

## NBA

## Bobcats wounded, winning

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December for a right ankle sprain he suffered after coming down on the back of Emeka Okafor's foot. He sprung back from that injury, just to be sidelined this month with knee soreness.



May

"We have guys banged up," said May. "For some games) 13 or 14 are guys

healthy, then all of a sudden we have 10. It just happens like that, a couple of guys get sick...a couple of guys get banged up, so it's tough. But it's tough for everybody in this league, not just us."

The Bobcats' continued stroke of bad injury luck is not theirs alone, but, at least for this season, they're winning, despite the shortage of players.

In a three-game road trip, the Bobcats finished with two wins, first with an overtime victory against the Los Angeles Lakers, then Denver with 10 players available.

Wallace had 25 points, 13 rebounds and two blocks against the Nuggets, including one which may have saved the game.

"I feel more comfortable this year," said Wallace, "because of the guys. The way the team is spread out, and the confidence that our younger guys have now."

All in all, Wallace seems to have more pep in his step this season, despite the nagging pain in his shoulder, because of the versatility the team has in their line-up and his role in it, in spite of the injuries.

The offense is more comfortable and we take the swing position by the mismatches," explained Wallace. "I might be out on the wing, or I might be on the post. It's a more comfortable set for me out on the floor now as opposed to last year where I was basically at (power forward)" he said.

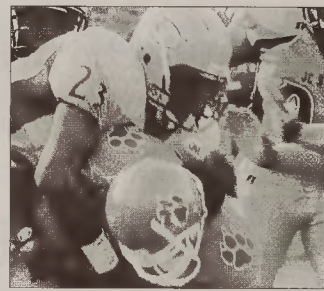
The Bobcats have 16 wins, more than half of last year's total of 26. And they finished January much more impressively than the 1-15 effort at the same time in 2006. Yet,

in spite of the improvements, Charlotte coach Bernie Bickerstaff commented after the game in L.A. that it is hard to gauge the team's improvement.

"They've been good but the barometer isn't there simply because when we started to play well the injuries came up," said Bickerstaff. "So we haven't really been able to get a good read because we were playing really good basketball and some of the key guys went down whether it's Brevin, whether it's Sean. So it's hard to assess, but I think when we have all our components we're a pretty good basketball team."

For Wallace, the All-Star Break will be a welcome respite. He, much like his coach feels the team has done a great job adjusting to the situation, but he can't wait until everyone is healthy again.

"We're doing good," said Wallace. "We just hopefully will get everybody back healthy and get everybody playing good and we'll be OK."



Charlotte's ultimate source for HBCU sports.

## Hopkins added spice to rivalry

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helped McGrady, who now plays for the Houston Rockets, skip college and head straight for the NBA.

Well, somewhere along the way, Hopkins ticked off a lot of people: college coaches who were hoping to ride the McGrady bandwagon; Mt. Zion because Hopkins was getting more press than the school; ordinary Joes who wanted a handout from McGrady but couldn't get past Hopkins; and the white media. (I say white because there sure aren't that many black media around here.) Hopkins was just a little too uppity for those overweight and over-aged white males.

And that's what made his hiring by Shaw so delicious. Former Shaw President Talbert O. Shaw wanted a championship before he retired - by any means necessary - and Hopkins was the man for the job.

When Hopkins signed a three-year contract, I asked him why not a long-term deal. He said if he couldn't win a championship in three years, he didn't need to coach. He wasn't going to be like some coaches who took 16 years to get their first championship - an obvious dig at a certain coach in Charlotte.

He promptly recruited one of the best players to ever play in the CIAA in Ronald Murray. Everybody from the janitor on down had the

Bears penciled in as the champs that year. Shaw this. Shaw that. You'd have thought there was only one Raleigh CIAA school. Until the quarterfinals of the CIAA tournament.

The Falcons had heard and read enough. They sent the Bears back into hibernation with a resounding spanking.

But Shaw got its revenge the following year. Then, before you could say NCAA probation, Hopkins was gone in a bitter and nasty dispute over money and control.

Don't ya just miss it!

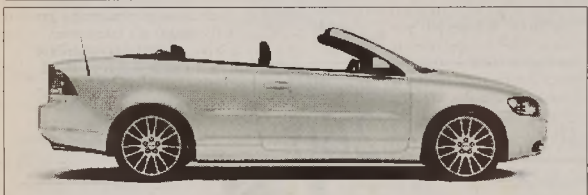
Shaw vs. St. Aug's will always be one of the best rivalries around. And with the two schools dissing each other in football last season, fans were drooling for basketball season to begin. They wasted their DNA.

Yes, the crowds still pack it in to watch the games, but where's the drama, the intrigue, the hatred?

Coaches Jacques Curtis and Antonio Davis are good friends; men's coaches Thomas Hargrove and Robert Brickley have no animosity. There was no middle ground with Hopkins. Before he left the conference, coaches and game officials hated him as much as the white media.

Don't ya just miss it!

BONNITA BEST is sports editor at The Triangle Tribune.



Volvo's C70 convertible: sporty ride at \$40,000.

## C70 converts into must-have ride

Volvo's C70 convertible's roots go back to the coupe used in the

### Test Drive



WINFRED B. CROSS

"The Saint" in the mid '90s. The odd thing is the car didn't show up for a couple of years after the film, so it was nearly dated the day it hit the streets.

Volvo has since dropped the coupe and revamped the convertible into something a bit more spectacular. It's the latest in what's becoming a long line of retractable hardtops.

The car's looks are much like its predecessor, only slightly shorter and wider. It actually looks more like the coupe than convertible.

With the top up, the C70 is twice as stiff as the old convertible.

The top is a wonderful thing, but a tad slow. It takes about 30 seconds for the 11 servos, four hydraulic pumps and glass and steel panels to fully retract or rise. That's eons in top time, but it's a nice show. It all stacks neatly in the trunk, which means I hope you don't have much luggage or anything else to go in there.

Interior space is meant for four, but two will be the most comfortable. The rear seats are serviceable for most children and a small percentage of adults. If nothing else, you could put more stuff in back.

The interior is much like that of every current Volvo. The floating center dash console is present, as is real wood and aluminum trim. Seats with the optional

leather covers are good but I wonder if a little more padding is in order.

More horses are certainly needed. The five-cylinder, turbocharged 218 horsepower 2.5-liter is hardly a race-inspired engine. That's OK because this car is really built for more leisurely driving. It's not that you can't drive it fast. The six-speed manual does inspire you to get spirited, but 218 horses on a car that is 318 pounds heavier - and safer - is just OK.

That's not enough to keep someone away from this car. Heck, you could just sit in the thing and listen to the optional 12-speaker system, which has two, count 'em, two subwoofers.

The C70 has certainly gone from an afterthought to a must-have. Looking to drop \$40,000 or so for a convertible? Take a look at this all-weather drop top.

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