

# Artis' long shot pays off

Continued from 1B

every member of my team," Artis said. "I found myself watching them and going 'wow.' I just want to play my role and do as much as possible."

Artis, who started playing basketball at 14, is good at overcoming odds. She originally signed with Virginia, but tore the anterior cruciate ligament in her left knee before playing a game. Only 16 at the time, the injury was especially devastating.

"It was a hard adjustment, being young and away from home," she said. "It helped me focus on what I needed to do."

Artis' joint was reconstructed, and she transferred to Northeastern, where she averaged 28 points per game as a senior and earned an honorable mention Kodak all-America in 1995. Getting into the pros proved to be more difficult. She tried out and made the ABL's draft pool, but no one picked her. She went to Europe to gain experience and helped lead her team to third place in the German League, then came home to play in pro-ams.

"The tryout I had here was a lot better than the one I had for the ABL," she said, "and that's

because of the experience I got in Germany."

Artis wanted to play for her hometown New York team, but didn't get an invitation. "I didn't get my \$125 non-refundable application fee back, Artis said, which added insult to injury.

Three special dates are already circled on her schedule - July 10, July 10 and July 26 - when Charlotte plays New York. She wants to show the Liberty what they could've had.

"I think about it but I don't think about it," Artis said. "It's not where you're from but where you're at."

# Worm, Zo start wrestling match

By John Pacenti

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIAMI - Dennis Rodman hid fully dressed in the locker room showers for a good 10 minutes after Chicago's loss to Miami on Monday.

The player with the ever-changing hair color then emerged just long enough to take one more dig at the Heat's Alonzo Mourning.

"Zo vs. the Worm" played a central role in the Heat's 87-80 Game 4 victory to avoid a series sweep, including a wrestling match between them midway in the fourth quarter.

"I'm a smart guy. I'm not the guy out there making \$100 million. He's out there trying poke my eyes out," Rodman said as he was escorted out of the locker room by a bodyguard.

"He's just a young kid. He doesn't know how to play the game of basketball."

Mourning wrestled back some momentum for the Heat in the Eastern Conference finals at Rodman's expense. Mourning pulled down the NBA's most outlandish player with 8:14 left in the game after the two locked up going for a rebound. Replays showed Mourning tapping Rodman on the head before Miami coach Pat Riley separated the two.

"I had a real hard time getting them apart," Riley said. "I had to get a knee in there, I had to get my arms in there, and they were saying everything to one another."

Rodman's streak of getting a technical foul in every one of the Bulls' playoff games continued when both players were called for double technicals following the altercation.

The teams, though, avoided a repeat of Game 5 of the Miami-New York playoff series when six players were suspended after most of the Knicks bench left to join an altercation.

Mourning, who scored 18 points and pulled down 14 rebounds, had little to say about what Riley called his "ritual dance with Dennis."

"It's unfortunate, we got tied up," Mourning said. "In that situation, the referees made the right decision. ... I'm just glad it didn't affect the outcome of the game."

Rodman had 13 points and 11 rebounds, but the player known as

"The Worm," once again earned the wrath of his coach.

"I thought Dennis should wait until he gets his WBA, WFA license to start something like that," Chicago coach Phil Jackson said.

The battle between Mourning and Rodman started up after Miami's franchise player predicted a win for Game 4 following Miami's 98-74 loss on Saturday. Rodman mocked Mourning's prediction at the Bulls' practice on Sunday and continued to taunt him during the game.

At one point Rodman patted his chest in front of Mourning as if to say, "my heart goes out to you," after the Heat complained about a foul in the fourth quarter.

Chicago guard Ron Harper said that Mourning and Rodman were just the highlight of a game full of trash talk.

"I enjoy these kind of games. You hear ugly at your back and everyone's talking trash. Dennis and Zo. It's a fun game," Harper said.

It wouldn't have been so funny for Miami if Mourning was ejected from the game. Riley said that Rodman's antics are encouraged by the league and the media.

"I think it's the most ridiculous thing to come along and we pander to it," Riley said. "The league knows it and they let him get away with it. He takes a half dozen cheap shots a game."

# Belle's absence hasn't taken toll on Indians

By Rick Gano  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO - General manager John Hart walked through the Cleveland Indians clubhouse looking for a football-like windbreaker on another cold day for baseball.

Then he addressed Monday's hot topic. Not the series between the teams that have become such big rivals in the AL Central - the Indians and Chicago White Sox - but about Cleveland facing Albert Belle for the first time.

Belle signed a five-year, \$55 million contract last November with the White Sox.

Hart said he briefly chatted with Belle at Jacobs Field during the winter after Belle had signed with the White Sox.

"It might have been the day he was evicted from the stadium," Hart said. "I congratulated him on his contract but told him he was now the enemy."

During the offseason Belle was asked to leave Jacobs Field when he tried to use the team's batting cages.

Hart said there were no hard feelings about Belle signing with the White Sox or any of the criticisms he's leveled at his former team.

"The guy did a great job for us," Hart said. "There have been a lot of dramatic things happen in Cleveland the last five or six years and he was part of it. He made his choice and went somewhere else."

So far the Indians have not missed Belle, who hit 242 homers during his career in Cleveland. That's because they've signed players like Matt Williams and David

Justice. Entering Monday's game against the White Sox, the Indians led the majors with 75 homers, a pace that would give them 264 for the season.

"We've got guys swinging bats who can make up for it. With this offense we really haven't missed Albert at this point.... We've been able to fill in a number of positions for less money," Hart said.

Hart stopped short of saying that Belle's absence had made the Indians' clubhouse a better place. The addition of Williams, Justice and Marquis Grissom has helped do that.

"It's a different flavor in the clubhouse, but that's the word

- different," Hart said.

Many Indians fans apparently couldn't wait until the White Sox go to Cleveland for a three-game series early next week for a glimpse of Belle.

There was a noticeable contingent of Indians fans scattered throughout the 26,383 at Comiskey on Monday.

Some booed Belle and others cheered loudly when he struck out in the fourth inning.

"The thing that's most intriguing is he's a guy in our division. We have had a rivalry. We've been the best two clubs in our division the last three or four years. We'll get to see Albert a lot more," Hart said.

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# Indy 500 isn't the same show

Continued from 1B

come back. Fortunately, somebody at the track had Nabors on tape. Unfortunately, that version didn't fool most spectators any more than filling out the 35-car grid with replacement drivers.

"The reputation of this place has carried it," said John Dvorske. "But things have changed."

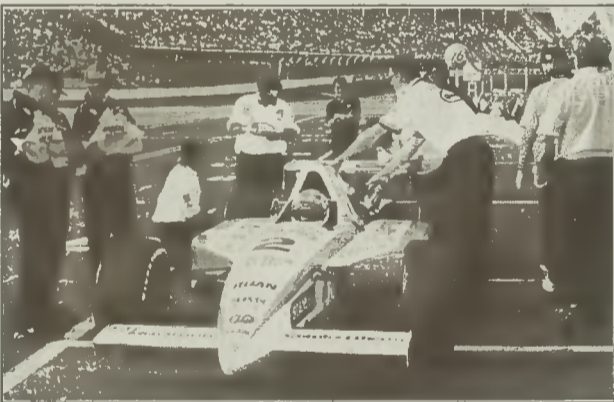
Dvorske saw his first race in 1952 and has come back every year since. Just like his father did, Dvorske passed on his love of racing to each of his three sons. But the back-to-back false starts this year, on the heels of what he considered a diminished race last year, had him wondering whether to return Tuesday.

"The streak was going to end some day," he said, then stole a glance at his wife, Kathy. She looked unhappy. He looked chastened. "I might have to come back alone."

Still, half an audience is better than none. Or so it must seem to Tony George now. His worst-case scenario probably had the split with the Championship Auto Racing Team owners and drivers costing him half the Indy car audience. He'd likely take that 50 percent in a heartbeat come Tuesday.

Whenever the race is actually run, the grandstands figure to have bigger gaps than the one between David Letterman's front teeth. And by angering soap-opera fans for one more day, ABC's broadcast of the race could get walloped by "Jerry Springer," "Jenny Jones," and "Geraldo" - people whose credibility might actually get a boost by being compared to this once-proud institution.

George can't even count on his own staff to stay glued to the broadcast of the race. Ward said the track doesn't pay a weather forecasting service. As a result, somebody has to switch over to the Weather Channel every now and then to keep an eye on storm fronts.



PHOTO/WADE NASH

The Indy Racing League's lack of big-name stars isn't a real draw at the Indianapolis 500.

How times have changed. In years past, the drivers brought prestige to Indy and nicknames that conjured up images of hard-charging racers risking everything to go fast. They were known as "Tex" (A.J. Foyt), "Lone Star J.R." (Johnny Rutherford), "Big Al" (Al Unser) and the like.

The best-known nickname in this year's field is Jack "The Racing Dentist" Miller. He probably had more people sitting in his waiting room Tuesday than cheering him during the race.

Wonder if he brought enough Novocaine to go around.

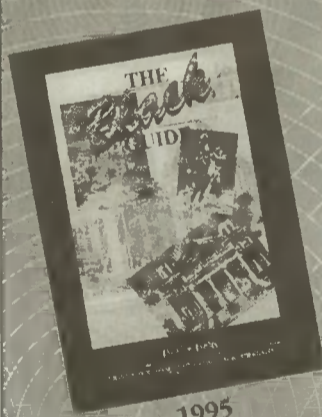
## One more time



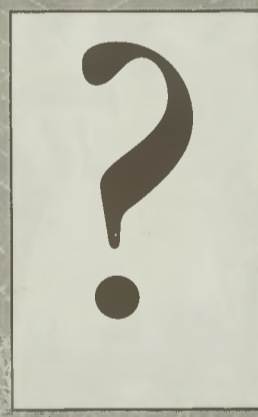
The Statesville Road Elementary School Right Moves for Youth basketball team became champions of the 4-6 grade A Division of the Right Moves for you basketball tournament. It's the second year in a row the school's team has won the tournament. "We thought we could do it," said Doug Spears, who coached both teams to victory. "The kids believed they could do it. That's what was important." Spears, a retired Gaston County school teacher, is a volunteer in the Right Moves program. The tournament was April 16.

# IT'S TIME

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