

Colbert anxious to prove his worth

Continued from page 1C and was suffering from bone spurs, bone chips and a calcium buildup that required off-season surgery.

Colbert won't use that as an excuse for his sophomore slump.

"It didn't bother me enough to not play," he said. "If you can walk and you can run, you can play. My thing wasn't any different from things that other guys play with every year - that's why I don't like to talk about it."

That Colbert kept his injury a secret doesn't surprise his teammates.

"Nobody knew how hurt he was because that's just the kind of guy he is," quarter-

back Jake Delhomme said. "He doesn't complain. He just comes out and plays. But in talking with him after the season, he had some issues and he was in a lot of pain."

Now that he's healed, Colbert wants to prove he can be an effective option in Carolina's offense. He did it in 2004, when he broke all of the Panthers' rookie receiving records.

But as he struggled through the early part of last year, the Panthers began to use Carter more and more. By the time the playoffs rolled around, Carter was the deep-ball threat, Ricky Proehl was the third-down receiver and Colbert was the

odd man out.

It was obvious to even the casual fan that the Panthers needed to bring in a receiver to complement Smith, preferably a big, physical player who could help open up lanes in the running game.

Colbert knew the Panthers would likely bring someone in, but didn't concern himself with it - even after they chose Johnson, who became an instant starter.

"How am I going to better myself worrying about who they bring in? They're going to bring in guys every year," he said. "That's what this game and all sports are about - competing and playing and winning."

Activists: Keep Title IX alive

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Brennan spoke strongly against the current administration's recent attacks on the law through the Commission on Opportunity in Athletics, and she affirmed her commitment not only to continue to support the legislation but also to write about it.

"As the Bush administration inexplicably tries to weaken it, your goal, my goal - and all of us working together - it becomes even more important to make sure they don't touch this," she said.

Brennan's address at the end of the annual forum complemented the calls to save the 1972 legislation from further changes that also echoed loudly throughout the two-day gathering.

As part of a Title IX panel discussion, NCAA Senior Vice President Judy Sweet reiterated the NCAA's position on Title IX, noting a 2005 NCAA Executive Committee resolution that encourages institutions to abide by the education department's 1996 clarification of "prong three" of the Title IX compliance test rather than the clarification issued last year that allows for compliance solely through electronic surveys to calculate women's interests in sports. The resolution also urges the education department to rescind the additional clarification and honor the department's commitment to enforce the legislation, including the 1996 clarification.

Sweet, who is stepping down from her position with the national office this summer, called her involvement in opposing a weakening of Title IX one of the most rewarding aspects of her career. She said the challenge of educating others about the intent of the Title IX legislation will continue.

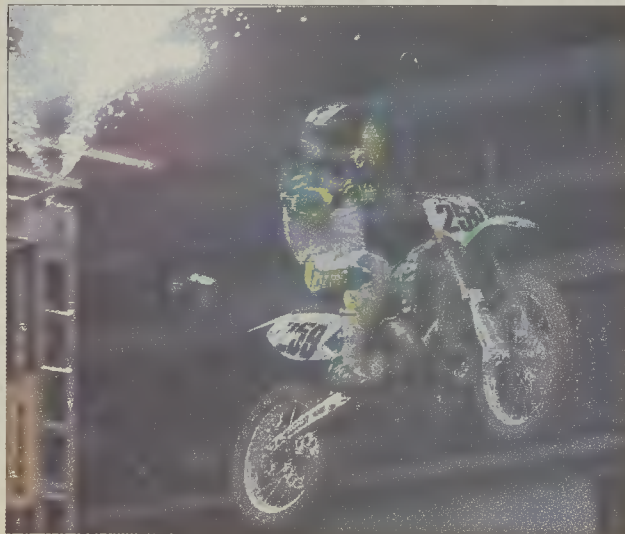
"The Title IX team that worked from so many different parts of the country made a difference," she said. "Unfortunately, our work is not done, but I know because of the quality of individuals who understand and are committed to making sure Title IX remains strong, we will win once again."

In the Division I breakout session, a panel of senior athletics administrators talked about communication as it relates to facilities, merging

men's and women's athletics departments and among directors of athletics and their staffs.

As part of the Division II session, panelists shared the importance of having and encouraging diversity within athletics departments. They also provided practical tips and suggestions for becoming an influential person within the athletics department.

In the Divisions II and III sessions, members of the NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics also led discussions on the use of male practice players. Talk centered on the compliance issues that must be considered in the use of men, and the opportunities that are either afforded or denied to student-athletes when such players are used.



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

James Stewart is the first African American to win a major motorsports championship in any discipline. He finished second in this year's AMA Supercross, two points behind the winner.

It's a wonderful life on two wheels for motocross champ

By Herbert L. White
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James Stewart is going places few racers have been.

Stewart is the first African-American to win a major motorsports title in any discipline, taking his first Supercross race in 2005 for Kawasaki Racing. The Bartow, Fla., native has been on a tear this year, finishing second in the AMA Supercross championship last month, two points behind five-time champ Ricky Carmichael in the closest campaign in series history. Carmichael finished with 338 points, a couple ahead of Stewart and Chad Reed, who tied for second.

"For fans and non-fans, you've got three guys within (two) points of the championship," Stewart said. "You've got the top three guys in the world, so it's going to be heated."

But Stewart is working on getting even in the AMA Supercross championship, which is contested with 250 cc cycles on outdoor courses as opposed to indoor tracks

in arenas.

"I get stronger as the season goes on, so I'm looking forward to the outdoor season," he said.

The obvious comparisons to another prodigy - golf's Tiger Woods - are inevitable with Stewart. He was introduced to the sport by his racer father, James Sr., and entered his first race as a 4-year-old. He won nine national amateur titles before turning professional in 2002. Since then, Stewart's success has brought increased attention to the sport, especially among African-Americans.

"For me, it's great to say I'm doing something like that for the sport, but I don't say this is my job," he said. "I'm a racer, but it makes me feel good about it."

Stewart, 20, has also been rumored to be a candidate to saddle up for a four-wheel ride, but that's not where his heart is now. He's open to the possibility should the opportunity present itself, but motorcycles are where he's most comfortable.

"I think that whole thing was blown out of proportion," Stewart said. "I definitely have interest, but not anytime soon. I'd be a fool to leave motocross at this point in my career."

What drives Stewart at this point in his career is the realization that he can improve as a racer. With Carmichael serving as a veteran standard of success, Stewart is learning that a tough mental approach is as important as being heavy on the throttle.

"I know what it takes to win races," he said. "It took me a while to figure it out, but I'm closer to it now."

That would include motocross and supercross titles, which would put him in the sport's rarefied class. It doesn't matter how or where, as long as the results find him on top of the standings.

"I want to win both," he said. "A championship is a championship. To win right now, my focus is on winning the world championship."

Sting struggles to crack glass

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Franklin complimented her effort with 12 points on Saturday.

Charlotte is 13th in the 14-team WNBA in rebounding, averaging 29.6 per game. Only Phoenix (29.0) is worse.

"The rebound disparity is really becoming an Achilles heel," said Bogues.

Tammy Sutton-Brown, a 6-4 center who led Charlotte in rebounds last season with 5.4, is averaging 3.8 after five games, while 6-foot forward Sheri Sam leads the team with 5.6.

"We just have to keep attacking and looking for the open man," said Sutton-Brown. "That's something we have to focus on... the (Sun) definitely have someone who is 7-2 (Dydeke)... and

it's definitely hard to rebound against her, but we need to pick up and get a better strategy."

"It's just effort, it's just focus," said Sam. "We just have to keep pounding and keep working. I think we tend to get away from what we practice, get away from our system, and I don't think we can do that."

"It's just the little things that make winning teams, winning teams, and the teams that lose don't really pay attention to detail."

Last season's Defensive Player of the Year and third leading rebounder, Tamika Catchings is coming to town Friday when the Sting hosts the Indiana at Bobcats Arena at 7 p.m.

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