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Brown seeks revenge in ACC track meet

by Doug Clark
Staff Writer



Carolina trackster Reggie Brown will be looking for a win in the 600-yard dash this weekend in the ACC conference meet in College Park, Md.

If revenge can be a factor in any race, it will be in the finals of the 600-yard run at the Atlantic Coast Conference championship track meet in College Park, Md., Saturday.

It was in College Park, nearly one year ago, that UNC's Reggie Brown, after losing a photo-finish to Maryland's Bill Ohlmacher, was disqualified for shoving. His time of 1:11.0, which would have qualified him for the national championships, was disallowed.

"I think it was a planned strategy against me," said Brown, a senior from Port o' Spain, Trinidad, and the co-captain of this year's team.

"I was put in a pocket. One (Maryland runner) elbowed me from inside. One elbowed me from outside. One was in front of me."

When he made his move on the final turn, said Brown, one of the Terrapin runners cut him off. "I had to touch him to keep from falling down," he said in a soft-spoken West Indian accent. Still, Brown nearly won the race, but after much controversy, Maryland was awarded the first three places, and Brown was left with nothing.

"I think it is going to be more interesting this year," said Brown. "From what happened last year they (Maryland) know they will have to come real good to beat me. I know what I have to do to win. I will be the target. I plan to go out from the start. There will be no holding back."

The fact that Brown has not lost a race at 600 yards this season does not hurt his confidence. But his best

time this season of 1:12.3 is not his best ever, and is well off the national qualifying standard of 1:10.7. But he attributes that to the fact that he hasn't yet met strong enough competition. He confidently expects to both qualify for the nationals Saturday, and to remain undefeated.

"Conference has always been something important to me," he said. "You use other meets for a preparation. Being athletic captain and a senior

doesn't put a lot of pressure on me. Track is an intrinsic love. Once you love something like that the pressure you feel you take easily."

Brown would love to beat Maryland Saturday, but the Terrapins have dominated ACC track. This year they are expected to win — again. But Brown does not accept that.

"If there are surprises to come they will be in this track season," he said. "What makes me mad is everybody says Maryland has a good team, but I think we have the ability. We have to get it into the guys that we can win. I think we're going to win a good amount of races." Among others, he named the 600 and the mile relay.

Brown is the anchorman of the mile relay. He has a personal best of 46.8 for the 440, and plans to try out for the Trinidad Olympic team in that event this spring.

But of immediate concern is the ACC meet. An indication that Brown has not approached his best performance of the season has been the absence of one of his trademarks — a broad smile, flashing two gold teeth, during a race.

"My way of relaxing under pressure is to smile," said Brown. "It's a way to say the guy next to me is nothing. I've been running so easily there wasn't any need for a smile."

Although teammates Charles Matheson and Chris Cox have been running close behind Brown, it has not been close enough to push him to the kind of time he is capable of.

Saturday, he said, "I only hope I get a running push instead of a physical push."

And if he does, Reggie Brown could be smiling again.

Susan Shackelford

Problems continue to mar Dome's image

Football teams from the Sigma Nu fraternity and the business school played each other on a chilly November night in New Orleans. The "game" was covered by local newspapers and even noted by a national magazine.

About 3,000 watched. The "fans" weren't there to see any highly-perfected collegiate football skills. Most were Tulane University students, drinking beer and socializing at their campus football field.

They were at Tulane Stadium, instead of the Louisiana Superdome, where their varsity football team was playing the University of North Carolina. Tulane student Morris Kahn explained the lack of fan attendance at the \$163 million, downtown arena, where UNC again played Tulane, only this time in basketball.

"This is not a protest against the team. It is against the dome," Kahn told a local newspaper during football season.

Kahn, who led the boycott, said they were protesting poor management by Superdome Services, Inc. (SSI). Dome food prices are too high; Tulane football players had been allowed only 2½ practices there; and the student fans ride buses into town because of limited parking, they complained.

The issue with management has been only one of the many problems with the

Superdome since taxpayers approved its funding by a 3:1 margin in 1966 and saw it open less than four months ago, Oct. 31, 1975.

The Houston Astrodome, which in 1965 was the first dome structure in the world, has overcome most of its difficulties. The Superdome is both a different story and a continuing story. Financial, legal and most recently management setbacks have kept the Superdome and indoor sports arenas, in general, in the minds of many.

This includes North Carolinians, who don't have any sports facility in the state that seats over 16,000. State Sen. Julian Allsbrook, D-Northampton County, proposed in the last N.C. General Assembly that \$50,000 be appropriated for a large-scale study of an indoor sports arena for the state. His idea called for a 25,000-seat facility at a cost of about \$25 million.

Burdened with budget-cutting and high levels of unemployment last spring, the legislators did not approve money for the study. They did set up the Legislative Research Commission, which includes state house and senate members, to look into the arena suggestion.

The sports facility committee falls under finance-related matters, which is only one of 10 areas of the Legislative Research

Commission. The committee is headed by Allsbrook and Rep. Jack Gardner of Smithfield and has a \$3,770 budget.

Problems plague dome

In the present Superdome situation, SSI head Sherman N. Copelin's administration has been criticized for padding payroll figures, showing a lack of courtesy to fans at the dome, not keeping paper towels and toilet paper in the restrooms and failing to clean the dome's concrete and carpeted surfaces. These questions of quality service were also a part of the student protest at Tulane Stadium.

Most recently, a special grand jury seated last week in Baton Rouge is investigating the Superdome and may subpoena present and past dome officials to testify. East Baton Rouge Parish Dist. Atty. Ossie Brown said he is publicly going to state what the findings are and if there is evidence of wrongdoing, his office will prosecute or refer the matter to Orleans Parish Dist. Atty. Harry Connick's office for prosecution.

Though management skepticism has marred the dome's image, by far the biggest worry has been money. Originally the dome was set at \$50,000 and \$35 million, but those figures rose quickly to almost 100,000 and \$163 million. Now many reliable observers predict that by 1999, when the State of Louisiana pays off interest on the bonds it is floating to finance the dome, the building may cost over \$300 million.

Already, since its opening, the Superdome has accumulated a \$4.3 million deficit, and Louisiana citizens know they are ultimately responsible for paying the difference between the dome's income and its debts.

Before the recent attacks on the dome operations, other snags occurred during the four-year building period. Memories of almost two dozen court suits to stop construction and contracts that didn't always go to the lowest bidder haunt many Louisiana voters. For example, Ad Art of California submitted the highest bid (\$4.6 million) for four, eight-by-88-foot scoreboards, and it got the job. And the contract for security, crowd control and janitor service went to the now criticized SSI without a bid.

Overall the dome's financial difficulties seem to stem from a firm resolution by

Louisiana leaders, such as former Gov. John J. McKeithan. He realized that, according to initial estimates, the Astrodome would be larger than the Superdome.

Responding to the situation, he said, "We're not going to let a couple million dollars stop us (from being the biggest)." He and other guiding forces behind the dome successfully pushed for the "big" goal. And now, the Superdome has cost over four times as much as the Astrodome. The Louisiana Superdome, located only a few blocks from New Orleans' famous French Quarter of jazz and Bourbon Street, is the largest indoor room in the world.

Upside down cereal bowl

Compared to Houston, the Superdome roof is 680 feet in diameter, while the Astrodome's is 642. The Superdome is 273 feet high, and the Astrodome is only 208. For football, the Superdome accommodates 75,000, and the Astrodome, 52,000.

The Superdome resembles a gold-sided cereal bowl burned upside down on a concrete slab. The Astrodome will fit inside it. The Superdome's theatre-like seating may be altered into different configurations by shifting sections that are on moveable tracks on the floor.

A six-sided, 26-by-22 foot television screen hangs above the center of the field, providing instant replays and closeups of the players. The dome contains 75,000 feet of carpeting, 88 bathrooms, 9,000 tons of air conditioning, and in general, enough concrete to build a four-foot wide sidewalk 400 miles long. The dome was conceived by New Orleans businessman David Dixon.

In Pontiac, Mich., a \$55.7 million facility should be ready in two years. It will have an 80,400 capacity. Montreal is also pushing for completion of its dome by the '76 Olympics. The man who nurtured the concept of a dome in America was Judge Roy Hofheinz, the chief mover in the Astrodome. As mayor of Houston in the 1950's, Hofheinz made two trips to Rome. While there, he visited the 160-foot high Colosseum, built in 80 A.D. When he returned to the United States, he said:

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