

SPORTS WEEK

B SECTION

JUNE 3, 1999

Ruffin teams with Mackovic, Kind to win The Crosby

By SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Just playing in The Crosby Celebrity Golf Tournament was a prize in itself for Ben Ruffin.

Ruffin, a former vice president of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and chairman of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, said he went out to have fun and to enjoy playing a sport that he had picked up only 20 months ago.

But after charging to the head of the field after the first day of competition last Friday, Ruffin said his competitive spirit came out. That helped carry Ruffin and actor Richard Kind to the championship of the tournament last

Sunday at Bermuda Run.

The Ruffin-Kind team finished with a score of 34 under par to hold on for the tournament championship. They won \$120,000, which will be donated to the charities of their choice.

"We had a great time playing together," Ruffin said. "Going into the tournament, I just thought it would be a fun time to go out and play three days of golf."

Ruffin was paired with John Mackovic in the opening round. Mackovic provided the key shots as the team roared to the lead after the first day of the tournament. The team ended the day with a score of 12-under-par 60. However, Mackovic, the former player and head football coach at Wake

Forest, had another obligation and left after the opening round. He was replaced by Kind, a veteran actor who stars in the comedy "Spin City" on ABC.

"My new partner came in on a red-eye flight from Los Angeles on Saturday morning and came straight from the airport to the golf course," Ruffin said. "I didn't know what to expect."

Kind's relaxed style and personable nature quickly put Ruffin at ease.

"He was great," Ruffin said. "We played some really good golf. We picked up 13 holes on Saturday and then nine on Sunday. Richard is a really nice guy. Our chemistry was really good. We were just out there playing and having fun."

Ruffin, who carries a 20 handicap, led the way on Saturday. He came through with several key shots to help the team to its 13-under score. But on Sunday it was Kind who stepped up with the big shots. None was bigger than his putt on the final hole that gave the team its victory.

"Richard played superb," Ruffin said. "We needed a stroke going into the final hole and Richard made a great putt to get it."

Kind's putt from 160 feet gave the team the victory and made Ruffin the first African American to stand in the winner's circle at the Crosby since it came to the Triad area in 1985.

"It was a very humbling experi-

ence for me," Ruffin said. "It really didn't hit me until I saw the kids (Crosby Scholars) out there on the 18th green. To see the number of kids who have been helped by this tournament is something. For Katherine Crosby and Sara Lee to host this tournament to benefit so many people around here is such a wonderful thing."

Ruffin and Kind will choose which charities they would like the proceeds from their winnings to benefit.

"I guess that's the ironic thing," Ruffin said. "You go out and have fun playing and then you get a chance to do something that you've wanted to do all your life and that is to be able to help someone."



Photo by Bruce Chapman
Ben Ruffin



From The Press Box

Sam Davis

Wake's bats awaken in time to boost Deacons to Super Regional

Fortunes can change quickly in any sport, but when it comes to baseball it seems that timing and hitting can be everything.

Such was the situation for Wake Forest, which was one of the nation's hottest hitting collegiate baseball teams going into last week's NCAA regional tournament.

The Deacons came into the tournament fresh off of its second consecutive ACC baseball championship and had one of the nation's hottest hitters in Jon Palmieri. But after watching their bats grow cold, the Deacons saw all of that come to a screeching halt after two NCAA tournament games. The host Deacons found themselves on the verge of being eliminated by a team they had beaten to a pulp less than 48 hours previously.

Richmond silenced Wake Forest's bats for one game and that was enough to cause some doubt in the Deacons' camp. However, Wake broke out in time to advance to the NCAA Super Regional Baseball Tournament at powerhouse Miami this weekend. Miami is the top seed in the tournament and brings a 44-13 record into the game. Wake, which advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 21 years last season, comes in at 47-14.

The Deacons will travel to Florida for the best-of-three-game series, which will be played on Friday, Saturday and Sunday (if necessary). The winner of the series will advance to the College World Series.

The Deacons had made short work of Siena in the opening round last Friday, taking a 22-4 victory. Wake followed that up with a 12-1 win over Richmond on Saturday. The Deacons looked poised to put the championship away on Sunday morning

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Photo by Bruce Chapman
Wake Forest, led by Danny Borrell, pounded opposing pitching to win last weekend's NCAA regional at Ernie Shore Field.

Keith Matkins headed to A&T?

By SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Bill Hayes, North Carolina A&T football coach, has landed one of his biggest coups ever.

According to sources close to the program, Hayes has signed Keith Matkins to an athletic grant to attend A&T. Matkins was recently released from his athletic grant at the University of South Carolina after Lou Holtz took over the Gamecocks' program.

Matkins was one of the nation's most highly-touted players during his senior season at West Charlotte High. He was a two-time All-State selection and was named to the Parade All-America Team. Several scouting services rated him the top high school quarterback in the nation during his senior season. After a high-publicized recruiting tour, Matkins signed with South Carolina and Coach Brad Scott.

However, Matkins never seemed to fit into the Gamecocks' offensive scheme. A classic drop-back passer, the 6-5, 200-pound Matkins, didn't possess the skills to fit into the Gamecocks' offensive scheme. It became even more obvious that his playing time would be limited under Holtz, the former Notre Dame coach, who prefers an option-oriented attack. Matkins had dropped to No. 3 on the Gamecocks' depth chart going into the 1999 season.

After concluding spring drills, Matkins informed the athletic department at South Carolina that he wanted to be released from his scholarship and was granted his request.

There were a number of suitors for Matkins' services. However, he and his parents were impressed with the academic environment and support system at A&T. Hayes and the Aggies have been very successful with transfers in their football program.

Another factor, according to a source, who requested anonymity, was the number of Aggies who have either been drafted into the NFL or signed free agent contracts in recent seasons. A&T led all schools in North Carolina in the number of players selected in the NFL draft two years ago and has placed multiple players in the professional football ranks in the past two seasons.

See Matkins on B2

Stedman Graham brings his message of hope to local youth

By THERESA DAVIS
FOR THE CHRONICLE

Opportunities like playing in the Crosby Celebrity Golf Tournament give Stedman Graham a chance to spread his message.

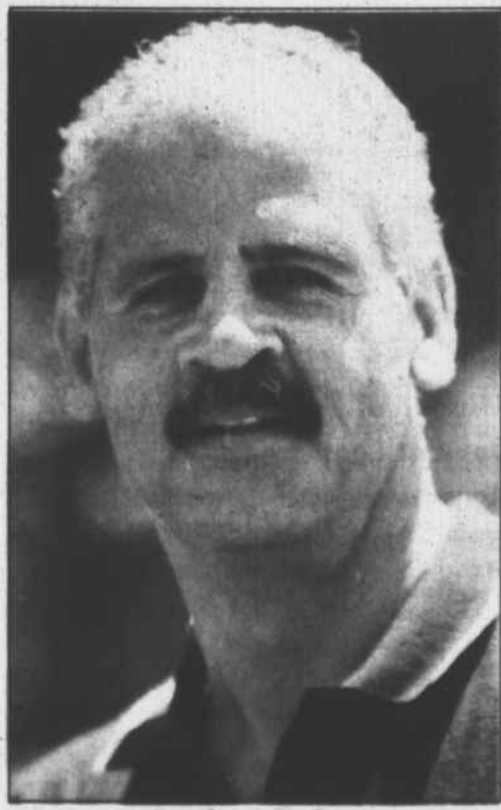
Graham, a former professional European Basketball player and current fiancé of Oprah Winfrey, takes advantage of public appearances to talk with at-risk youth. Graham brought his message to LIFT Academy in Winston-Salem last Thursday morn-

ing before the start of The Crosby.

Graham said that if he hadn't been good at sports he probably would have been a statistic.

"Growing up, I had a lot of rage in me," he said. "I came from a family that did the best it could, but I just didn't have the things it took for me to be a top student. I never even thought about being a doctor, lawyer or any type of professional. I didn't think a professional position was

See Stedman on B2



Stedman Graham

Erving pleased with NASCAR team

By SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Much attention has been focused on the lack of African Americans and other minorities in NASCAR in recent months. The issue was raised in a documentary on HBO's "Real Sports" and has seemed, to stay in the headlines ever since.

There are currently few African American owners or drivers in the sport. Perhaps the most well-known team is owned by Julius Erving and Joe Washington. Both were in the Triad last weekend when The Crosby Celebrity Golf Tournament was played at Bermuda Run.

Erving, the former NBA All-Star, said he and his partner



Julius Erving

aren't interested as much in breaking barriers in the sport as they are in putting the best possible car on the racetrack.

"When Joe came to me with

the idea of putting together a racing team, we both realized that it was a great opportunity to use many of the same competitive energies that helped us to achieve in athletics," Erving said. "There was a conspicuous void and we saw a great opportunity for us. I think for both of us it gave us a chance to rekindle some of the things that had been on the back burner."

Before he and Washington invested in the business the duo researched the stock car racing business thoroughly. He said the team didn't see any impediment in gaining access to the sport.

"It's not like we crashed the party," Erving said, referring to comments by some in and out-

See NASCAR on B2