

# Lack Of Black Coaches Is "An Alarming Situation"



STEVE AND WALTER

...Camp Green Residents

## Annual "August Jam" Set

### For Camp Green Residents

By Teresa Simmons  
Post Staff Writer  
August 12 marks the "August Jam" for residents at Camp Green. A time when residents invite one guest for a three-hour picnic with music and conversing.

You may usually hear adverse information about prison systems...break-outs, complaints. But Camp Green, a minimum security prison in Charlotte, which houses 192 residents (with 62 on work release) possesses a satisfied atmosphere (at least within the realms of their situations).

Walter, 25, who has been imprisoned at least since '78 with one year and eight months at Camp Green, points out that the minimum security is a "temptation." When you're outside of the gate playing basketball it's easy to want to run into the woods. But the penalty is to regress on the level scale and probably a return to a maximum security prison.

"We have better and more activities here at Camp Green," Walter continued. Adult Basic Education Classes; Money and family management classes; Drug Abuse and Alcohol rehabilitation related classes; Community Readiness Training and more classes are offered.

"Our goals and objectives," according to Superintendent Robert Reese, "are to improve, upgrade and expand the educational levels of our residents and to develop good work habits."

Residents have to earn the privilege to be placed on work release. The philosophy of the system is that if a resident has a job when released, chances for him or her committing a crime on the outside is decreased.

**PRISON RECREATION**  
The question as to whether prisoners should be allowed certain privileges has been topic for discussion in many circles. "If they are in prison they don't need any recreation," may be the reaction by one. "But prisoners are human beings and incarceration is enough punishment for any soul," may be the response of another.

The August Jam, the brainstorm of the Unit Resource Advisory Committee, has been an annual occurrence at Camp Green for the past five years. Committee members, which now number about 12, provide refreshments and music for inmates and one guest. Last year inmates were allowed to invite three guests but inflation knocked the other two away this year.

About three times a year inmates meet with the committee and submit their lists of wants, needs, desires and complaints. According to one spokesperson of the committee, Gaynelle Roberts, "We can't always meet the demands of the residents because they are against policy." The committee also provides residents with their choice of speakers. Recently professional basketball star Cedric Maxwell spoke at the Camp. Once a month someone is chosen to speak, a lawyer for instance, or someone from Parks and Recreation.

"At the first of the year we ask the men who they would like to see. We try to have them interact with the community," Ms.

Roberts continued. The August Jam is just another facet of preparing residents and allowing them the freedom they will assume once they enter the outside world.

"It's a good opportunity for the guys," Walter explained. "It's a good opportunity to be with your family or girl friend and it's not, like a regular visit." Walter attended last year's August Jam.

There is a big difference comparing maximum prison systems to Camp Green. "In other places you may learn how to be a better thief," Walter explained. "But once you leave Camp Green there is no reason not to go home without some knowledge."

Steve, 27, has been a resident at Camp Green since December 1. He is looking forward to the August Jam. "It's something I've never been to. It will be new to me and I'll probably relieve more tension. It's a double visit... more like a get-together."

Comparing another unit Steve revealed that Camp Green has more recreation. Everything in Salisbury was fenced in," he remembered. "But here the basketball court is on the outside. You have weights to lift, horse shoes and other games." Steve has even joined the Jaycees and helps with various community projects.

Both Steve and Walter are presently looking for jobs. "I give a place one month to contact me. If I haven't heard from them by then I apply some place else," Steve asserted.

Walter obtained his GED high school diploma while at Camp Green. Steve plans to begin his courses shortly.

**REGULATION**

We have already established that to receive the privileges of recreation or home passes one has to earn them within the prison system. Camp Green residents are 18 months to two years to parole or expiration.

And remember Superintendent Reese's statement: "No one is automatically allowed work release," it has to be earned."

But even Reese had reservations at first about the August Jam. "We tried it and we have been fortunate. We have been without any problems at all."

It is not so bad to offer softball, basketball, horse shoes, table games, telephone privileges to men or women, especially if they will not abuse them.

**THE SYSTEM**  
There are six minimum custody units located in North Carolina with most emphasizing short term education. Work release is the basic objective and goal for most inmates. At Camp Green education is on the site. The population turns over quickly and usually there is not enough bed space.

At last check, according to Superintendent Reese, 17,500 men and women were imprisoned in North Carolina. Fifty-four percent of this number were black men and women.

Could it be the economy? "The population for blacks was up before the economy went bad," Superintendent Reese responded. "There are a number of things involved."

"The 'We don't have the same opportunities' attitude is a cop out," Reese stated. "Racism is involved and a high percentage of blacks' value systems are also causes."

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black head coaches in basketball in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg system, reports that he is aware of "certain feelings" of discontent among black assistant coaches in the area. "I don't know of any concrete information that could prove their complaints are justified," he stated. "It's the kind of thing you just can't put your hand on."

Thompson was hired at East Mecklenburg in 1975 by the principal, Leroy "Pop" Miller, and the athletic director, Vic Williams. He noted that coaches are usually chosen by agreement between the principal and athletic director at a school-with the athletic director generally making the recommendation. All 10 athletic directors at Charlotte-Mecklenburg high schools are white, Thompson said.

When informed that Dave Harris had indicated few blacks apply for head coaching positions, Thompson virtually echoed the response given by Rudy Abrams to the same information: "That's the same reason they've been giving for the last eight or nine years."

In reference to the difficulties Abrams is having in obtaining another coaching job, Thompson commented:

"He did more than a helluva job at West Charlotte. Based on the job he did there, I'd think he'd be a top candidate for any coaching job. Maybe his leaving West Charlotte and Garinger has something to do with his problems-I don't know."

Thompson estimates "at least 60 percent" of the high school basketball players in Charlotte are black, and he figures that a similar percentage of the players in other cities in the state are black.

As for the number of head black basketball coaches at North Carolina high schools-Thompson knows of fewer than "half a dozen."

"I feel like black children need more leaders and role models period," Thompson concluded. "We haven't had this over the years and as a result I think black kids actually respond better to whites in authority because they're used to them, rather than blacks, being in positions of authority."

Mike Pratt of Olympic High School, the only black coach of a girls basketball team in Charlotte-

Mecklenburg, agrees that there should be more black head coaches. "There definitely should be more in football," he replied. "I'm quite sure some blacks have applied for openings." Pratt has experienced "no problems at all" at Olympic, however. "I've gotten every position I applied for," he revealed.

An assistant coach at Eastway Junior High School, Bill Dulin, has not been as successful as Pratt in obtaining coaching positions. Dulin, who was an assistant to Rudy Abrams at West Charlotte, has worked as an assistant coach for six years in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and has applied unsuccessfully for head coach-

ing jobs at West Mecklenburg and Myers Park. "I don't know why they went outside the system to hire coaches at Myers Park and Independence," Dulin commented. "I don't know what they're basing their qualifications on when they choose a man from Wilmington-a man who had a losing record-over coach Abrams."

Dulin said that he is going to continue his efforts to find a head coaching position in Charlotte, even though he feels "frustrated sometimes."

"I don't know if there's

any one thing you can put your finger on," Dulin explained. "but it seems like when coach Abrams left that was the end of black football coaches in Charlotte."

Jeryl Todd, an assistant football coach and head track coach at Independence, stated that he is not aware of discrimination against black coaches. "I've heard complaints from other coaches, but I try to have an open mind," he answered.

Todd has not applied for head coaching vacancies and feels he is "not ready

yet" to be a head coach in football. But he does agree there is a problem for black coaches in the area.

"It's a hard question and I've given it some thought. I think there's a feeling that black coaches lack experience and management skills. I also think there may be a problem with community acceptance of head black coaches in football and basketball."

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