For people who like to smoke...

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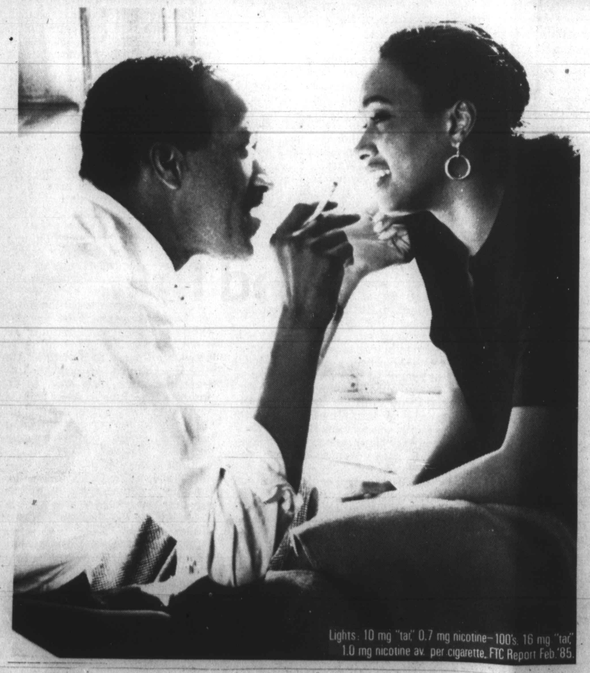

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The Afro-American SPORTS Section B

■ International News 3B
■ Business Pulse 6B

SAM LACY

Curse?

You sit and watch a baseball game such as last Tuesday night's All-Star event at Cincinnati, in total indifference as to its outcome .... On this night, you're a fan .... You just want a good game, no matter which side wins.

Then comes the third inning and you find yourself rooting for the National League to catch up and tie the 2-1 American League lead .... And you ask yourself why, since this was a contest in which you felt no real personal allegiance to either side.

Comes the dawn

Suddenly, it strikes home .... You are hoping the Nationals will tie because in that way the loss, if it comes, will not be charged to Dwight Gooden, the score will be at 2-2, and someone else will become the donkey .... So?

In the subconscious, it occurs to you that Gooden had been the losing pitcher in his other All-Star appearance — beaten 3-2 at Houston in 1986.

Then you look back further and you realize that black pitchers have a history of so-so performances in inter-league play, such as All-Star games and World Series confrontations.

No clippings, please

A classic example of this unexplainable dilemma is Don Newcombe of the old and highly successful Dodgers .... The same year, 1956, when he had 27 regular season victories, wrapped up both the Cy Young and MVP awards, Newk was twice blasted in the World Series, coming out of the set with the Yankees with a 21.21 earned-run average over 4⅔ innings .... In 5⅔ innings of the previous year's (1955) World Series, he was blistered with a 9.53 ERA.

The big righthander stands retired with an 0-4 World Series record, his clippings negated.

Hall of Famers

Hall of Famer Juan Marichal appeared in eight All-Star games, won twice .... Hall of Famer Bob Gibson, often referred to as one of baseball's all-time great hurlers, posted a 4-2 record in two World Series .... However, Marichal turned an amazing 0.50 ERA in his 18 innings as an all-star, and Gibson's 1.51 was equally spectacular for his 1964 and 1968 World Series efforts.

Luis Tiant was loser in both of his All-Star game efforts, but was a two-time winner on World Series mounds .... Joe Black was a surprise starter when he beat the Yankees in the opening game of the 1952 Series .... But he wound up that fall losing the next two times out.

A blue Blue

Vida Blue was 0-3 in World Series performance despite presence on the mighty Oakland A's of the early seventies .... He was 2-0 as an all-star pitcher.

"Mudcat" Grant was 2-1 for Minnesota in the 1965 Series, flunked in the star shows of the two years on either side of the Twins' pennant season.

Dock Ellis who made World Series starts for the Pirates in 1971 and the Yankees in 1976, could win for neither .... He was 0-1 with a 15.43 ERA for Pittsburgh and 0-1 with a 10.80 ERA for New York.

Coincidence or....?

And when the New York Mets and Boston Red Sox hooked up in the '86 World Series, neither Gooden nor "Oil Can" Boyd could win a game.

Now would you call all this a concealed coincidence or a subtle curse?

Notable Quotable

Hank Aaron, Hall of Fame outfielder and all-time homerun champion:

"It took me 17 years to get 3,000 hits in baseball. I did it in one afternoon on the golf course."

SPORTS on deck

WHAT'S A MINORITY?: In Fenway Park, the word is a no-no, as fired white managers are replaced by hired white managers (1st Sports).

* * *

DOUBLE-THREAT: At Norfolk State, one Sweat is not enough, especially when there are two available (1st Sports).

* * *

BLACK MAGIC?: It seems to work in reverse for star pitchers like Dwight Gooden, Don Newcombe et al (Lacy column).

Husband-wife team Norfolk St. coaches

NORFOLK, VA — A double barreled package, believed to be one of the most successful husband-wife coaching teams in the history of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) will ply its trade in new surroundings during the upcoming 1988-89 collegiate basketball and track campaigns.

James "Jim" Sweat, who coached Hampton University's women's basketball team to this year's NCAA Division II national title, and his wife, LaVerne, who developed the Lady Pirates into a national contender in women's track, joined the faculty and athletic staff at Norfolk State University on July 1.

Jim Sweat will succeed Isaac "Ike" Moorehead, who is relinguishing the reins of the NSU women's basketball team after an eight-year tenure at the helm.

LaVerne Sweat will fill a year-long coaching vacancy that has existed in the university's women's track program.

In addition to coaching women's track, LaVerne Sweat will serve as head coach of volleyball, coordinate the women's sports program and teach in the Department of Physical Education and Jim Sweat will serve in the area of student affairs.

This year, Jim Sweat's Lady Pirates defeated number one ranked West Texas State (65-48) in the finals of the NCAA championship tournament held in Fargo, ND.

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LaVerne Sweat's Hampton women's track team captured the 1987 and 1988 CIAA track championships, finished second in the NCAA indoor nationals in 1987 and 1988 and placed third in the NCAA outdoor national championship meet this year while winning national titles in two relay events. Sweat's thinclads also annexed four CIAA titles.

In 1981, the CIAA's first woman president was named the NAIA national women's track coach of the year and coached the U.S. World University track and field team in Bucharest, Romania.

LaVerne and Jim Sweat
new Spartan coaching combination

Zina fails In Belgium; Lori triumphs at home

The celebrated "Texas Twins," separated by desire last week, came out of their respective tennis efforts with mixed results.

Zina Garrison and Lori McNeil actually are not related although both formerly played out of the same Houston camp, are close friends and are the same age at 24. However, each now competes on a separate leg of the Virginia Slims circuit.

Last week Zina played the Belgium stop at Brussels and was defeated by a virtual unknown, Isabel Cueto of West Germany, in the third round.

At the same time, Lori remained at home to seek the Slims title at Newport, RI.

She won the event as the second seed behind Pam Shriver of Baltimore. Shriver was turned back by Barbara Potter of Woodbury, CT, on Saturday in a mild upset.

This placed the burden on McNeil in the final. And Lori was equal to the task.

She disposed of Potter on Sunday, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, to take home the $40,000 first prize from her second singles crown of the year, the fourth of her career.

One-on-One

American long jump record-holder Jackie Joyner-Kersee was in a hurry. After one jump in the Outdoor Track and Field Championships at Tampa last Friday, she rushed off to attend the wedding of sensational newcomer Gail Deavers. Deavers, incidentally, is considered a future threat to Jackie's heptathlon domination.

It's all in the family

News lines of the past week produced situations in which promising young athletes seemed to have taken cues from their fathers — who in their time also were outstanding athletes.

Sam "Bam" Cunningham had numerous salary bouts with the New England Patriots while he was setting the team's all-time rushing record (5,453 yards) during the mid and late seventies as fullback.

Today, son Randall Cunningham is telling the Philadelphia Eagles he is provoked by the club's reluctance to offer him a salary befitting a "quality" quarterback.

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Former heavyweight Ken Norton sparred outside the ring over fight purses as much as he did inside the ring first seeking, then defending, the title.

Twice during negotiations prior to a Muhammad Ali match, Ken, Sr., threatened to hold out.

On Wednesday, Kenny Norton, Jr. ended his stance as the last holdout against the Dallas Cowboys. He's a linebacker and an NFL first-round draft pick.

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Baseball fans are familiar with the stories of Bobby Bonds and Jose Tartabull, both of whom went through skirmishes with their clubs over pay comparable to their talents.

Barry Bonds and Danny Tartabull have not engaged their respective clubs thus far, but it is deemed inevitable that their time will come . . . LACY.

David DuPree from 'Good Times' Mag

Here's one nice guy who finished first

If a coach or player is to be judged on winning, former Bullets coach K.C. Jones is unequalled.

Nice guys finish last do they?

Not in this case.

This is one nice guy who finished first — almost all of the time.

Jones, 56, retired as coach of the Boston Celtics at the end of the playoffs to become a team vice president and player personnel director.

He will leave a legacy that, as a coach and as a player, is staggering.

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In nine seasons as a defensive specialist for the Celtics, he collected eight NBA championship rings; he was an assistant coach of the Los Angeles Lakers during the 1971-72 season when the Lakers had the best record in NBA history (69-13) and won the NBA championship. And in eight seasons as an NBA head coach, three with the Bullets and the last five with the Celtics, Jones won seven division titles, five Eastern Conference titles and two world championships.

"It was really fun playing for K.C.," says guard Danny Ainge.

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Jones scoffs at the nice guy tag.

"I'm a good guy, not a nice guy," he says, "and there's a world of difference there. Nice guys get walked on. Good guys can make decisions and respond to situations."

'Team' has always been the key word for Jones, and if nothing else, his teams — the ones he's played on and the ones he's coached — have always shown a certain togetherness that's guided them through the hard times.

"The most important thing to me is that the team has done well," says Jones, "and that I was a part of the team."

K.C. Jones
'. . not nice guy, good guy . .

Finding someone to say something negative about Jones is virtually impossible.

His players love him, his peers respect him.

"He's got our respect as a coach and as a person," says Celtics star Larry Bird, "and he's a better person than he is a coach, so that should tell you something about him."

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Some teams win in spite of the coach, and some teams win because of their coach. The Celtics won partly because of Jones and partly for him.

"He says what he has to say in simple terms and he expects you to respond," says all-star forward Kevin McHale. "What he says makes sense. He was the perfect coach for the team.

Born in Tyler, Texas, Jones was named after his father. Oddly enough, neither the 'K' nor the 'C' stand for anything. His name is simply K.C. Jones.

Jones says his father was named after the railroad engineer, but no one in the family knew it was spelled Casey Jones.

Everyone who knows basketball knows who K.C. Jones is, however.

"He's never gotten his due," says Lakers coach Pat Riley, who has dueled with Jones in four of the last five NBA Finals series. "People just don't understand the difficulties in coaching a team that is expected to win all the time. Being involved in as many championships as K.C. has is simply phenomenal.

(David DuPree is a black writer who covers the NBA for USA Today.)