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## SPORTS

## Hush, hush sweet Charlotte

## Despite injuries, 3-0 loss surprises Hornets

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Charlotte Hornets came into the NBA playoffs limping. And that's how they're headed into summer vacation.

The New York Knicks saw to that Monday, beating the Hornets 104-95 to complete a three-game sweep in their first round series. As big a surprise as Charlotte's best season ever was, so was the Hornets' quick exit. It didn't have to be that way, forward Glen Rice said.

"It's going to be real hard for me to swallow," he said. "We should've gotten a lot farther than we did, regardless of how

well we did in the regular season. I really felt we had a chance to really do something."

After watching New York lay waste to Charlotte's postseason, point guard Muggsy Bogues, who was hampered by a sore hamstring, gave the Knicks credit. Still, he couldn't help but wonder what might have happened if both teams were at full strength.

"You can't make excuses. I think we still could've beat those guys the way we were, but it would've made it easier if we had healthier bodies," Bogues said. "This is the time where guys go into the playoffs with healthy bodies, go in with a

game plan, having your core guys who got you up to this point. But because of my situation, Dell's (Curry, shoulder) situation and Matt's (Geiger, back) situation, coach (Dave Cowens) had to go with a scramble-type rotation and try to find who could give us some kind of spark or contribution."

Even with the injuries, Charlotte had chances to win each game. Aches or not, New York, led by ex-Hornet Larry Johnson, took Charlotte's best shot in moving to the next round.

"Everybody had a heart like warriors," said forward Anthony See **HORNETS** on page 3B



PHOTO/ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Larry Johnson dunks the ball home Monday in New York's 104-95 win over Charlotte.

## New guys fuel Knicks sweep

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The New York Knicks took a lot of abuse for spending a lot of money on free agents and trades last summer.

In the first round of the playoffs, at least, it looks like money well spent.

Guards Chris Childs and Allan Houston came via free agency. Forward Larry Johnson, the \$84 million whipping boy as a Charlotte Hornet, came in a trade. They all had a hand in dispatching Charlotte 104-95 Monday and sweeping the Hornets 3-0 in their best-of-five series. After being blinded by the glare of New York-style expectations, the new guys — especially Johnson, who has been knocked since the trade for a lack of offensive production — needed a breakout series.

"It meant a lot to all of us," Childs said. "Allan came out and really got us going early."

"LJ has been consistent all year. It's just that early on in the season a lot of teams were double-teaming (him) and he's not a guy who's not going to be unselfish. If he doesn't have the shot, he's going to pass. See **KNICKS** on page 3B

## ACC packs Sting

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Charlotte Sting has a distinct ACC flavor.

The WNBA team stayed close to home in the first two rounds of the league's first draft Monday, selecting Virginia guard Tora Suber with the seventh pick overall and N.C. State center-forward Sharon Manning with the 10th selection. Their addition brings the Sting's ACC contingent to five, including former North Mecklenburg High and N.C. State standout Andrea Stinson.

"I'm very excited about the players that we added to our roster," Charlotte coach Marynell Meadors said. "We entered (the) draft looking for point guards and post players and filled those needs with extremely talented players."

The 5-7 Suber directed Virginia's offense as a four-year starter. She was a Naismith Award finalist and an Associated Press All-America honorable mention last season. She finished her college career as the Cavaliers' all-time leader in three-point field goals made (220) and as third-leading scorer (1,767).

"I'm overwhelmed right now by the good news," Suber said. "This is a dream come true for me. I'm happy to be a member of the Charlotte Sting."

Manning, 6-3, was a teammate of Stinson and Rhonda Mapp, another Sting player, at N.C. State. She currently plays for Thienne in the Italian League with Stinson. In four seasons at N.C. State, Manning was most valuable player in the 1991 ACC tournament and was named all-ACC in 1990. She averaged 13 points, 7.5 rebounds and 1.5 assists per game with the Wolfpack.

"Tora Suber is an explosive guard who has incredible shooting range and tremendous quickness," Meadors said. "Sharon Manning possess an innate ability to get to the ball and put it back in the basket."

In the third round, Charlotte picked 5-8 guard Debra Williams from Louisiana Tech and Mercer forward Andrea Congreaves in the fourth. Williams was a 1996 Kodak All-America selection and three-time all-Sun Belt Conference and all-tournament selection.

Congreaves, 6-2, averaged 24 points and 10 rebounds at Mercer. She was named a Kodak All-America as a senior in 1993.

## Learning the ropes



PHOTO/WADE NASH  
Carolina Panthers receiver Rae Carruth looks in a pass during minicamp last week in Charlotte. Carruth, the 27th pick in April's NFL draft, is expected to be a major contributor on offense.

## Top pick flashes speed

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Rae Carruth spent most of his first minicamp with the Carolina Panthers sleuthing.

The rookie wide receiver tried to draw similarities between the offense he starred in at Colorado and Carolina's. Although last week's minicamp was just an introduction to the NFL, Carruth said the Panthers' offense won't be too difficult to master.

"I think our offense might have been technically a little more difficult" at Colorado, he said. "It's just a transition from a lot of numbers to words. I'm trying to crack the code — I guess that's what they call it in football terms."

"It's a little bit different. It's like my first practice in college, but I'm picking it up pretty fast."

Carruth, who was selected 27th overall, showed off the speed that made him one of the top receivers available. He

impressed coaches and Carolina quarterback Kerry Collins with several superb catches, including one that Collins felt he'd overthrown. With a start like that, Carruth is already making himself a part of the offense that Carolina coach Dom Capers said needed more speed.

"I'm starting to feel comfortable in it," Carruth said. "They've accepted me, and I'm glad to be here."

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## Barrow wants that winning feeling again

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Micheal Barrow is learning how to win again.

The Carolina Panthers linebacker didn't get to do a lot of it in five seasons with the Houston Oilers, but that changed with an offseason switch in teams. Slowly, he's learning that being a part of a winner requires a change in attitude.

"For me to come in, I'm being a sponge. I still have a disease of losing that's in me that I need to get out," he said. "When you associate losing with Houston, we lost a lot of close games and that became contagious. Here, they won a lot of close games, and they know how to win and I've got to get back to the old feeling, that feeling of knowing how to win and getting the best out of my ability constantly."

The first thing Barrow learned in last week's minicamp is the how the Panthers pay attention to details. The coaches expect discipline, and the players pick up on it quickly. There's little room for deviation — or error.

"It's definitely different from where I came from," he said. "This is a tight ship, a stickler for details... You still have a chance to relax in this type of atmosphere, but there's no gray area. You understand what you've got to do."

Barrow, who is projected to start at inside linebacker beside 37-year-old Sam Mills, is making the adjustment from freelancing on the field to taking a more disciplined approach to attacking the ball. Carolina's 3-4 defense is expected to free the

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PHOTO/WADE NASH  
Michael Barrow says he likes Carolina's discipline and aggressive defense.

## Colorado not rocky on road

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

One of the big turnarounds in baseball this year is how the Colorado Rockies are playing on the road.

"All we heard last year was how bad we were playing on the road. Now all we're hearing is how well we're playing on the road," Larry Walker said after the Rockies beat the St. Louis Cardinals 5-4 Friday.

Colorado won a club-record seventh straight road game for an overall record of 16-7, including 8-3 on the road. The fast start is a sharp contrast to last year's road record of 28-53.

Walker, who hit his NL-leading 10th home run, said there was a lot of pressure on the Rockies last year because their poor road record sparked a lot of comments from fans and the media.

"That was all we heard about last year and I think that put a lot of pressure on us," Walker said.

"Maybe we're doing a better job this year of shutting that talk out."

Rockies manager Don Baylor said the team dedicated itself over the winter to winning on the road.

"We knew we had to address that issue this year, and we have done that," Baylor said. "I can't really say how we've turned it around, but we're happy about it."

Colorado was 7-2 on the road through last week and 7-3 at home.

"We have to make sure we don't play at home this year like we did on the road last year," Walker said.

Rockies starter Kevin Ritz (2-3) is 2-0 on the road and 0-3 at home.

"I don't know what it is about the home and road," Ritz said. "All I know is I had a 4-0 lead when I took the mound, and that makes it easier to pitch."

Baylor said the early lead gave Ritz the confidence to use his breaking ball to set up a good fastball.

"He kept the Cardinals guessing, and that made all his pitches effective," Baylor said.

The Rockies got some stout defense from catcher Jeff Reed, who threw out runners trying to steal twice for inning-ending double plays as the batter was striking out on the pitch.

Walker, who was one behind Ken Griffey Jr. for the major league lead in home runs at the start of the game, said he was glad to hear that Griffey hit three Friday.

"I'm glad he hit those tonight," Walker said. "I don't want to have to think about chasing him."