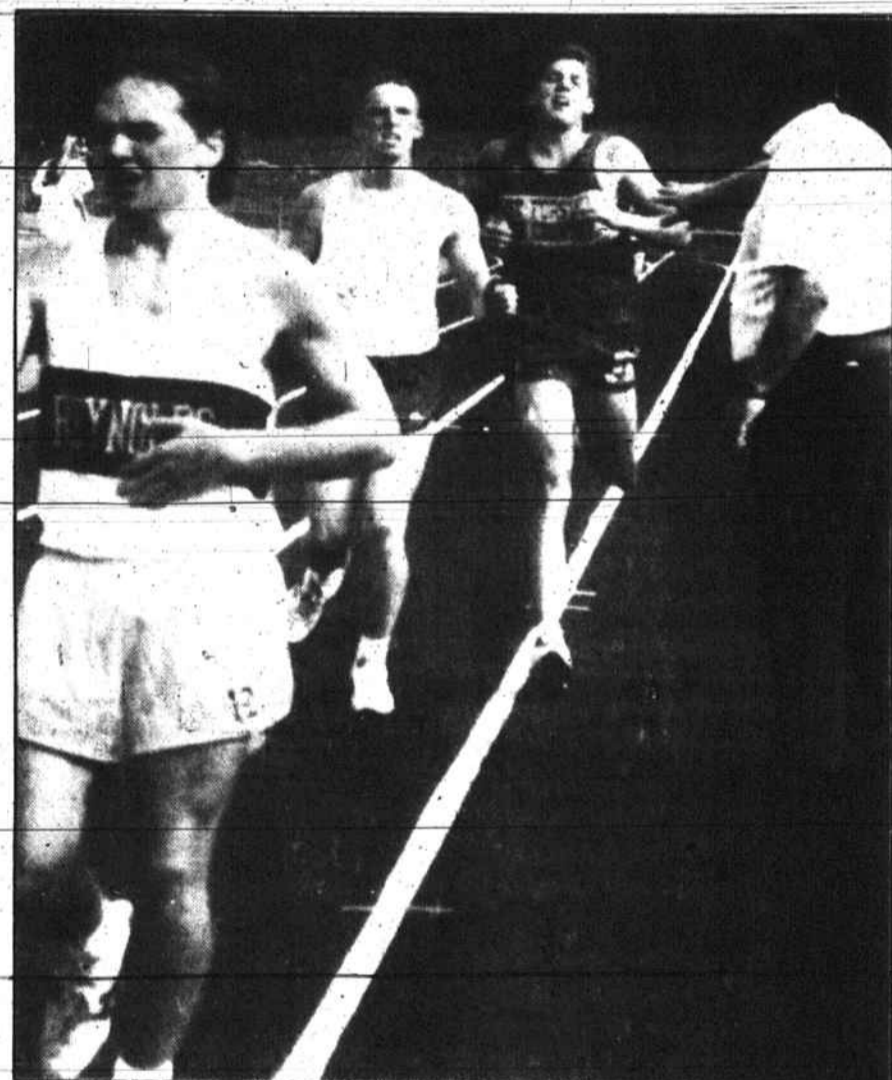
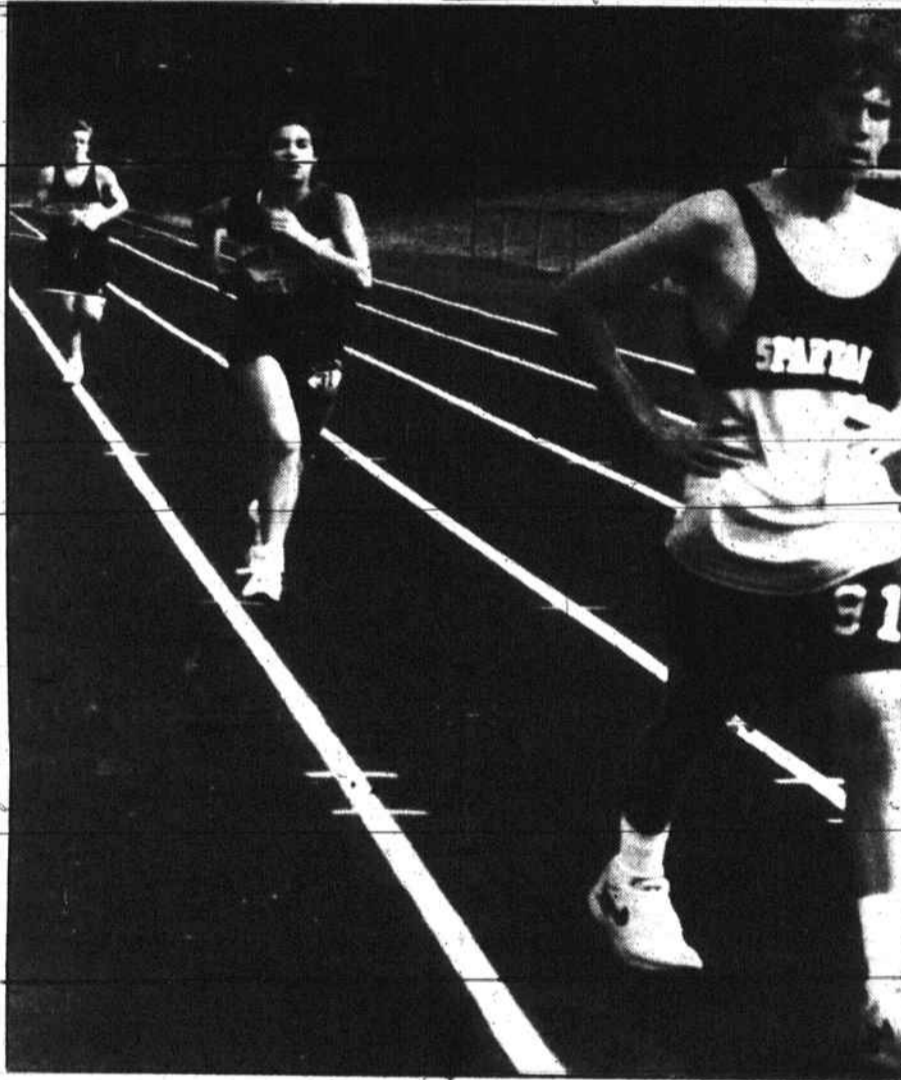
"I remember my mom jumping around the living room saying 'That is my boy' after I would come home from a game and tell her what I did. And she would talk about the Dodgers and players like Maury Wills, John Roseboro, and Sandy Koufax," Uqdah said. "I used to daydream about coming to bat in the bottom of the ninth with a runner on base and the game tied and getting the winning hit. I couldn't eat, drink and sleep enough baseball. I still can't."

The Triad Travelers men's and women's teams are in the midst of raising funds to go to the national tournament in Phoenix where they will play on the Cactus League fields of Major League Baseball's Angels, Brewers, Giants, Cubs and Padres. Anyone wishing to make a financial contribution or is interested in learning more about the NABA can call David Jones at 275-5968.



Abdul Uqdah

Finish Line, Sweet, Finish Line



The finish line was a welcome sight for cross country runners from Mount Tabor, Reynolds, West Forsyth and Mount Airy High Schools Sept. 14 during a quad-meet at West Forsyth. West was not an obliging host as it swept both the boys' and girls' meets, winning the boys' meet 32-47 over runner-up Mount Tabor. Mount Airy finished third with 64 points and Reynolds was fourth with 92. The Lady Titans edged Mount Tabor 27-30 in the girls' meet with Reynolds taking third with 85 points. Mount Airy didn't run in the girls' meet. Greg Vassar of West Forsyth won the boys' meet in a time of 17:51 while Mount Tabor's Lauren Escott won the girls' race in 20:53.

Photos by Dee-Perrett



Mustangs win third from page 17

Mustangs had secured their third victory in a row to level their record at 3-3 for the year.

"I just kept thinking to myself that I had to get the ball over the net," Long replied when asked how she dealt with the pressure of serving, especially in the midst of a long streak with victory in the cross hairs. "I felt a little pressure, but I just told myself to get the ball over the net and into play."

"I told her she was going to serve into the net," Parkland coach Dana Grieser said with a grin. "I was using reverse psychology so she could prove me wrong."

Parkland did little wrong against the Eagles to pull even in the win column after starting the season 0-3. They jumped out to a 6-0 lead in the first game behind the serving of Jennifer Fisher and Melissa Spencer, who served three points each. East roared back behind Amy Loflin's four points off a booming, frozen-rope serve and two points



Photo by Melissa Vaquera
The players were intense at East Forsyth Sept. 15.

before Kim Moser gave the Eagles a 9-8 lead, scoring four points with a long, sinking serve.

The score see-sawed until Jenny Lewter's bullet serve knotted the game at 11-11 when East couldn't return the screamer. Lewter reeled off three more scoring serves to give the Mustangs a 14-11 advantage before serving the game-winner into the net. Moser tied the game at 14-14 before her fourth serve found the net, setting the stage for Long. The junior gave Parkland a 15-14 lead with a line-drive serve that wasn't returned and glad wrapped the victory with her second serve that was banded about several times by East before settling into the net where it couldn't be dug out.

"Scoring early in the first game gave my girls some confidence," Grieser said. "The other team had some serves into the net which gave us the serve back quickly and we scored. That is always a killer for the other team."

The second game ebbed and flowed like a gently flowing river with neither team able to take command until Long began serving. Her seven consecutive serves for points was the only stability in the game and the momentum they generated was one of the keys to winning, according to Grieser.

"Volleyball is a momentum sport and when you get it going it is hard to stop," he said. "What it does is hurt the other team emotionally. We served very well, but I was a little disappointed in our return of serve. We did a lot of one hits instead of setting the ball. We were having some problems, so I told the girls to just get it deep. I don't like one hits, but sometimes you have to do whatever it takes to win."

Mt. Tabor Avenges Loss from page 17

was too high, but when the referee measured it he found it was only 1/8" off. I think the girls had it in their heads that the net was too high and that had a psychological effect on them."

All was not bleak for the Spartans. Elizabeth Rieker caught Jett's attention with her hustle and ability to dig for passes and Lauren Cappelluti turned heads with her passing.

"Lauren's passes were right on the money," Jett said. "I was impressed with both girl's play in the second game."

Cappelluti's performance earned her a starting assignment against Carver. She made the most of it, serving points 11 through 15 to win the match after beginning her serve with the Spartans trailing 12-10 in game two of the best-of-three series.

"Lauren really came through for us," Jett said. "She showed me she wants to start and play with her last two performances. She capitalized on her opportunity to play."

Meredith Macy keyed the Spartans' first-game victory using an unorthodox, but effective, serving technique.

"We had trouble getting the ball over the net on our serves against North Davidson so I told the girls when we played Carver to get the ball over the net anyway they could: whether it be underhanded or overhanded," Jett explained, noting that Macy served points 14 and 15 in addition to three through eight.

"Meredith is normally an overhead server, but she served underhanded against Carver and realized it was important to keep the ball in play. In varsity volleyball, power is needed; but in junior varsity it is more important to keep the ball in play. During a time out Meredith was in awe that she could serve points with an underhand serve."

Macy served her share of points, but she wasn't a one-person wrecking crew.

"We played the same six girls in both games and they hustled, they called their shots and they communicated very well," Jett said. "The scoring was spread out among the girls. We were very balanced in that respect."

Untying the Tie: Six Teams Tie for First at Governor's Open

Bring out the cards. Not the poker playing variety, but the golf score variety.

That was the only way to determine the winners of the East Area Council's Governor's Open last Saturday at Winston Lake Golf Course as three teams tied for the title in the First Division and three deadlocked in the Second Division. The ties were broken by the lowest score on the handicap hole and after all was said and done the team of Curtis Hatton, Tommy Gavin, Robert Bethea, and Harry Davis won the First Division with the team of Ken Kimble, Nat Irvin, Pat Cosadine and Mike Shannon winning the Second Division.

Hatton's team shot a 58 in the 18-hole Captain's Choice event to finish tied with the team of Calvin Strange, Jay Farrabee, Chris Ingram, and Floyd Green and the team of Wayne Arant, Mark Lewis,

Mike Roland, and Phillip Blevins. In the Second Division, Kimble's team shot a 64 to wind up tied with the squad of Charles Stevens, Jim Beaty, Garland Wallace, and David Morris and the team of Amos Lewis, James Dixon, Leonard Jackson, and Herman Springs.

"The tournament was a success," Tournament Co-Chairman Mike Pitt said. "We had 22 teams, 88 players and a lot of sponsors. The money goes to the Business Department at Winston-Salem State University. The final numbers aren't in, but we hope from the golf portion to raise over \$5,000 and hope to add \$5,000 from the sale of raffle tickets for a fur coat valued at \$3,500. It was donated by Toumy Papastavrou of Anastasia Furs. The winning ticket will be drawn at half-time of the Winston-Salem homecoming game Oct. 15."



First Division winners at the Governor's Open Golf Tournament were (L to R): Harry Davis, Curtis Hatton, Robert Bethea and Tommy Gavin.