

Bulls Ride Hurd In Rebuilding Year

Guard Lights Up CIAA

By HERB WHITE
Post Sports Editor

Johnson C. Smith sophomore basketball player Walter Hurd, always a gym rat of sorts, has developed night habits to improve his game. While most students are asleep, Hurd will go to Brayboy Gym on campus in the wee hours to work on his moves.

"While everybody else is asleep, I'll go to the gym at one, two o'clock in the morning," he said.

Those mornings in the gym are paying off, as Hurd is the CIAA's top scoring machine, with a league-leading 27 points per game average. For the 3-14 Golden Bulls, who play Fayetteville State at home tonight, success is more likely when Hurd has a good game.

Comparisons with the Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan aren't uncommon and Hurd says people have even done double takes.

"People sometimes say 'That's Michael Jordan' in the mall, but in the back, some people will say, 'That's not him because he's not tall enough,'" said the 6-3 guard. Jordan is 6-6.

There are other similarities, at least on the court. Hurd is the main cog in a wheel consisting of young players. For Smith to win, or even stay in the game, Hurd has to score. And score. And score. But he likes that role.

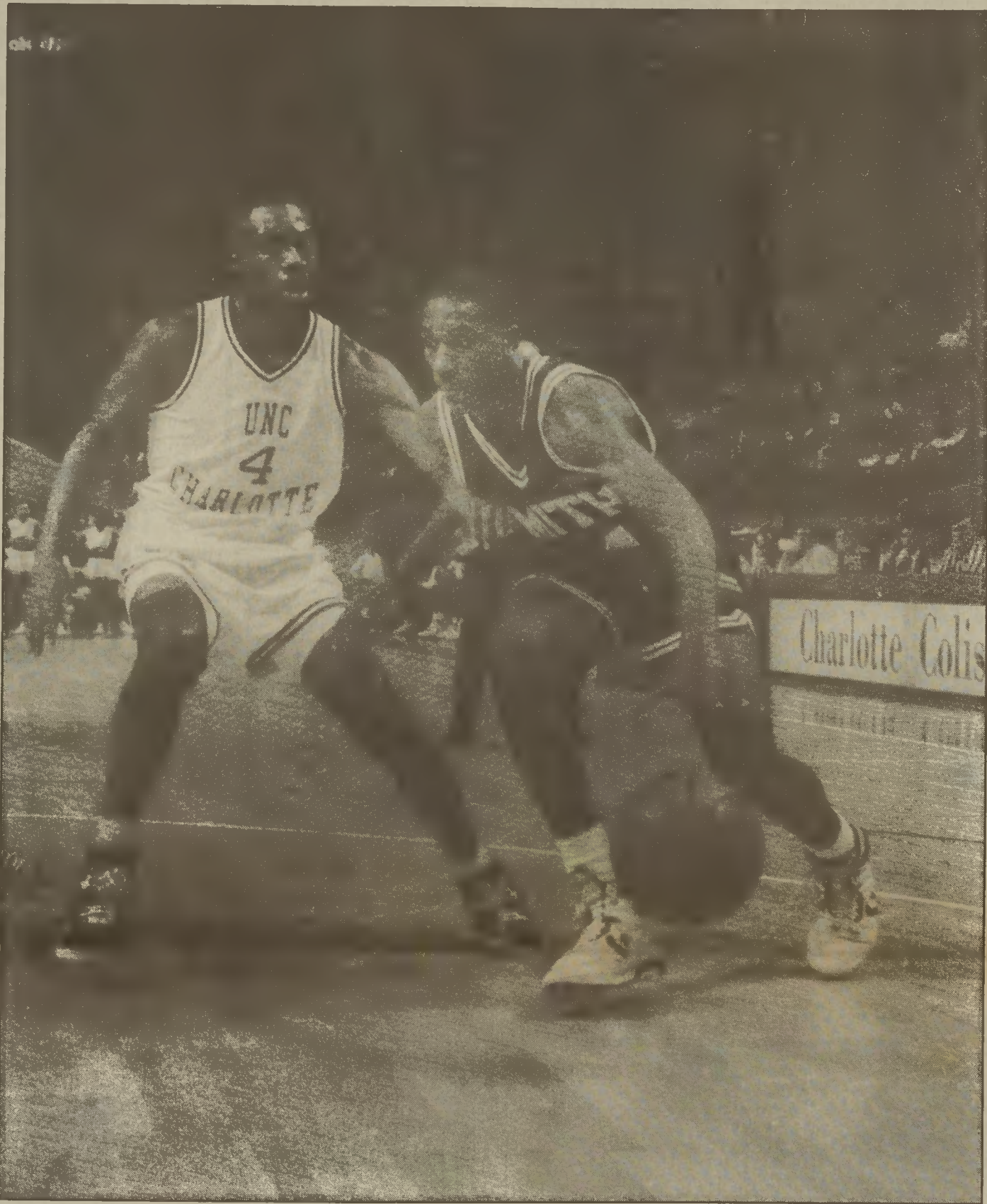
"My whole attitude is I can handle anything within reason," he said. "The scoring load I can handle. If we had a little more help on offense, we would be better off."

The Bulls have struggled this season, but have developed a modest string of two wins in their last three games, all on the road. Still, the pain of losing hurts, Hurd said. He has even given some thought to transferring, but won't because of his relationship with coach Steve Joyner.

"It hurts to see him lose. He's the best coach I've ever had," Hurd said. "That's the reason why I'm still here. I could've transferred to Virginia Union or Norfolk State, where my style would fit in, but I like the school and I love coach Joyner."

Joyner has nothing but praise for Hurd, noting that he has matured rapidly this season, both on the court and off.

"He's getting better on his work



Johnson C. Smith guard Walter Hurd (right) leads the Golden Bulls and CIAA in scoring with a 26.5 points per game average.

Photo/FRANK WILLIAMS

habits. We're attempting to get him to work on his all-around ability," he said.

That ability has not gone unnoticed around the CIAA. In a conference where every team has gunners, Hurd stands out from the pack, and defenses act accordingly. Joyner said part of Hurd's improvement comes from the fact that he tries to get his teammates into the offensive act.

"He's listening and he understands he's a marked man when he steps into most gyms," Joyner said.

Hurd takes all the attention in stride, but has been known to be a talkative leader, unafraid to let opponents, officials or teammates know what's on his mind. On the floor, he truly believes a defense can't stop him.

"I'm not a cocky player," Hurd said. "I'm a confident player."

That confidence was shaken early in the season after Hurd offered a challenge. Before a December game at UNC Charlotte, he all but guaranteed a 30-point night against the 49ers. UNCC heard that and proceeded to limit Hurd to 12 points in the 49ers' 98-71 win.

After eating crow, Hurd realized UNCC as the turning point in his season. Since then, he's been on a tear, going around and through defenders with whirling moves to the basket when he's not floating feathery jump shots.

"UNCC made my game much better. I have to give credit to (49ers coach) Jeff Mullins and Jeff West (who defended against him)," he said. "I'm grateful for that game. Not many people get the chance to prove themselves again."

As Smith, a squad that starts three sophomores, a freshman and a senior, improves, Hurd will likely relinquish some of the scoring burden. A good sign came Saturday when the Bulls beat Winston-Salem State 86-78 when Hurd left the game with four fouls midway through the second half. Smith hung on to the lead with Hurd out and put the Rams away in the final minutes when he came back.

Hurd, however, wishes those wins came more regularly, but realizes the Bulls are rebuilding. His job is to help speed it along as best he can.

"Everywhere I've gone, we've won. When I was with the Gauchos (a New York AAU team) we were the only team to beat the Russians," he said. "Now it's saying 'Hey this is the other side of it.' I want to win. I guess I just want to do it now."

Prop 42 Undercuts Colleges

Commentary By
Chester A. Higgins
NNPA News Editor

WASHINGTON, DC - He was a little man, old even then some 20 years ago, but his eyes were alive and sparkling with life as he told me how as president of Grambling, he was jack-of-all-trades. He was not physically imposing, but you knew immediately you were talking to an authentic American original. Born August 6, 1905, Dr. Ralph Waldo Emerson Jones came to Grambling (it was called the Louisiana Normal and Industrial Institute at that time) in 1926, taught math, science, was dean of men, and was named president of the school June, 1936, in the depth of the Depression.

"I coached basketball, football as well as cleaned the gym, did everything in those early days. Had to," said Dr. Jones, as he looked around proudly at what this little school, carved out of the mud of backwoods Louisiana, built on faith, sweat, tears, a nickel and a nail, had become on that date in 1970. It now boasted handsome new buildings, a burgeoning student body, topnotch teachers and a football coach, Eddie Robinson, who was even then a living legend.

In all Coach Robinson has produced more than 230 stars for pro football, including Paul Tank Younger, Buck Buchanan and most recently all-pro Washington Redskin quarterback Doug Williams while becoming the winningest coach in the history of collegiate football (349-122-15) as of late last year. The Grambling Marching Band was the envy of the college world, and still is.

But if you thought Grambling

was merely a football factory for development of big, over-muscled and under-celebrated young men, you've got another think coming. Many of these young, unpolished, unlettered youth bloom and go on to graduate school in some of the nation's premiere universities.

"Big, black boys used to come to us in the Depression years," Dr. Jones told me. "Some of them dressed in overalls, brogue shoes with a nickel and nail rubbing together in their pockets; their worldly possessions on their backs. But we took 'em in. Because we were their last resort, their way out of backwoods ignorance and poverty. They were eager to learn; they had faith that we would teach 'em and we taught 'em."

And now an all-white NCAA member organization has voted to impose Proposition 42 that would fall all intents and purposes complete the blocking of many young black athletes' chances to secure a college education through a leg-up freshman scholarship. Passed by the NCAA earlier, Proposition 48 began the blocking process. Although he is not personally affected, John Thompson, the very successful black Georgetown University basketball coach, saw immediately what this final move to Proposition 42 would do to aspiring, poor, black athletes and he has vigorously protested.

You must try to envision what life was like for blacks in the deep South 50 to 60 years ago. The Civil War put an end to slavery in 1865, but despite heroic efforts by many whites of goodwill who swarmed to the South, established schools for the newly-freed slaves in the Reconstruction Era, and desperately sought to teach the

basics -- readin', ritin', 'rithmetic, to a whole generation of unlettered ex-slaves the glow faded, bigotry won out.

A series of "black laws" nakedly designed to re-enslave the recently freed slave, culminating in the notorious 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Supreme Court "separate but equal" decision, lowered the curtain of darkness over black aspiration, snuffing out the gleam of hope in black eyes. For the law while rigidly enforcing racial separation, was an unmitigated fraud for it made no attempt to guarantee even a semblance of equality in allocation of local public funds, quality of teachers, teaching material, physical plant, mandatory classroom attendance, etc.

Centuries of black enslavement during which it was against the law and custom in that brutal system to teach blacks to read or write in an area where most African Americans lived was thus followed by imposition of the wretchedly inferior system of segregated education. Some 30 years after Plessy, Dr. Jones arrived at Grambling. These nearly illiterate blacks stumbling in bewildered eagerness onto that primitive little "college" campus must have been a heart wrenching experience to behold. But Dr. Jones and his small band of educators did not hesitate. For 51 solid years, Dr. Jones taught 'em. He did not seek SAT scores, they didn't have accumulated grade point averages. They came desperately in need of teaching, and he taught 'em. He retired in 1977 and died two years later, 1979. But he left a legacy of how to in terms of instructing the so-called "uninstructable."

Something the present-day NCAA members might ponder.

Local Table Tennis Players In Tournament

National Champions will participate in the Charlotte STIGA Spring Open Two Star table tennis tournament Saturday and Sunday at Tuckaseegee Recreation Center at 4820 Tuckaseegee Road.

The tournament, sponsored by the Charlotte Parks and Recreation Department and the Charlotte Table Tennis Club will offer over \$2,000 in prize money and trophies.

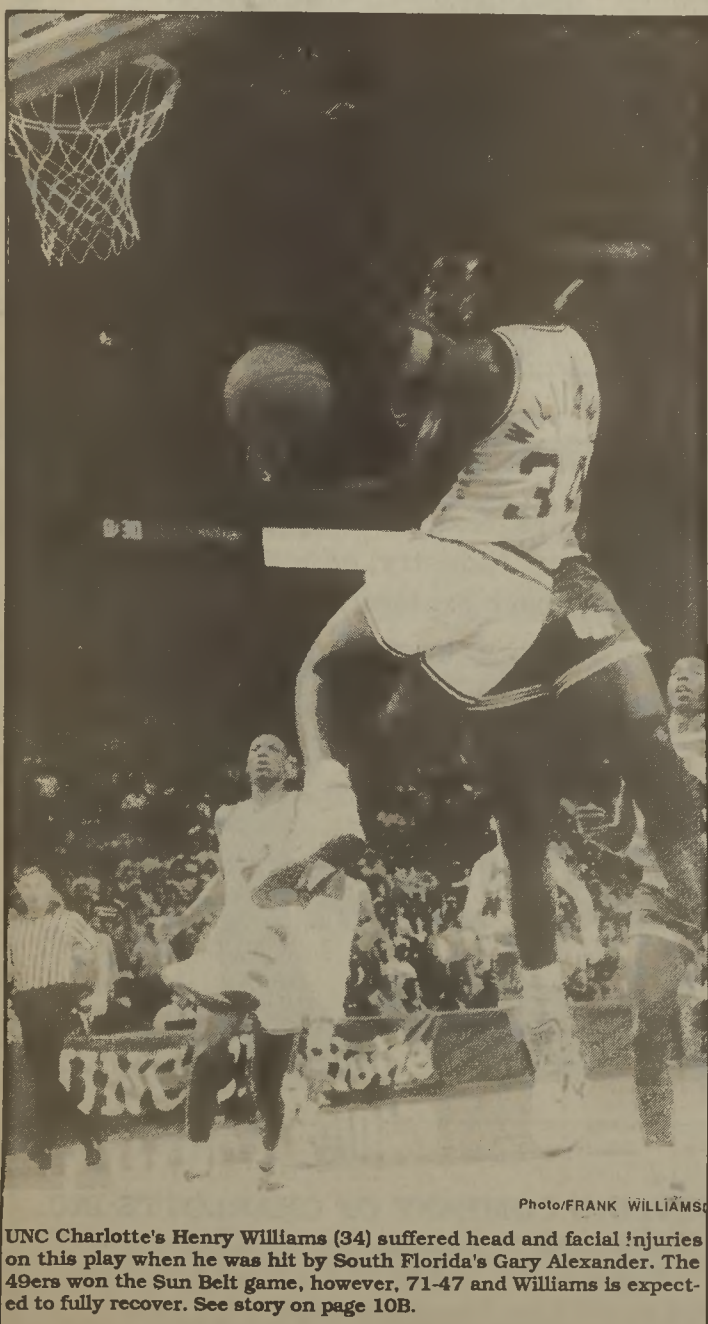
Sixteen events will be held at various levels ranging from novice to expert. There will be free refreshments during the tournament and a party for participants.

Play begins at 9 a.m. both days and is free for spectators. Competitors' fees range from \$3 to \$15 per event. For more information, call the recreation center at 399-4492.

February Ski Trips Planned

The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department and Alpine Ski Center are sponsoring one-day ski trips on Saturdays in February to Winter Place, Beech Mountain and Sugar Mountain. Each day trip costs \$44.95 and includes transportation and lift ticket. Ski rentals are available for \$10, \$12 and \$14 based on the type of ski rented.

All trips depart at 5:30 a.m. from the Sears Automotive Center parking lot at Southpark and return at approximately 9:30 p.m. To register, visit Alpine Ski Center at 1501 East Boulevard or call 332-2824.



Photo/FRANK WILLIAMS

UNC Charlotte's Henry Williams (34) suffered head and facial injuries on this play when he was hit by South Florida's Gary Alexander. The 49ers won the Sun Belt game, however, 71-47 and Williams is expected to fully recover. See story on page 10B.