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Section

SPORTS

Currie
spices up
dismal
preseason*Sting's top draft pick
shows she can handle
WNBA competition*By Herbert L. White
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Monique Currie is finding the WNBA is nothing like college basketball.

The Charlotte Sting rookie has lived up to expectations after being the third player picked in last month's draft, but there's much to learn. After three preseason games, Currie, a former Duke standout, is finding her way.



Bogues

"I'm still getting adjusted," she said. "There's a lot of different rules, especially on defense (about) what you can do, what you can't do. The preseason gives you a little bit of time to adjust to those types of things."

Like most rookies, Currie's learning on the fly. In Saturday's 85-66 loss to Indiana, Curry was matched against all-star forward Tamika Catchings. Currie picked up a couple of fouls early, but more than held her own, leading Charlotte with 18 points on 5-of-6 shooting. Catchings scored 14 points on 4-of-11 shooting.

"I wanted her to have that challenge of playing Catchings and let her have that feeling of the type of top players in this league," Sting coach Muggsy Bogues said. "She responded well. She got some tick-tack fouls, but she stayed with it."

The Sting, which opens the regular season May 20 against Chicago at Bobcats Arena, expects more of the same from Currie, a two-time Kodak All-America and all-ACC pick. After a franchise-worst

Please see CURRIE/2C



PHOTO:WADE NASH

Rookie Monique Curry has been one of the few bright spots for the Sting in a 0-3 preseason.

Lakers left to
ponder what
went wrongBy John Nadel
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — The joy and anticipation stoked by the possibility of an unprecedented Battle of L.A. disappeared with the greatest playoff collapse in Lakers history.

To make matters even worse, it was capped by an embarrassing flop in Game 7.

So now, with the Clippers about to play Phoenix in the Western Conference semifinals, the Lakers head home for the summer to ponder what went so completely wrong against the Suns.

The Lakers were just a rebound and six seconds away from advancing to the second round of the playoffs in Game 6.

How in the world could they have been so horrific in Game 7?

Please see LAKERS/2C

HE STUDIES NUANCE AND DEFENSE



PHOTO:CURTIS WILSON

Carolina Panthers linebacker James Anderson looks in a pass during a drill at the team's minicamp last week in Charlotte. Anderson was drafted to bolster a rebuilt linebacker corps.

Imitation of art

*Panthers rookie Anderson paints his own canvas at linebacker*By Herbert L. White
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Leave it to James Anderson the artist to describe the linebacker's canvas.

The Carolina Panthers rookie - an art major at Virginia Tech - can relate his profession to his academic pursuit. On the field, his job is to create as well as react by merging the science of football to improvisation.

"You set your rules, you set your guidelines, but you've also got to

adjust to what you see, making changes just like art," he said. "You start out your painting one way but by the time you see it on the canvas it can change and be totally different."



Anderson

That approach is what made Anderson attractive to Carolina, which selected him in the third

round of last month's NFL draft. A cover linebacker who can also support the run, he fits the mold of mobile defenders the Panthers covet.

"He's a guy we targeted early on in the draft process," Carolina head coach John Fox said. "If you had to compare him to somebody, we thought he was a lot like (former Panther) Will Witherspoon when he came out of Georgia. He's a smart coverage guy ...and

See ART/2C

Bonds on HR chase: 'It's overwhelming'

By Tim Dahlberg
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA — The night starts off awful, just like the rest of the road trip. Barry Bonds is slumping, the crowd isn't letting up, and his mother is in the stands to witness it all.

The boos and chants of "Balco Barry" are bad enough. Now Bonds lumbers out to left field only to be greeted by a huge sign stretching across the front row of the stands.

"Babe Ruth did it on hot dogs and beer. Hank Aaron did it with class. How did you do it?"

On this night, with a bang.

A home run of Ruthian proportions helps to wipe away a season worth of frustration Sunday night, bringing Bonds to within one home run of the

Please see FOR/4C



PHOTO:ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Francisco Giants slugger Barry Bonds has been booed and vilified, but continues his quest for the all-time home run record.

Robinson's effort opened baseball as global game

By Earl Heath
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

LOS ANGELES — "Baseball has done more to improve the social landscape in our country than any other sport."

Those were the words of Baseball Hall of Famer Joe Morgan on the 59th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's breaking baseball's color barrier. On hand at Dodger Stadium was Jackie's daughter Sharon Robinson.

She stood at home plate with Dodger great Don Newcombe. They both watched the Dodger video board. The video not only featured Robinson in his rookie year, but also showed the Mariners' Japan-born Ichiro Suzuki waving to the crowd and

the Boston Red Sox Dominican born Manny Ramirez running on to the field holding the American flag.

"It never gets old," said Sharon Robinson. "Every time that video goes up on the board, I have to hold back tears."

This is in part to the statement Morgan made as in recent years there has been an influx of foreign players to the Major Leagues from the far east. There's also a heavier contingent of Latin players now than there was before Robinson's fete was accomplished. Dodger's centerfielder Kenny Lofton was off the disabled list just in time.

"At this point, anything to do with Jackie Robinson is very important to African-

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Distant
replay
for hoop
pioneers*Barnstormers
want props from
basketball's
establishment*By Eric Bozeman
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Former Harlem Globetrotter John Kline is hoping the black legends of basketball get their just due.

Recently U.S. Rep. Carolyn Kilpatrick and Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin of Michigan introduced a resolution to Congress to get the nation and the NBA to recognize the contributions that black barnstormers made to the game in the first half of the 20th century. Unlike their baseball counterparts, players like Kline, Nate "Sweetwater" Clifton, Bobby "Showboat" Hall, Walter Dukes, Vertis Zigler, Ernest Wagner, and Don Barnette have yet to be properly recognized for trailblazing a path for today's professionals.

Congress eventually passed the bill, but the players of that lost era want the NBA and the Hall of Fame to acknowledge them as well.

Kline, who founded the Black Legends of Basketball Foundation in 1996, wants to see African American players who played for traveling teams like the New York Renaissance, Washington Bears and Harlem Globetrotters given their due for their playing days between the 1920s until the late '50s.

"We would like acknowledgement from the NBA and the Naismith Hall of Fame," Kline of Detroit said. "We were just barnstorming teams, we didn't have leagues like the Negro baseball players did, but we suffered through some of the same things that they did."

The sad state of African American NBA players not being connected to the history of these players was never more evident to Kline than when NBA big man George Mikan died last June. Kline, 74, explained that it appeared as though the Mikan family was having trouble burying the former NBA star, but Shaquille O'Neal stepped up to pay for his funeral. However, when seven-footer Walter Dukes died, it was left up to family, friends, and Kline's organization to help with the details of the former

See BASKETBALL/3C



NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Sharon Robinson, Jackie Robinson's daughter, Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Kenny Lofton and Dodgers great Don Newcombe participated in a ceremony honoring Jackie Robinson's Major League debut in 1947.