

Sitting out hurts Bobcats most

Continued from page 1C
torn stomach muscle that will put him out for a month or so.

"This is part of the game," said Knight. "Sometimes you just try to come back and do things before you should, so you have to deal with it," expressed Knight, prior to undergoing surgery December 29 to repair the muscle tear.

"Brevin has had an abdominal tear for some time and has bravely tried to play through it, as is testimony to his warrior mentality," said Bobcats team physician Dr. Glenn Perry. "This is not career threatening and he should have a full recovery." "You take the time now to get it as good as possible

before you move on," said Knight.

Being patient with being sidelined is a lesson May learned in the 05-06 season, after having knee surgery in the off season, only to miss 56 games after suffering another knee injury. Though the prognosis for his ankle sprain was only 7-10 days, May was much more adjusted to the idea of being out at all.

"I've been through situations like this...going through last year helped me," said May. "You know the first time I came back. I wasn't ready and ended up having to have another surgery. So now I know how to gauge my body."

May, who recorded his fifth

double double this season with 15 points and 13 rebounds on Dec. 13 against Cleveland, scored 32 on Dec. 14 in a win against Orlando before being sidelined. He returned to the court Dec. 30 against Indiana and scored eight points in 17 minutes.

May's patience paid off, but he admitted the situation was frustrating.

"Yeah, it's frustrating, but it's part of the game," said May. "You have to deal with it and stay positive."

Unfortunately, for Knight, the wait is just beginning. He'll be out between four and five weeks recovering from the surgery. The waiting should be familiar though. Knight has been

sidelined six times already this season; four games with a lower calf strain and twice with the recurring right groin strain.

The Bobcats all have some time to mend after fatigue seemed to have been a factor in their New Year's overtime loss to Kevin Garnett and the Minnesota Timberwolves. They return to the court Friday in Orlando. They don't return to Bobcats Arena until January 13 when they face Philadelphia at 7pm.

The Bobcats acquired point guard and Charlotte native Jeff McInnis Wednesday from New Jersey. The Bobcats sent Bernard Robinson to the Nets.

Seven issues for new year

Continued from page 1C

lasted but a year come to mind. Now he's wailing that a small-market team like the Bobcats needs league help to avoid red ink and handing out pink slips. That's no way to make friends in this town, especially if you're losing regularly.

• Carolina Panthers. They missed the NFL playoffs after enjoying a summer of hype as the "it" team. No need to worry, though. The Panthers aren't that far from making the post-season in '07, should they acquire a franchise quarterback, middle linebacker and left offensive tackle. This group will undergo a major overhaul in the offseason, and for the better, too. Expectations will be lower, which won't hurt.

• Marc Davis. Remember this name in auto racing circles. The 16-year-old is moving up the ladder of success at Joe Gibbs Racing, and his goal is to be racing in NASCAR's big leagues in 2008 when he turns 18. The kid's on track to be the first breakthrough home-grown graduate of NASCAR's Race for Diversity program. And he's barely old enough to have his driver's license.

• Johnson C. Smith football. After years of futility, the Golden Bulls were a stunning success in 2006, going 7-4 with an appearance in the Pioneer Bowl. There'll be no sneaking up on anyone this year, with a new set of expectations that include winning the CIAA West Division. Sixteen starters return, so head coach Daryl McNeill, armed with a contract extension and raise, won't have to start from scratch.

• Calvin Brock. The Charlotte native tasted defeat for the first time in a loss to Wladimir Klitschko for the world heavyweight boxing title. How quickly can he recover to get on the comeback trail for another shot? In a division with lots of pretenders (other than the hard-hitting Klitschko) Brock will have other opportunities. The issue becomes when, and against whom.

• Independence High football. If the Patriots win their seventh straight N.C. 4A football title, it surely won't be luck. Coach Tom Knotts is the best in the state and he has the best talent in the best football conference in N.C. That's a recipe for success.

CIAA exceeded expectations on the field, court

Continued from page 1C
The top 10 shining moments:

10. I-40 cruise. NCCU offensive coordinator Darrell Asberry relocates 30 minutes down I-40 to become head football coach at Shaw after the departure of Deondri Clark to Fort Valley State. Asberry, who helped guide the Eagles to No. 1 in offense, swipes three NCCU assistants along the way. The Eagles don't skip a beat while the Bears finish 3-7.

9. If at first you don't succeed... After repeated attempts to move the CIAA out of the South Atlantic region, the Carolinas-Virginia Athletic Conference finally gets its wish. The CIAA will move in 2008 to the East Region, one of eight newly-created super regions by the NCAA.

8. Good idea turned bad. It was to be the perfect ending to a fairy tale season: Johnson C. Smith gets picked to play in the Pioneer Bowl in its host city Charlotte.

The CIAA's thinking: a packed Memorial Stadium filled with Smith fans and a jumpin' joint. Instead, the only things jumping were the 10 Smith fans in attendance who, at one point in the game, jump over to the Tuskegee side because that's where the sun is shining.

7. We got next. NCCU volleyball goes undefeated in the conference for the second straight year, and take player and coach of the year honors for two years running. Shari Matthews is named Division II's national player of the year, a first in school history.

6. Reversal of fortune. Pioneer Bowl aside, the

Golden Bulls have a season players and coaches can tell their grandkids about: a 24-game losing streak turned into a 7-4 record, second-place West Division finish and a postseason berth.

5. R-E-S-P-E-C-T. The NCAA finally sees the light - Earned Access light, that is - and awards at-large bids to NCCU and ECSU, the first time two teams make the playoffs since 1991.

4. Momentum ride. The CIAA basketball tournament loses none of its luster in a new city. Over 155,000 fans, partygoers, celebrities, etc., attend the weeklong tourney in Charlotte, generating \$15.4 million for the city. Half of that amount is spent on concessions at Charlotte Bobcats Arena.

3. Anybody but you. Fayetteville State ends

Shaw's 77-game conference streak dating back to 2002, giving others hope that the Lady Bears can be dethroned in March.

We have a tie for No. 1:

1(b). Fo', fo', fo'. Despite losing three of four games in the first semester, Shaw regrouped to become the first women's team in tourney history to win four straight championships - a record that will not be broken for quite some time.

1(a). We are the champions. The Eagles are black college national champions, a goal of coach Rod Broadway's four years ago. Sheridan Broadcasting Network made it official last week after NCCU finished a perfect 10-0 conference season, repeated as CIAA champions and earned its second straight playoff berth.

GOLF

Varner wins Par Busters' New Year's tourney

By Herbert L. White
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Harold Varner III started off the new year with a win in the Par Busters Golf Group's first tournament of 2007.

Varner won New Year's Shootout Jan. 1 at Charles T. Myers Golf Course with a round of 73, three shots ahead of Alvin Thompson

and four in front of Roger Sifford.

A team from Charlotte won the Upstate Thanksgiving Shootout Nov. 26 at Carolina Springs Golf Club in Fountain Inn, S.C.

Charlotte won the four-team match with a total of 55 five strokes ahead of Greenville, S.C. Spartanburg, S.C., finished third at 62.

The Charlotte squad was led by Jay Robinson's 68 and Matt Kilgo's 73.

Otis Worthy and Brian Tiddy won the Tees 68 9/123 Par Busters Club Championship at Birkdale Golf Club in Huntersville Nov. 19.

Worthy and Tiddy topped the field in the member-guest tournament with a combined 67, two shots

ahead of Reggie Sellers and Otis McClurkin. Reggie Degree and Terrian Gill won the guest draw with a 67, three shots ahead of Bruce Rafferty and Len Kure. Sellers won the club championship with a 70, while Andre Robinson was second at 75 and Doc McLean was third with a round of 78.



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

SINKING FEELING: Navy cornerback Rashawn King of Raleigh walks off the field after the Midshipmen lost to Boston College 25-24 in the Meineke Car Care Bowl Saturday at Bank of America Stadium.

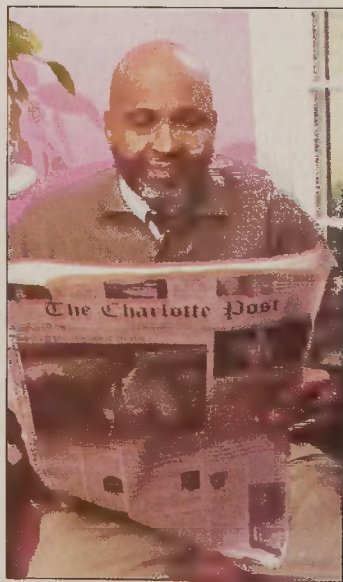
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