



Photo by Anthony Hill
(Top) Sprinters take off during meet. (Bottom) Michael Rucker hands baton to Girrad Miller.

Runners prepare for Blount meet

Tri-City hosts tune-up for weekend event

BY ANTHONY HILL
THE CHRONICLE

There was no Hakeem Mohammed or Jason Jewers at last weekend's developmental meet, hosted by Tri-City Relays at Mt. Taboř High School. But there were a number of other runners who wanted to show what they had and tune up for this weekend's meet in Durham.

"That's exactly what we wanted to accomplish with this meet," said Tri-City coach Lemuel Johnson. "Some of our runners aren't running in this today (Saturday) because this meet is kind of like a tune-up for next weekend. We have the Blount Invitational in Durham. Then, in a couple of weeks, we'll go up to Detroit for the national competition."

Tri-City head coach Buddy Hayes added: "The meet in Durham is probably going to be on the same scale as nationals. ... That's the only meet that brings two organizations together. We'll really be able to tell how well we're doing after this meet in Durham."

Both of the track clubs, representing Winston-Salem (Tri-City and Elite) performed well during the meet. No final times or finishes were made available after the meet. Some of the notable performers were Tri-City runners Girrad Miller, Michael Rucker, Jaki Gaaney, Shantia Brown, Brittany Wardlow, Travis McGriff Jr., Chris Allen, Maurice Love, Abraham Canty, Jashawn Gary, Dominic Williams and Eugene Galloway. The Elite track club also had various notable sprinters, including the club head coach Antwan Hughes. Hughes showed off the speed that got him a scholarship on the N.C. A&T track team a few years ago when he put his spikes on for the "coaches relay." Hughes made up 15 to 20 meters after he and his partner fumbled the baton exchange. That didn't seem to deter him much. He simply turned on the jets and came to within a couple of inches of winning the race.

"I feel so fluent out here today," Hughes said. "No one will be able to see us when we do this at the Blount meet. At the Blount meet, this event will have two sprinters and two coaches. That will make us almost impossible to beat if I feel like this. I think we're going to do well at the (meet) next weekend."



Hayes is also confident. He seems to be satisfied with the team's progress, and he said that this meet really helped his squad out in many facets.

"We're about where we thought we would be around this time," Hayes said. "We've suffered a few injuries with our 13- and 14-year-old girls. The boys are doing outstanding as usual. I think we're sticking with our plans pretty well."

"This meet is just a tune-up. If we wouldn't have run this meet, it would've been about three or four weeks before some of these kids could've competed. We used this meet to lower some of our times and get some reputations in before the national competition."

Both clubs will compete at the Blount Invitational meet in Durham this weekend.

'An unbreakable bond'

The story of two ballers who found friendship

BY ANTHONY HILL
THE CHRONICLE

Stories are told all the time about friendships that began on the playing fields, courts and tracks of recreational and amateur sports. But there are very few that are as moving as the bond that two Winston-Salem men developed over a span of more than 20 years.

"I remember it like it was yesterday," said Flagg Stanfield. "Mr. Gunter would pull up his old pickup truck, and Terry and I would jump in the back. That's my earliest remembrance of playing hoops with Terry. To be honest, I don't even know where Terry's dad took us that day. But I do remember that day."

Terry Gunter and Stanfield weren't simply two boys trying to have fun. They were two friends of opposite colors who had no idea that they'd still be close friends after all these years. After all, they met on a basketball court. Usually, when the game or season is over, so is the closeness. Not in their case.

"Basketball made it possible for Terry and I to enter any gym in the city and be received with open arms," Stanfield said. "Basketball has allowed Terry and I, and many others, to cross racial lines, and I thank God for that."

The two men got closer and closer each year. They've either played on the same team or around each other for more than 20 years. Both players also played for Virgil Simpson at Anderson High School and then got even closer after they joined the Parkland Senior High team, under Tom Muse.

"Terry was two years younger, so we didn't play school ball together, although we played a lot of pick-up games with and against one another," Stanfield said.

Gunter and Stanfield finally got an opportunity to play on the same squad the summer after Stanfield's final year of high school. Both players joined a



Photo Courtesy of Flagg Stanfield
Flagg Stanfield (left) and Terry Gunter pose together.

team in the Hansel Hentz summer league held at Carver High School. The two played together for two years before separating again when Terry left for college.

"After college, Terry and I rejoined each other on a team at the Central Y," Stanfield said.

In the years that followed, the two played on various other teams, including league teams at Hanes Hosiery, Winston Lake YMCA, West Forsyth YMCA and the Sims Center. The two are currently tearing up the nets and floors at 14th Street Recreation Center. Both men play for the Syndicates.

"I guess that you could say that we're a package deal," Stanfield said. "Through the years we've won our share of games and a couple of championships along the way."

The two ballers also have played in various Hoop-It-Up competitions along the East Coast. Daryl Schnoes, Joe Jon Bryant, Bobby Britt and Andy Snow also joined them, in different combinations, for the 3-on-3 events through the years.

"In 1996, we won in Philadelphia and qualified to go

to the regionals in D.C. in '97," Gunter said. "Our win in Winston-Salem sent us to the World Finals in San Antonio too. We were back-to-back champs in Charlotte in 2001 and 2002. Those wins also qualified us for the World Finals in Orlando."

The squad's best finish is kind of ironic because it came during a loss in 2001.

"You're right," Stanfield said. "Our best finish came in that semifinal game in which we lost to a team in Atlanta. I thought that we played great that game. Things just didn't work out for us in the end. We had great fun and met so many friends along the way."

Basketball played a very strong role in both men's lives. It was more than a sport to both of them. It was a guide, bridge and tool that helped the two find each other and stay friends for life.

"Basketball was God's tool in my life to make good friends like Terry Gunter," Stanfield said. "I always thank our God for making all things possible. I'd also like to thank the league directors such as Rob Little, Art Blevins, Walter Funderburke, Ben Piggott and Hansel Hentz."

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And stop being a crybaby. The funny thing about the initial lawsuit is that it included Virginia Tech as a plaintiff and Boston College as a defendant, along with Miami and the ACC. Virginia Tech removed itself from the suit last month when the ACC extended invitations to only the Hokies and Hurricanes. See, that proved that teams were only suing because they wanted to be a part of the ACC. Or some of them were simply upset to not get an invitation.

OK, now get a load of this: The lawsuit says that West Virginia, Rutgers, Pittsburgh and Connecticut have spent millions on football based on presumed loyalty from schools with which they had been aligned. They are seeking to recover what they say will be losses in ticket sales and broadcasting fees, and the cash value of diminished recruiting power.

So, in other words: They're upset they won't get that big paycheck after getting spanked by Miami every year. That's like Mike Tyson whining about not getting another shot at the championship belt. If he would've handled his business and made a positive name for himself, he wouldn't have to depend on prize fights to survive from year to year.

The schools, officials and teams of the Big East simply need to stop crying and let the ACC get on with its future. Heck, ACC Commissioner John Swofford is probably making plans on which team should become the conference's 12th member as I speak.



Swafford

Heck, that's what I'd be doing. There have been talks of Notre Dame, Arkansas and others names floating around the ACC's front office in Greensboro. I don't think either one of those teams is a good fit for the conference. If you're going to add a team, it should be one that fits the conference geographically. It should be a team such as South Carolina, University of Georgia or maybe East Carolina. We shouldn't look for teams like Boston College, Syracuse or Notre Dame. Or here's an idea: Why don't we just leave the conference the way that it is?

The art of being a fan is over

Do you remember when we all had one favorite professional team? Well, some of us still may have that favorite team. But so many of my friends and associates skate from team to team every other season. Most of them have gone from the San Francisco 49ers, the Dallas Cowboys, and the St. Louis Rams to the Atlanta Falcons. And in basketball they've gone from the Chicago Bulls and New York Knicks to the Dallas Mavericks and Los Angeles Lakers.

Or what about baseball? We all know that in modern baseball,

free agency is king; loyalty is old-fashioned. Nowadays, teams are quick to sign the most players they can afford. If it wasn't for the cap, most teams would probably look like the Yankees of the last four years - you know, a team with way too much talent to be legal.

Even the best and best-loved players are hard-pressed to start and finish careers in a single city. In truth, the concept of team has always been a fleeting notion in baseball. Its signature moments have come from mythical struggles pitting not the Red Sox against the Yankees, or the Dodgers against the Giants, but in one man competing against another. Consider Game 1 of the '88 World Series, Kirk Gibson homering off Oakland's Dennis Eckersley. Or consider lesser talents on the stage: Atlanta's Sid Bream stumbling home past Minnesota's Mike LaValliere's outstretched arms in the '91 National League Championship Series (NLCS).

To further illustrate my point, consider that not one of these players spent his career with just one franchise. Sure, fans will always root for their hometown teams. But they remember, in fact savor, the plays made or - in the

case of former Tennessee Titan Kevin Dyson's near score at Super Bowl XXXIV - not quite made by individual ballplayers.

Yesterday, players made new homes with new teams in the NBA. The same will happen when the football season starts again. This is an ongoing cycle that will probably never end. This is really bad for the fans. Those are the only people the moves really hurt, besides the ballers' families in some cases. But what about the blue collar guys and hard-working women who wait half of the year to view their favorite team again, only to find out most of the players they love are gone?

As I said, nowadays members of the public are generally just fans of athletes and not teams. No one wants to buy the official shoes of the Los Angeles Lakers, but would purchase the latest release of sneakers from Allen Iverson. That's what sports have become: a bunch of individuals making plays, money and the news. Think about it.

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Golfer

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LB - Albert Gamble - MSU
DB - Vontrae Long - Howard
DB - Curtis Deloatch - NCAT
DB - Tor-EI Robinson - BCC
DB - Deon Rheubottom - DSU
P - Jon Voroshilin - MSU

state meet. Her time has already dropped from a 2.35 to a 2.30 in the 800-meter dash. She also competed in the Jim Law Invitational, where she finished fourth in the 400-meter race and first in the 800-meter race, outrunning her field by more than 50

meters. On June 28-29, she finished second in the 800-meter race and third in the 400-meter race. "I think her times will continue to drop, and she'll continue to win races," concluded Hughes. "Akilah and her sister's potential is limitless."

MEAC

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RB - Brad Lee - BCC
KR - Curtis Deloatch - NCAT
PK - Jon Voroshilin - MSU

Sisters

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and her chances the rest of the season."

Akilah finished first in the 800-meter race and third in the 400-meter race at AAU

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