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Wolfpack rocked by point-shaving allegation

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina State coach Jim Valvano and two former players denied allegations Wednesday of point-shaving in a basketball game against Tampa, a smaller, unranked school, in 1986.

The Greensboro News & Record, quoting unnamed sources, reported that a State Bureau of Investigation probe centered on a Dec. 27, 1986, game between then 12th-ranked N.C. State and the Division II school. The Wolfpack lost, 67-62.

William Dowdy, the SBI's chief investigator, acknowledged that the agency was investigating the N.C. State basketball program — already on two years' probation for NCAA violations — and that part of the probe would include the point-shaving allegations.

However, he added, "There was no information to lead me to believe there was any point-shaving."

"I was never aware of anything going on with point-shaving," Vinny Del Negro, now a guard with the Sacramento Kings, said in a telephone interview from Miami. "I just think we had a bad game."

"I don't know anything," said Bennie Bolton, another member of the '86 team, reached at his home in Washington.

"I heard about it, yeah," said Bolton, who has been playing in Australia. "It was just a case of coming in against a hungry team and we didn't play up to our capabilities."

Valvano, who missed the game at Tampa due to illness, said he never suspected anyone of trying to throw the game.

"If I had, I would have reported it," he said. "But I never reported it because I never had a reason to."

"I don't know what to make of it," said Tampa coach Richard Schmidt, whose 1986-87 team finished 26-6. "If there was point-shaving going on, why would it be against us? There wasn't even a line on the game, at least not to my knowledge."

Stockpiling pheasants County flocking to pheasant populating

VERNON (AP) — Lon Byars and about 150 others want to establish a pheasant population in Wilbarger County. But they face a formidable task.

Say "pheasant." It's a new word for this North Texas county along the Red River, and it doesn't come easily except for hunters who travel elsewhere in search of the game. But get used to it. The idea just might fly.

Two years ago, Byars said, County Judge Bobby Arnold and the county agricultural extension agent got a group of men and women together to gauge their feelings on the matter. Byars, a farmer, and about 60 others, including other farmers, business owners, professionals and homemakers, heard a man from Tillman County, Okla., just across the Red River, talk about efforts to develop a pheasant population there.

"He told us Tillman County alone couldn't start a pheasant population in this area," Byars said, "and that the more pheasants you put out, the better the chances would be."

"We'd been seeing some pheasants in the county that had migrated from Tillman County," Byars added. "That aroused some interest. We wondered where they were coming from. After he told us about their program, the judge asked for a show of hands to see if there was an interest to start a program here. There was definitely an interest."

And the government's involvement in the effort ended right there. It just so happened that one of the interested men was the county judge and the other was the extension agent. Since that meeting in January, 1988, Greenbelt Pheasants Inc. has been formed, thousands of private dollars have been donated and thousands of birds have been released.

Byars, president of Greenbelt Pheasants, said that in 1988, about 15,000 ring-neck pheasants flew the coops set up across the country in abandoned houses, unused barns and other structures donated by residents.

In 1989, about 14,000 birds — at about \$1 a bird — were released, about 500 from each of 30 release sites, Byars said.

At each site, the birds are hatched in a 10-foot-by-20-foot brooder house where they are kept until they're about 2 weeks old, Byars said. Then the fledglings are let into a 20-foot-by-75-foot net-covered flight pen where they test their wings.

"Then, at six to eight weeks of age, depending on their maturity, they'll be released out of the pen," Byars said. "The gates are opened

and they're allowed to venture out on their own."

Food and water are kept nearby, he said. "After a week or so, few stay around."

"We release them in all parts of the county," Byars said, "but we try to release some in a habitat with some type of feed grain and some type of foliage cover."

It's a considerable amount of work, and that's what was lacking in a previous effort to establish a pheasant population here, Byars said.

"(The Texas Department of) Parks and Wildlife tried this same thing," he said. "They had game farms in East Texas and they brought them out here in coops and released them."

The failure might have been because they were hatched in one environment and released in another; or because the birds released were fewer in number; or because the department "didn't want anyone to know they were doing it," Byars said. But for whatever reason, the idea was grounded from the start, he said.

"By then not telling anyone they were doing it, no one planted anything for the birds or left any habitat, any crops standing," Byars said.

That may be part of the reason Greenbelt Pheasants gets no state support for the present project.

"In fact, we couldn't even get any encouragement from those people, any indication that it would work," Byars said.

But members of Greenbelt Pheasants think the plan will work. Many farmers, Byars said, are leaving parts of their grain fields unharvested just for the birds. So they hope that maybe the pheasants, which aren't native to the United States and were introduced to the plains of West Texas only in the 1880s, will stay around this time, especially since so many are being released in such a small area.

Why all the trouble? Pheasant hunting, which the state allows as close as Hardeman County to the west, is a secondary goal, Byars said.

"We don't promote hunting," he said. "If we do establish a population here, then in the end there should be a hunting season. But it was sold basically on the aesthetics of the program. It's going to enhance the quality of all our wildlife — ducks, turkey, deer. All wildlife will benefit from that habitat."

Byars said that at the end of this year, the program will be evaluated and its organizers will decide whether to ask donors, who were asked for only three years of involvement, to extend their support.

Right now, he said, the program seems to be working.

Lehmann

(Continued from page 9)

wants to drop that requirement to two years.

Money issue #2 is how much the owners should contribute to the player's benefit program. Last season, the owners contributed \$34.2 million to the program and offered to donate 44.86 million this season. However, the players want a contribution of 62.5 million.

Money issue #3 is minimum player salary. The players want an increase from \$68,000 to \$112,500. The owners are offering \$85,000.

Money issue #4 is roster size. Since 1985, the owners have limited roster size to 24 players. The players union wants rosters restored to 25 players.

Neither side is innocent in this issue.

The owners, despite their cries, are still rolling in profits. Almost all major league teams showed a profit last season, and they'll get even more cash this season. The new television contracts with ESPN and CBS will generate \$20 million for each team this season before the first fan even takes a seat.

Players get paid astronomical sums to play a kid's game. The travel is no doubt difficult, but it's not as if the players are being forced to walk on hot coals for a living. They're asking for a minimum of \$112,500 to play a game that all of us would gladly play.

If the owners are so strapped for cash, then why are they still handing out multi-million dollar salaries to marginally-talented free agents? The owners started this salary feeding frenzy with their irresponsible spending, and now we're suffering for it.

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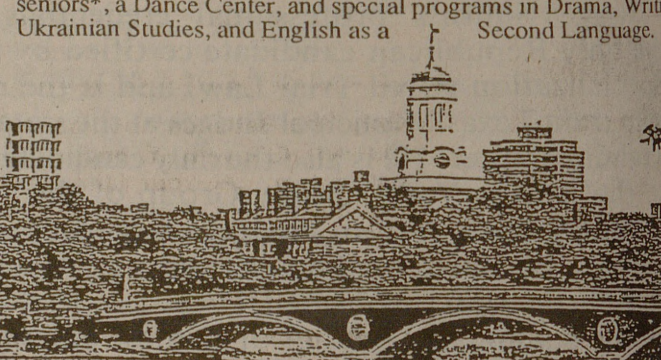
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