

Texas A&M

The Battalion Sports

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Return trip

N.C. hopes last year's experience pays off

United Press International
CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—Top-ranked North Carolina has been to the NCAA Final Four six times, and each trip has ended without a championship. But senior point guard Jimmy Black believes last year's journey to the title game will make the difference.

"Last year we were a little tense," Black said Tuesday. "We were a little in awe of everything going on around us. This year we are going to be calmer."

North Carolina's return trip to the Final Four marks the first time a team has made back-to-back appearances in the event since UCLA accomplished the feat in 1976.

It's also the first time North Carolina has gone into the Final Four ranked No. 1. Black said the Tar Heels, with a 30-2 record and a 14-game winning streak, will not change their strategy in New Orleans, where they face the University of Houston in one of Saturday's semifinal games.

"We're just going to approach it the same way. We're not going to do anything different," he said.

That includes using the four-corners spread offense that has drawn so much criticism in recent weeks.

"We're not playing for the fans, we're playing to win," Black said of the slow-down offense. "If we need it, we'll go to it regardless of what people think."

"We didn't go out there and drag in those people by the hand," Black said about the fans who claim the slow-down offense is boring. "They came in of their own free will. We're just doing what we need to do to win."

Black said he is sure Coach Dean Smith is tired of hearing comments that he has never won a national championship.

"We were kidding him about it some Sunday (after the Tar Heels downed Villanova 70-60 for the East Regional title)."

"I said, 'Two more games and it's all yours, Coach.' Then he just smiled," said the 6-foot-3 Black, who talked with sports writers in Carmichael Auditorium prior to the Tar Heels next-to-last practice before leaving for New Orleans. "I want to win it also, but my main concern of winning it is to win it for Coach Smith."

Black, who doctors said came within millimeters of being paralyzed when a vertebra in his neck was broken in an auto acci-

dent in June 1980, was described by freshman teammate Michael Jordan as the "all-around point guard." Black is averaging 7.8 points per game and has 202 assists, making him second in season and career assists behind Phil Ford, the point guard who won notoriety for his execution of the four-corners offense.

"I love to work with Jimmy Black," the 6-foot-5 Jordan said. "He knows what to run, what to call and if you make mistakes he won't holler at you. He just tries to soothe your thinking."

Jordan, the Atlantic Coast Conference's Rookie-of-the-Year, said he had enjoyed his freshman year.

"I'm hoping to look back after March 30 and say it was even better," he said. "I never thought I'd be playing this well or that I'd be in this situation."

Jordan is the Tar Heels' only starter who didn't play in North Carolina's 63-50 loss to Indiana in the NCAA championship game last year. He replaced forward Al Wood, who set an NCAA semifinal game scoring record with 39 points against Virginia last year.

"I think I feel less pressure than he (Wood) did," Jordan said. "It was his last year, his last shot. I'm going in with the same idea (to win) but to me if we don't win, I've got three more years."

When asked about the Tar Heels' chances of winning the championship Jordan replied, "We just want them (the three seniors) to leave with that sense of accomplishment of winning the NCAA championship. We want to make them happy, the fans happy and Coach Smith happy."

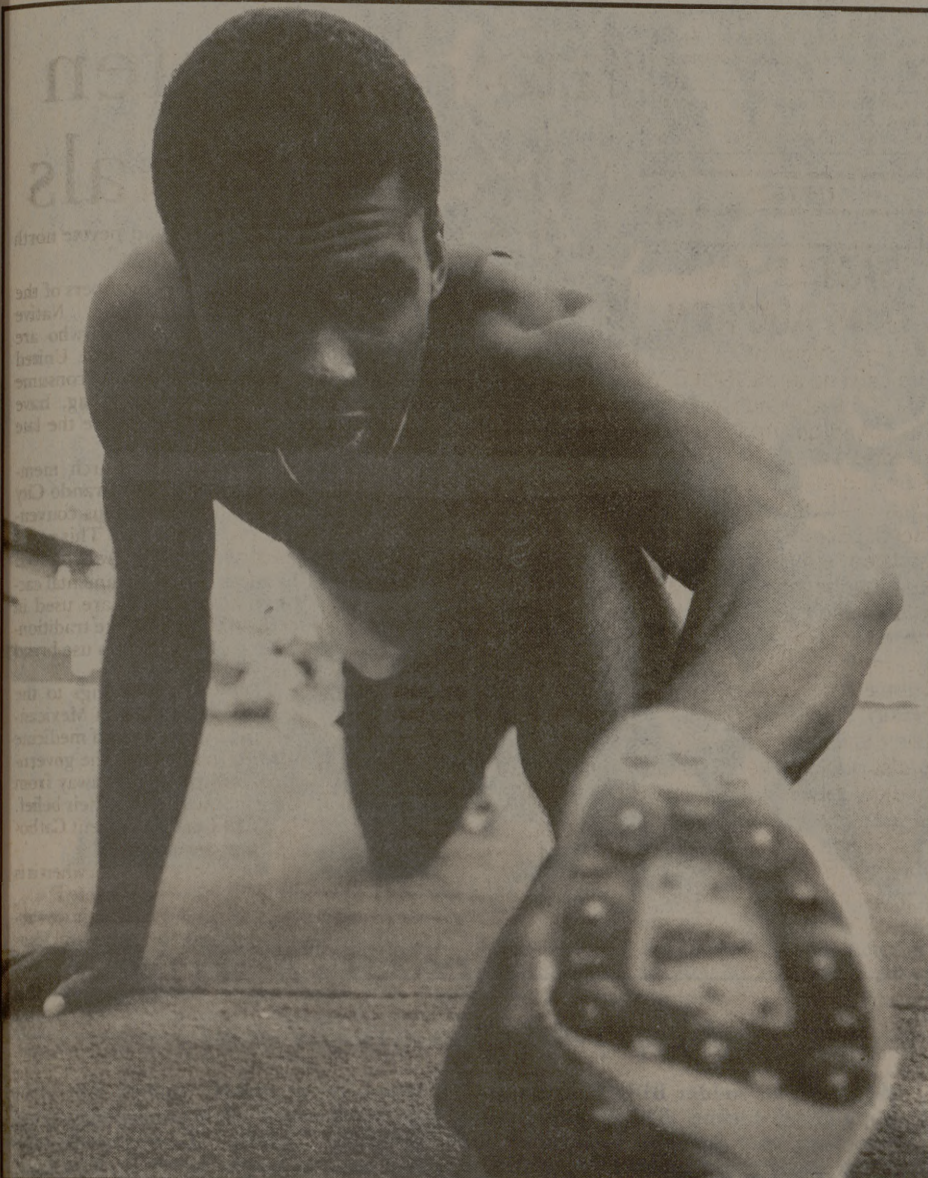


photo by Jane Hollingsworth

Ouch!

Bill Shelton, a freshman member of the Texas A&M track team, stretches before practicing for the Aggies' meet

at Rice earlier in the season. Shelton, from Seabrook, Md., runs in the 400-meter relay event for the Aggies.

Women's softball team to play at SHSU today

The Texas A&M softball team plays Sam Houston State University in a double-header today in Huntsville at 3.

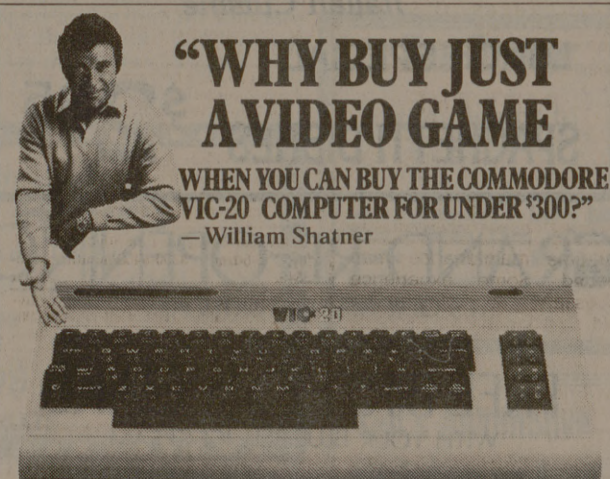
The Aggies have a record of 15-1 after sweeping seven games in the Sooner Invitational in Norman, Okla., the past

weekend. Lori Stoll and Shan McDonald now make up the Aggies' two-player pitching rotation after freshman Lisa

Martinez withdrew from school March 12 because of academic difficulties. Texas A&M's only loss came

to Missouri last Wednesday by a score of 1-0. However, the Aggies and Shan McDonald defeated the Tigers 1-0 in the Sooner Invitational over the weekend.

McDonald has a 5-0 record and Stoll is 8-1 with three perfect games.



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