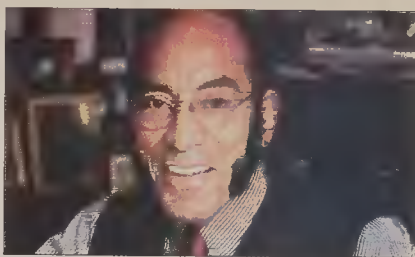


Sports

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2007

SECTION C



HALL OF FAMER/6C

U.S. Business Hall of Fame inductee Earl Graves talks about Black Enterprise magazine, fame and where he'd start a new business today. Graves will be inducted to the hall today at the Westin Charlotte.

Success with or without Woods

Wachovia growing in Tour stature

By Herbert L. White
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Who needs Tiger Woods? The Wachovia Championship, which tees off for its fifth year next week at Quail Hollow Country Club, has nine of the world's top 10 players. Woods, No. 1 in the world rankings, may yet commit - the entry deadline is Friday.

"We don't see which way he's leaning," said Mac Everett, general chairman of the tournament. "Like everybody else, he's got until Friday to decide."

With or without Woods, the Wachovia is already sold out and the purse is a hefty \$6 million. Although not a major tournament, the Charlotte stop is one of the most lucrative on the PGA Tour.

"Our tournament is a sell-out," Everett said. "There are a lot of stops on the tour that aren't. With nine of the top 10 committed and 27 of the top 30, we feel we've got a great field. Obviously, Tiger Woods brings a lot to the field."

Tickets for the entire tournament - at \$140 per book - are long gone and there's now a waiting list for next year. A Mulligan program, where fans can turn in their tickets if they can't catch the afternoon rounds, is available at Carowinds throughout the week. Proceeds will go to local charities, including Teach for America and First Tee, which teaches golf in underserved communities.

"The Charlotte community has really embraced the tournament," Everett said. "We have 2,600 volunteers who take an ownership stake in making the tournament a success. And the top reason the players come is for the golf course. We have a great course and the other things are just gravy."

Charlotte tops W-S in golf

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Charlotte topped Winston-Salem in a Senior Golf Association tournament in Winston-Salem.

The Charlotte squad topped Winston-Salem 20-4 at Winston Lake Golf Course. The Charlotte team captained by James Black was paced by Leroy Roseboro's round of 71, followed by Darryal Watts' 71 and Richard Degreee at 72.

The Winston-Salem group captained by Joe Johnson was led by four golfers with 75: Robert Bertha, Gene Williams, Hiawatha Bertha and Richard Thomas. Richard Williams added a 76.



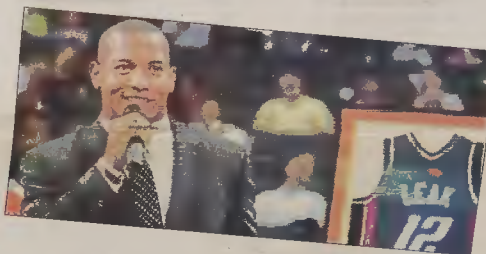
Best in class



FILE PHOTOS

Hampton linebacker Kevin Durant, (top) a three-time Sheridan Broadcasting all-America from Florence, S.C., is near the top of a deep class of defenders.

Florida quarterback Chris Leak, a Charlotte native who led the Gators to the Division I national championship in January, is projected to be a second-day selection. Leak's SEC rival, LSU's JaMarcus Russell is expected to be the first quarterback taken.



Hampton LB among best on defense

By Rick Freeman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Notable players in this weekend's NFL draft, grouped by projected NFL positions. All are seniors unless noted.

DEFENSIVE ENDS
Position outlook: Despite the numbers, the class is kind of weak, with only a few top prospects and some projects.

DEFENSE
GAINES ADAMS, 6-5, 260, Clemson: Quick and dangerous as an end rusher, he also has shown a knack for batting down passes with his agility and lea-

ping ability. Has good escape moves if he doesn't beat his man with speed or explosiveness. Could fill out some. He's agile and can change directions quickly, though he doesn't shed blocks as often as he should.

JAMAAL ANDERSON, junior, 6-6, 279, Arkansas: An excellent prospect when he plays with the proper amount of aggression. He reads plays well and can run down ballcarriers on running plays. His Achilles' heel is his speed off the snap, which is not that good.

JARVIS MOSS, junior, 6-6, 251,

Florida: A talented, nimble athlete who needs to add some bulk and learn to use his hands better to keep linemen at bay. More of a finesse rusher than a power one. His height and quickness help him tip passes.

DEFENSIVE TACKLE
Position outlook: NFL DTs need to do more than just clog up the middle. The elite ones are the kind who can occupy two blockers, freeing their teammates to wreak havoc, or pressure the QB themselves.

ALAN BRANCH, junior, 6-6,
Please see ELITE/2C

LSU's Russell a franchise quarterback

By Rick Freeman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

QUARTERBACK
Outlook: After the much-hyped JaMarcus Russell and Brady Quinn, there's one polished player from a mid-major and a lot of QBs who look like projects right now. Charlotte's Chris Leak, who led Florida to the national championship, is projected as a second-day pick.

OFFENSE
JAMARCUS RUSSELL, junior, 6-foot-6, 263 pounds, LSU: The mammoth Russell has incredible arm strength and above-average

accuracy, especially on long throws. Makes good decisions, both pre- and post-snap, but occasionally will force balls into coverage.

BRADY QUINN, 6-3, 226, Notre Dame: Having thrived the past two seasons in a pro-style offense, Quinn's draft stock solidified. He's put up good numbers, except in games when his offensive line left him scrambling for cover.

KEVIN KOLB, 6-3, 220, Houston: Good arm strength and accuracy, his mechanics are almost perfectly sound. He saw a

lot of action in college, starting for four years and racking up numbers in a short-passing system.

JARED ZABRANSKY, Boise State: The folk hero of the Fiesta Bowl could be a flyer pick at best, due to his inconsistency and lack of big-school pedigree. He could be a dangerous scrambler and runner.

RUNNING BACK
Outlook: They have to be able to run routes, pick up blitzes, get open on broken plays, sell play-action and, oh yeah, tote the ball.
Please see WIDEOUTS/2C

Panthers can't afford to miss this year

By Herbert L. White
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When you're 8-8, there's no good reason to stand pat.

That includes the Carolina Panthers, who have the 14th pick in Saturday's NFL draft. The Panthers have glaring needs: safety, middle linebacker and defensive end on defense; offensive tackle and tight end on

offense.

Here's a wild card: Receiver. OK, Carolina has the game's best at that position in Steve Smith. But Keyshawn Johnson can't stretch defenses and Keary Colbert and Drew Carter don't provide enough balance.

So, don't be surprised if the Panthers go that route. Georgia Tech's Calvin Johnson won't be

available, but if Ohio State's Ted Ginn is, he fixes immediate needs for the offense and a returner on special teams.

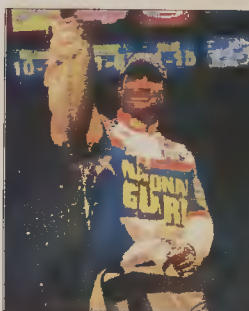
After that, there's defense, which is what this franchise is staking its reputation on. But gamebreakers are priceless.

Regardless, a potent draft class puts Carolina over .500. Anything less could be a mess.



ALFRED WILLIAMS

Hometown: Jackson, Miss.
Events fished: 104 (12 years)
Tournament wins: 3
Top 10 finishes: 10
Career earnings: \$95,338



DEREK JONES

Hometown: Chicago.
Events fished: 73 (nine years)
Top 10 finishes: Five
Career earnings: \$64,646



ROBERT PEARSON

Hometown: Herndon, Va.
Events fished: 44 (nine years)
Largest day's catch: 15 pounds, 13 ounces
Career earnings: \$15,250

Alfred Williams (from top), Derek Jones and Robert Pearson are in the field of 400 anglers at the National Guard Open Bass tournament at Lake Norman.

Payday on the line - and scales

Lake Norman bass tournament worth \$1.5 million

By Herbert L. White
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Big bass means big bucks at Lake Norman this week.

The National Guard Open, which opens today and runs through Sunday, is the richest fishing tournament in North Carolina history with a \$1.5 million purse, with \$200,000 going to the winner.

The tournament is part of the Wal-Mart FLW Tour, the largest bass fishing series in the U.S. More than 400 anglers from 37 states and three foreign countries will compete.

Big catches are the norm at Lake Norman, which is large enough for anglers to spread out.

"Lake Norman is a big and fairly shallow lake," said David Cooke, a tournament veteran in a statement. "I think with even

Please see BIG FISH/2C