



INSIDE STUFF

DICK DEVENZIO

Reporters often call it "pressure" now, which makes it obvious they never went through it themselves. When I hear kids say it, it seems to me they must have incredibly easy lives. I'm talking about the so-called pressure of being recruited as a high school athlete. "USA Today" included a player's diary recently and they seemed to make an effort to highlight the frenzy of it.

"Sports Illustrated" writes about it periodically, also with the zeal of tireless investigative reporters with a bloodhound's mission. But what is so tough about being recruited?

The NCAA has thousands of rules to restrict recruiting; and high school coaches, sometimes with ambition and egos in the way, often make an effort to isolate their players further, while they try to orchestrate a player's contacts and narrow his choices according to their own preferences. In many cases, a high school coach merely wants to get attention himself. It's his brief time to get the ear of the big-timers, to be invited to work at college camps, and to get to rub shoulders with, and be recognized by, the big names in the sports world, all because of one star high school athlete.

Coaches claim they do all this "for the kid," to keep him away from high rollers and shady characters and would-be exploiters. But in the process, I think they often do the kids a disservice.

I personally feel that the college recruiting experience I went through in '66 and '67 was one of the highlights of my life both socially and educationally.

Through contact with hundreds of people and through the bombardment of questions—What do you plan to major in? What factors will determine your decision?—a player had to learn about himself and learn how to express his ideas. Every super salesman has a story. They all claim to be the best. If they do not have the best academic reputation in the nation, then perhaps they have the best athletic program in the southwest corner of a particular state. Taking it all in, a player had to learn to discern fact from fiction.

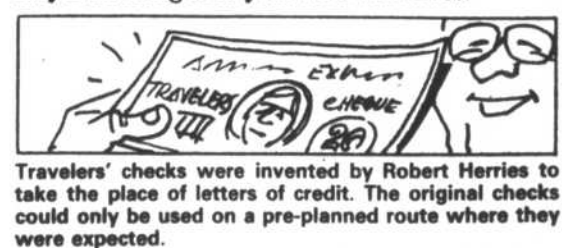
It was a great education. But the athletes don't get it anymore. Now they don't have the chance to make lifelong associations through constant contact with coaches and alumni. The contact is too limited to enable real friendships to form. I think it was better, more personal, more human, more enjoyable when you could see the coaches many times, and they could take you and your family out to dinner as often as you wanted to go.

Under the guise of protectionism, I think the NCAA has stripped from high school athletes a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and in its place are early signings based sometimes on scanty information and limited contact. High school stars are constantly heard to say they want to "get the decision over with" so they can enjoy their senior year in high school. That almost-universal comment tells me that they have been taught to believe that this is the intelligent thing to think and say. They have no idea what they are missing. But the NCAA should.

In many cases, the coaches who are shielding young athletes from college coaches and from media attention are pumping their own egos and are basking in the limelight themselves; and the NCAA, by so restricting recruiting, is denying the athletes an exceptional educational opportunity in the process.

It really isn't so much pressure being wanted, and being pursued. Mostly, it's fun. And it's controllable. Coaches don't purposely try to irritate a kid. They'll take no for an answer once they are made to realize the guidelines a kid or a family has set up.

So, don't bother feeling sorry for any kid who claims the recruiting process is pressure. It's a lot more pressure for the kids who are not wanted, and who spend their senior year wondering what happened to their dreams, where they went wrong, and what they'll be doing next year with their lives.



Travelers' checks were invented by Robert Herries to take the place of letters of credit. The original checks could only be used on a pre-planned route where they were expected.



Michael Mitchell (54) of the Warren County Eagles goes high to score a two-pointer Monday night against Plymouth. The win opened the way for Warren County to appear in tonight's championship game which will give the winner a chance to enter the eastern regionals. (Photos by Concherto Williams)



Jeffery Hayes (30) runs down a loose rebound for Warren County during Monday night action against Plymouth. The two clubs met in a semi-final round of the District I AAA basketball pitting the Roanoke River Conference representative against the Northeastern Conference representative.

Eagles Claw Way Into District Finals

By CONSHERTO WILLIAMS
Sports Writer

Warren County High's varsity boys are one game away from the regional playoff at Wilson, a spot which they earned by defeating Plymouth in the

Tournament Plans Are Announced

The Churchill-Five Forks Volunteer Fire Department will hold its first annual two-man, total weight team bass tournament on Lake Gaston at Eaton's Ferry Marina on Saturday, April 13.

Winners will receive awards as follows: first place, \$1,000; second place, \$500; third place, \$300; and luncheon, \$200.

Advance tickets are \$45 per team through April 3. After that date, tickets will sell for \$50 per team.

For more information, write Ken Smith, Route 2, Box 257, Macon, N.C. 27551 or call Smith at 257-2993 or Carl Lynch at 257-3780.

second round of the District One 3-A tournament Monday night at Ahoskie High School. The 82-61 victory pushed the Eagles to a 24-and-three overall record and moved them nearer the state finals in Greensboro.

Plymouth jumped ahead during the first five minutes of the game. Jeffery Simpson scored the first two field goals for Plymouth, putting them ahead momentarily. With 5:09 on the clock, Kevin Kornegay connected on one for two from the line, giving Plymouth seven points. The Eagles made eight straight field goals, adding 16 points to the nine already showing on the board. Plymouth was unable to score again until, with 34 seconds remaining in the period, Edison Ransome made a field goal. The period ended with the Eagles on top 23-9.

The Eagles scored 16 points in the second period, while Plymouth edged in with 17 points. At the end of the first half, the Eagles had a safe 13-point lead, 39-26.

During the third period, Plymouth came as close as eight points when Tony Young shot one for two on the free throw line with 4:06 on the clock. Warren County then scored six more points while Plymouth was forced to watch them gain their biggest lead of the period, 15 points. By the period's end, Plymouth had cut the Eagles' lead to 13 with a score of 56-43. By 4:55 in the final

period, Plymouth had cut the lead back to 10, but it took only a short time for the Eagles to bring down the victory by 21 points.

Monte Stevenson led the Eagles scoring with 23 points. He was assisted by Jeffrey Hayes with 17, Derrick Alston with 14 and Sean Mosely with 13. Other scorers were Wayne Durham, eight; Sylvester Davis, four; Michael Mitchell, two; and Arnie Stevenson, one.

Leading the Plymouth efforts were Sidney Franklin with 18 points, Tony Young with 13, and Jeffery Simpson with 12. Rounding out the scoring column were Rodney Purvis with four points, Kevin Kornegay with nine, Lee Downing and Edison Ransome with two; and Leroy Punkett with one.

A week earlier, the Eagles had an easy win over Williamston on Tuesday, Feb. 26. The final score was 79-47. Williamston never gained a lead during the game, and the Eagle starting line-up was able to retire with 1:06 left in the third period. The second string played the remainder of the game.

Warren County was led by Derrick Alston with 14 points. Monte

Coupon Clippers
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Some say twins are usually intelligent and fortunate in love.

Steverson and Jeffrey Hayes added 12 points each. Sean Mosely, Wayne Durham, and Clarence Watson scored eight points each, followed by Michael Mitchell with six, Bobby Kearney with four, and Sylvester Davis and

Mark Taylor with two points each. Williamston was led by Tony Doughty with 16 points. Other team scorers were Mike Griffin, eight; George Rucker, eight; Jesse Ward, six; David Little, Sam Johnson and Ricky

Mason, two; and Stacey Peele, one. The Eagles will play Washington High School on Wednesday at Ahoskie in the final round of district action. Game time is 8 p. m. Be there and support the Eagles.

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