AREA SPORTS

SPORTSCENE

By Fred Lindsey

CIAA Basketball Tournament

This week-end, it is the CIAA Tournament, next week, it is the MEAC and on March 9-12, the SWAC Tournament gets under way.

While Black college sports doesn't receive the publicity of the major Division I or some Division II schools, black conferences are still turning out the talent. Whether the talent is athletic or academic, black conferences need their just do.

With the CIAA Tournament expected to attract only 12,000 fans or so for the 14-team, four-day event, it is still a positive force in our communities. Perhaps we equate bigness with being better, but one only has to look back a few years to see that the CIAA has had its share of heroes. In basketball, such former standouts like Boston Celtic great Sam Jones, Harlem Globetrotter Curley Neal, Baltimore Bullet/New York Knick Earl "the Pearl" Monroe and of late Charles Oakley are all products of the CIAA.

Because Bowie State is the areas' only CIAA representative, many of us are missing the infamy of black Division II basketball. As "blue chip" Athletes shun black colleges for all the obvious reasons, schools like Hampton, Virginia State, Shaw University and Winston Salem State continue their roles for educating and turning out great athletes, they are most importantly producing good citizens.

The 44th, CIAA Tournament, which began Wednesday at the Scope in Norfolk, Va., will be a homecoming of sorts for many its devotees, holding to the traditionally black concepts of getting reacquainted with friends, extending well wishes and to party.

Sam Jones, a legend in the CIAA and the NBA, who is now a basketball analysis for Black Entertainment Television said the CIAA grew in popularity during the 1950s and 1960s because it was a conference that allowed black players to be more creative with a wide-open brand of basketball, but the CIAA Tournament was a time to "take care of business" and have fun afterwards!

"While there is still talent in the conference," Jones said, "All the better players want to play Division I, primarily because of their advantages, but for the kid that wants to play without the pressure that comes at the Division I level, the CIAA is the place to be."

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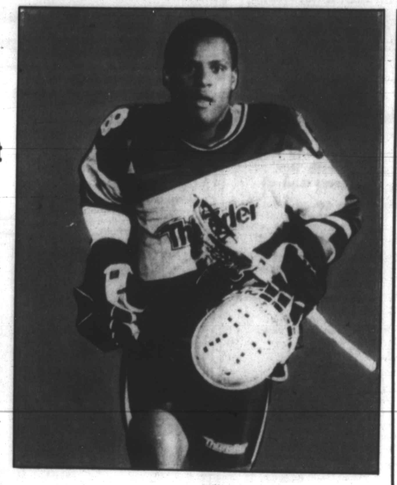


Rick Sowell leads the Thunder in total points.

Meet Rick Sowell of Baltimore Thunder

By Fred Lindsey
AFRO Sports Writer

In a game that is as fast as road racing, Box Lacrosse provides many a thrill for the experience fan.

But for many of us, lacrosse is a sport that we lest think about and that is unfortunate.

Although, it is not as physical as I would like to see it, lacrosse is an enjoyable game to watch, appreciate and to delight in the skills of those who play it expertly. Rick Sowell is such a person.

Unique to the sport of lacrosse, as well as to the Baltimore Thunder, the professional team in the City, Sowell appears to be an athlete who is reminiscent of the "good ole" days when athletes sacrifice everything for their team. Because lacrosse is the consummate team sport, teamwork is everything.

The 6'0", 175-lb. could easily pass for that NFL halfback who can dart through the holes of a football line, as well as run over people, but instead he chose lacrosse as a vocation.

"I really chose lacrosse as my sport because of the respect I had for one of my coaches,"Sowell said. "As a sophomore in high school, I was a football player who quit baseball to play lacrosse. My JV football coach needed players to field a team and because of my respect for him, I tried it and I've kept the sport with me through college and now through the professional ranks."

While lacrosse may seem like a complex game, it really is not. Sowell equates the game to basketball.

"Although there are many facits to it, lacrosse is not a difficult game to play," Sowell said. "Stick work is the most important thing, but if you can pass and catch and play defense similar to that in basketball, you can play lacrosse."

As a member of MILL (Major Indoor Lacrosse League), the Baltimore Thunder are only enjoying moderate success. With a 3-4 record, losers of four straight, they are desperately trying to make the playoffs and to show more improvement from their 2-6 record of a year ago. Sowell reflects on his team.

"The Thunder is the type of team with very little experience," Sowell said. "It is the type of team that has players on it who never played box lacrosse and as a consequence, other teams are finding ways to beat us; however, we are improving."

In his second year with the Thunder, Sowell, 25, a Washington College graduate is currently living in Washington, D.C. Originally from "upstate New York," he is a gym teacher and lacrosse coach at St. Albans High School in the District. He hopes to turn his team fortunes around.

"My goal has always been to be the very best I can be as an individual and for the team," Sowell said. "It takes the right frame of mind that the right attitude to win and I feel that if I had worked a little harder I may have prevented our four consecutive defeats."

At any level, it is a pleasure to meet athletes like Sowell and if you saw him play, lacrosse could become your game too.

"While Baltimore has the lowest attendance in the league, even with the entry of two new expansion teams, I feel that lacrosse and the league is doing good," Sowell said. "I believe that lacrosse is on the upswing. The league is averaging 10,000 per game in attendance and in Detroit and Philadelphia, it is higher. I just hope that lacrosse catches on in Baltimore."

Metro Classic Set

The all new Metro Classic will host the MSA Conference Championships and the Catholic and Public School Girl Basketball Championships at the Baltimore Arena, Sunday, March 5th

All proceeds from the event will go to the Fuel Fund of Central Maryland to assist needy families to pay their winter heating bills.

The times for the games are:

12:30 p.m. MSA "C" Conference Championship.
2:30 p.m. MSA "B" Conference Championship
4:30 p.m. Catholic and Public League Girls Championship
6:30 p.m. MSA "A" conference Championship

For information, Call 563-7070.

Short Shots

By Fred Lindsey
AFRO Sports Writer

MEAC Round Robin Baseball Tournament

The Mid Eastern Atlantic Conference has announced that it will start its Baseball Round Robin Tournament. February 24-28 at Mirmow Field and City Recreation Field near the campus of host institution South Carolina State College in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

While Coppin State College is the only area school to participate, the conference teams will include Bethune-Goodman, Florida A & M, North Carolina A & T, Delaware State, Howard University and the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore.

With a North and South Division, the MEAC has instituted the policy of a two hour time limit on all contests and a ten run rule after five innings.

Coppin plays Bethune-Cookman in its first game on February 24th.

Opportunity Unlimited, Inc. Announces Ball

On Sunday, February 26th, Opportunity Unlimited will have an open house and a press conference to announce that Opportunity Unlimited, Inc. will sponsor the Charm City Night Life Contest and Ball, to raise money for the Charm City Basketball Leagues.

The announcement will take place at Carver High, at 1:30 p.m. For more information, contact Leroy Nichols at 396-0564.

Women's Rugby Team Needs Players

The Chesapeake Women's Rugby Club is inviting all interested women to experience the exciting, fast-paced, contact sport of rugby. Although the game involves running, kicking, pushing, passing and tackling, it is relatively safe. The team seeks women of all strengths, sizes and speeds. (Some positions are best played by the small and the quick).

For more infromation, contact Gina Holsey, director of recruitment at 435-5400.

City-Wide Baseball Organizes

The Baltimore City Division of Amateur Athletics, City-Wide Baseball League organizational meetings will be held at the Virginia S. Baker/Patterson Park Recreation Center, 2601 East Baltimore Street, on the following dates:

On Tuesday, March 7th, at 7:00 p.m., the 12 and under the 14 and under and the CYO will hold their meetings. On Tuesday, March 21, at 7:00 p.m., the 16 and under, the 20 and under and the Unlimited will hold meetings.

If anyone is interested in putting a team into the league or needs more information, call the Division of Amateur Athletics at 396-9310, Monday through Friday.

Maryland High School Wrestling Classic

The Maryland High School Wrestling Classic will be held Tuesday, March 7th, at 7:30 p.m., at the Johns Hopkins University Athletic Center.

The Classic will be a senior all-star triangular match between teams representing the Maryland Scholastic Association and Independent Schools, the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association Division 4A/3a and the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association Division 2A/1A.

Gold, silver or bronze medals will be awarded to participants plus outstanding lightweight and heavyweight trophies.

For additional information, call Haswell Franklin 539-2320.

City Basketball Tournament

With Southern and Craig Tyson and Western with Dana Johnson, the class of city basketball for the 1988-89 season, the Baltimore City Public Schools' Basketball Tournament will be held this Saturday and Sunday at Coppin State College.

Tyson, a 6-4 senior, is being called the "best all-around player" in Baltimore, while Johnson, a 6-2 sophmore, has shown tremendous improvement in skills to be considered a major force in girls basketball for the next two years and beyond.

For Southern, the position of being first at season's end is something that has alluded Meredith Smith's team for nearly ten years, and although Southern has beaten Lake Clifton this year, they have to face Lake in the opening round of the tournament.

"It is difficult to beat any team twice," Smith said, "and it is even more difficult to beat a quality team like Lake Clifton twice, but if we are to be champions that's a hurdle we will have to take."

At Western, where the Doves are more familiar with the top position, it would appear that this year's climb to the summit was much easier than it has been in the past.

"We never take anything for granted," said Western coach Breezy Bishop. "We had to work just as hard this year as we have in the past. Being number one is our goal every year and we hate to settle for anything less."

The following are the game schedules for both days of the tournament:

Saturday, February 25th
Semi-Final Games
1:00 p.m. (Girls Walbrook (13-3) vs. City College (10-4)
2:50 p.m. (Boys) Walbrook (10-9) vs. Dunbar (17-4)
4:40 p.m. (Girls) Western (19-1) vs. Poly (9-6)
6:30 p.m. (Boys) Lake Clifton (16-2) vs. Southern (16-2)

Sunday, February 26th
Championship Games
3:00 p.m. Saturday's girl winners play each other
5:00 p.m. Saturday's boys winners play each other.

SPORTS

Sam Lacy

Deuce!

Lookout, world, here comes a solid new contingent of black tennis players to classic status.

The warning here is inspired by early developments in the Virginia Slims of Washington Tournament, held last week at the Patriot Center of George Mason University in Fairfax (Va.).

"Deuce" is the term used to indicate that there is a tie in the competition . . . . That's what happened on the first two days of play when Jeri Ingram won one match and Stacey Martin lost one . . . . Our kids deuced the world in those opening matches, although they didn't last long thereafter . . . . Nor were they expected to — yet.

Quick baptism

The 16-year-old Ingram of Silver Spring (Md.) turned upward of 4,000 heads when she rocked Wendy White of Atlanta, in the second match of Monday's opening . . . . White, a veteran of seven years on the international scene, succumbed in 2 hours, 25 minutes, 4-6, 7-6, 6-4.

Martin, a 17-year-old sophomore at the University of Tennessee, received a quick baptism . . . . In what might be called a cruel trick of fate, the Largo (Md.) rookie drew the world's most dominating player, Steffi Graf of West Germany . . . . Graf dispatched the nerve-wracked youngster, 6-1, 6-1, in 39 minutes.

But Stacey "learned a lot," she said afterward.

Chicagoan Katrina Adams, just two months into her 20th year, tossed a mild bombshell at Wimbledon last summer before bowing out in the fourth round of singles and reaching the doubles quarter-finals partnering Zina Garrison.

Katrina, however, thoroughly lacking experience in indoor play, was ousted in the first round at Patriot Center, succumbing to 26-year-old French veteran Isabelle Demongeot, 6-3, 6-3.

The regulars

For several years, the AFRO has kept up a week-to-week pursuit of the deeds of Yannick Noah, Nduka Odizor, Chip Hooper among the men . . . . and Zina Garrison, Lori McNeil, Camille Benjamin and Renee Blount (now retired) as they moved around the world on their respective pro tennis tours.

But, discovered lately is a surprising number of newcomers of whom much may be expected . . . . It is this expectation that triggers the notion for today's column.

Noah's name has been prominent in international circles for the past decade. At the outset he was helped by the discovery and endorsement by Arthur Ashe. Since then his performance has enhanced the recognition that is so much needed in this previously ultra-conservative sport.

Odizor, from Nigeria, improved after his 1982 arrival at Wimbledon and after moving to Houston. But his game while still competitive seems to have flattened out.

The same slowdown took over with Hooper after a 1980-81 splash in Europe and at the U.S. Open.

Zina & Lori

Garrison and McNeil have displayed ability on the women's tour since 1983, both having held a place among the top 15 money winners for the past five years.

Zina medalled with a gold (in doubles with Pam Shriver) and a bronze (after defeating Shriver) at the Seoul Olympics.

Behind them are noteworthy victories — Garrison over Martina Navratilova last summer and McNeil over Chris Evert a year ago.

No Ashe, Althea

On the men's side Ronald Agenor of Haiti climbed from a 74th ranking to 26th after scoring victories (in various tournaments) over Mats Wilander, Andre Agassi, Aaron Krikstein, Joakim Nystrom and Noah, all veteran touristas.

Then there is Roger Smith of the Bahamas with a shocker over Ivan Lendl in Vermont, and Todd Nelson of Indianapolis dropped a surprise on USLTA star David Pate in early August.

It is a respectable assortment of young players who — though there's not an Ashe or Althea Gibson among them yet — could offer some real incentives for kids of tomorrow.

Notable quotable

Jim Dent, former long-driving champion on the pro golf tour:

"Oh, I can airmail the ball alright, but sometimes it doesn't have the right address on it."

He asked for it and he got it

TOLEDO, Ohio (UPI) — Central Michigan basketball coach Charlie Coles was reprimanded and placed on probation for the rest of the season Monday by the Mid-American Conference for criticizing officials.

The action stems from comments made by Coles to the news media about officiating following Central's 66-57 loss to Western Michigan Wednesday night.

The MAC office, in announcing the action, said the comments made by Coles were "contradictory to the sportsmanship code enforced by the Mid-American Conference as well as the MAC rule that prohibits public criticism of officials either after a game or in any open forum."

In a post-game news conference Coles said the MAC has the worst officiating of any league and that he would welcome a reprimand for his remark. He had no comment on the action Monday.

* * *

The 8th annual Project Surivival Golf Tournament is scheduled for Aug. 7, at the Mt. Pleasant Golf Course. The event helps to fund the Sam Lacy Scholarship grants given each year to three local high school seniors.

FUTURE PLANS — Trainer Horace Parker (R) and co-owners Steve Diubaldo and James Route (left) savor the victory of their colt Diamond Donnie in the Dancing Count Stakes at Laurel Saturday. The speedy 3-year-old is now pointed for the prestigious Swift Stakes at Aqueduct next month. Jockey Greg Hutton and Maryland racing official John Passero participate.

One-on-One

Pappa wasn't the only one surprised at Laurel Race Course last Thursday.

Two fillies with ludicrous names combined to produce one of the largest exacta payoffs of recent years when "Topappas Surprise" won the fifth race and was followed by "Beahon's Asshegoes" to hang up a 4-2 combination worth $2,336.40.

Week in boxing

Feb. 25 at Las Vegas, Nev. — c-Mike Tyson vs. Frank Bruno, 12, world heavyweight title; Azumah Nelson vs. Mario Martinez, 12, WBC super featherweight title; Julian Jackson vs. Francisco Dejesus, 12, WBA junior middleweight title; Trevor Berbick vs. James Douglas, 10, heavyweights.

$10G scholarships

MIAMI — The National Football League will award $5,000 educational grants to two deserving South Florida black high school seniors this spring, NFL Director of Equal Employment David Cornwell announced early this week.

"Commissioner Rozelle and the NFL owners want to make sure that there are direct benefits to the local minority community from Miami

Queen Flo-Jo eyes new throne

Three-time Olympic sprint gold medalist Florence Griffith-Joyner and seven-time swimming medalist Matt Biondi were named Saturday the U.S. Olympic Committee's Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year.

Griffith-Joyner edged out teen swimming sensation Janet Evans by a mere six points — 561 to 555.

Griffith-Joyner, nicknamed "Flo-Jo," grabbed the world's attention in Seoul with her combination of speed and athletic ability. She set a world record of 21.34 in the 200 meters and added a silver medal to her three golds.

The 29-year-old sprinter from Los Angeles said she will concentrate on the 400 meters this season in an attempt to set another world record.

"I'm only going to compete for another two years," she said. "I'm going to concentrate on the 400. I feel it's going to take at least a year to learn how to run the race, but I think I can run a 46."

The women's 400-meter world record is 47.60 seconds, held by Marita Koch of East Germany.

Pimlico sets richest meet

Headed by the 114th running of the $500,000 Preakness Stakes, the middle Jewel of the $5 million Chrysler Triple Crown Challenge and the 24th running of the $700,000 Pimlico Special, a preview for Horse-of-the-Year honors, the Maryland Jockey Club has announced the richest stakes program in the 119-year history of Pimlico Race Course.

A total of 35 stakes with an aggregate purse of $4.03 million, excluding added money, have been carded for the spring meeting beginning Mar. 2 and running through June 27. Fourteen stakes carry a minimum six-figure purse and eight events are graded.

The Preakness has been increased in value by $150,000 this year to its richest level and the Pimlico Special has been upped by $200,000 from last year's running which attracted the world's richest thoroughbred Alysheba, Bet Twice and Lost Code.

Frank Robinson looks at new Birds

'We recognize challenge and we're ready'

We recognize the job ahead of us in 1989 coming off a season like we had last year (54-107) and we gladly accept the challenge.

This is actually the start of my second season as manager of the Orioles, but the first club I'll be taking to spring training. We will work very, very hard on fundamentals in Florida.

We hired a strength and conditioning coach (Alan Johnson from West Virginia University) to work with the players during the off-season. Our attitude is great and our morale high.

Last year we made a decision to clear our roster of the veteran Orioles whose names were so familiar to our fans. We've made room for new, young guys we think will become as well-known to the next generation of our fans.

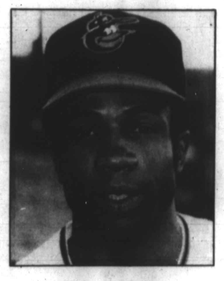
At training camp, there are only two spots on our roster that appear to be settled: Cal Ripken, Jr. (.264, 23, 81) and Phil Bradley .(264, 11, 56). Bradley came to us in a trade with Philadelphia during the winter.

However, there are no other guarantees, and it still isn't determined for certain where those two guys will be playing in the field.

As for our pitching, we like the way Bob Milacki and Pete Harnisch looked when they were called up last September. Milacki (2-0, 0.72) appeared in three games and was outstanding against the Tigers and Yankees. He held the Tigers to just two hits in his major league debut (September 17) and then struck out 10 at New York (September 28).

Harnisch (0-2, 5.54) didn't have the numbers Milacki did, but he can throw hard and the experience he got late last year will only help him.

Roland Hemond (vice-president for baseball operations/general manager) made a number of trades during the winter to strengthen our club. He picked up Brian Holton (7-3, 1.70) from the Dodgers. Holton will be battling to make the starting rotation, but Los Angeles used him in relief with great results.



Frank Robinson
'. . attitude, morale good . .'

In addition to the trades, we will take a long look at a few of our players we've developed in the farm system. Two in particular, but by no means the only two, are Pitcher Gregg Olson, our No. 1 pick in 1988 and Outfielder Steve Finley who had an outstanding season (.307, 6, 63) in the minors.

The outfield shapes up with Bradley, Joe Orsulak (.288, 8, 27), Pete Stanicek (.230, 4, 17) and Brady Anderson (.212, 1, 9). Orsulak came on strong after the all-star break, batting .304. Stanicek hurt his wrist in May, and it affected him the rest of the year.

The infield is unsettled right now, but we're hoping for big things from Juan Bell (.290, 13, 66 in the Dodgers' system) and Craig Worthington who was the International League MVP last season.

Three men, Randy Milligan, Larry Sheets and Jim Traber have their eyes on first base. Milligan came from Pittsburgh via the New York Mets' farm system where he was the International League MVP in 1987. Sheets (.230, 10, 47) and Traber (.222, 10, 45) will bounce back after having off-seasons last year.

Mickey Tettleton (.261, 11, 37) stacks up as our starting catcher, but Bob Melvin (acquired from San Francisco) will serve as back-up and Carl Nichols, with his strong throwing arm, shows a lot of promise.

The 1989 Orioles will open the season with modest but achievable goals. All we ask of our players is to give their best effort every minute of the day, in practice and during the games.