

Sponsored By Wade Ford
ACC INSIDE STUFF
 Dick DeVenzio

Remember the days when the pre-season used to end and nearly every ACC team was undefeated? Somewhere along the line, that has changed. This year, already, the best ACC teams have lost. Do these names sound familiar? Illinois, Richmond, UCLA, Iowa, Temple, LSU. All of these teams have dealt losses to ACC teams and, ironically, Wake Forest and Clemson are the only teams without losses as of this writing.

I guess you can call this parity, or maybe it's just a bad beginning. In any case, recent history has shown us that there is no special value to winning early or dominating people in December. Is it possible the ACC coaches are preparing differently from in the past?

I doubt the preparation has been significantly different, although sometimes the approach to the early games may be different from what it would be later in the season. Against UCLA, Dean Smith probably would not have stayed in a strung out pressure defense had that game been an NCAA tournament game. Early in the season, a coach like Smith will let his team keep getting beaten on double team attempts, for the "film value." The mistakes will be shown over and over—and the "stars" will have to watch closely, because those mistakes caused a loss. The teaching benefits, thus, will pay dividends later.

The inexperienced coach won't take a chance using an ineffective strategy for teaching purposes, but ACC coaches can afford it, especially a Dean Smith.

On the other hand, it really isn't possible to pretend that the early losses to non-conference opponents are primarily attributable to experimentation. The conference isn't as strong as it has been.

The big story unfolding in the coming weeks may involve the attempt of the NCAA to put some lights on the outside income of college coaches. Coaches, of course, resent this attempted intrusion; and many coaches throughout the nation have been vocal in their criticism of the NCAA.

Billy Tubbs, the head coach at Oklahoma has said he doesn't mind the attempt to limit coaches' income as long as the colleges are consistent: limit presidents' outside income, don't let presidents or professors hold positions on corporate boards or receive outside income either.

Alabama's Wimp Sanderson has said he would certainly test any NCAA legislation in court if his personal income is somehow limited.

Jim Valvano, recently featured by USA Today, as one of the nation's richest producers of outside income, hasn't been particularly vocal about this issue, probably because he is confident that the NCAA will fail to pass legislation with any teeth in it—or that any legislation passed will not bother him. Valvano is probably too smart for the NCAA. You can figure Valvano, if anyone, will find ways to bypass NCAA legislation.

Legal experts have pointed out that the courts are remarkably consistent in striking down any attempt of an authority like the NCAA to suppress income in this way. But the NCAA, in typical fashion, rarely concerns itself with what is or is not against the law. The NCAA bureaucracy basically feels it can pass anything and claim it is in the interest of college sports; therefore, important issues like players' welfare will be put off at least one more year, while the bureaucrats spend their time talking and voting on issues that either won't pass or which have no chance of withstanding appeals in the courts.

In my opinion, the NCAA continues to be a blight on college sports, but if the season manages to run its course without major incidents, it certainly will be a wide open field of 64 in the NCAA tournament. It truly looks like, this year, that 30 or 40 teams could win it all.

Jayvees Edge Huss 70-67 To Break Losing Streak

Brad Wilson's free throw with seven seconds remaining iced a 70-67 victory for Kings Mountain High's jayvee basketballers over Gastonia Hunter Huss Tuesday afternoon at the KMHS gym.

The jayvee Mountaineers, who broke a two-game losing streak, go into the Christmas break with a 3-2 record. They

return to action on January 6 at South Point.

Four players scored in double figures Tuesday for Coach Ronnie Funderburke's team. Jeffrey Ross led the way with 26 points and hit 62 percent of his field goal attempts. John Hill added 14 and Wilson and Shane Conner

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Wrestlers Edge Wildcats

Kings Mountain heavyweight Wayne Brazzell pinned North Gaston's Ray McSwain in the first period of the final match of the evening to give the Mountaineers a 37-36 victory in their first dual meet of the season Thursday in the KMHS gym.

The Mountaineers will compete in the Shelby Invitational Saturday and then take a holiday break before returning to action on January 3 in the Crest Invitational.

Coach Steve Moffitt hopes to use the break to get some wrestlers healthy. Several are nursing injuries at this point, including Brazzell who was injured Saturday in the Mitchell Invitational.

"This is the worst we've been hit by injuries since I've been coaching here," Moffitt said. "We have so many people out it's unreal. Hopefully, we'll get some people well and be in good shape by the

time the conference matches roll around."

With only nine wrestlers competing, the Mountaineers didn't fare well in the Mit-

chell Tournament Saturday. Tony Parker and Daron Hillman finished second, John Turner was third and Anthony Hillman fourth.

"Anthony Hillman has really been a surprise for us," said Moffitt. "He didn't wrestle last year but he's improving every week."

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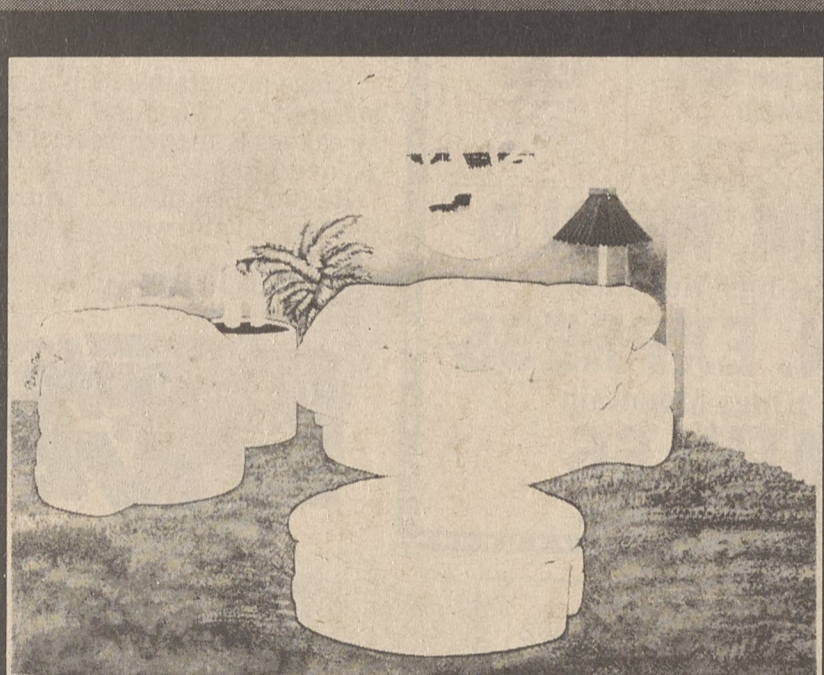
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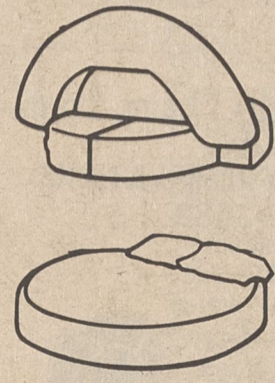
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