

SPORTS

Duke and Chicago a study in choices

By Barry Jacobs

DURHAM, N. C.

IT WAS THE KIND OF MISMATCH common early in the college basketball season. For the host Duke Blue Devils, a major college (Division I) team, the game was a "tune-up"—a chance to experiment, build up confidence, fatten its record. For the outmanned Maroons from the University of Chicago, a Division III team, the game was what coach John Angelus called a learning experience, "a tremendous opportunity" for his squad to test itself against the big boys.

Certainly, it was no contest. At half-time taller, stronger, quicker Duke led 55-29. The only suspense for the restless Durham home crowd was in wondering whether Duke would score 100 points and maintain a whopping 40-point margin at game's end.

Duke won, 99-61.

Except in sports, Duke and Chicago are strikingly similar. Both are private institutions with about 9,000 undergraduates. Duke was founded by James B. Duke, a tobacco magnate, while Chicago was the creation of oil baron John D. Rockefeller. Both universities are noted for fine academics and excellent graduate programs. Each is a leading center of learning in its part of the country. If Duke didn't already call itself the Harvard of the South, it's likely it would be proud to be known as the Chicago of the East.

Different athletic approaches.

But the schools have taken very different approaches to intercollegiate athletics.

Despite an illustrious sports heritage, Chicago decided long ago to deemphasize athletics, preferring to invest its energy and money elsewhere. Sports participation is geared toward the average student.

None of Chicago's basketball players is in school on an athletic scholarship. This season's top newcomer, 6'7" Jim Tolf, turned down athletic scholarships at other schools because they included his dropping plans to be a pre-med student. It was feared Tolf's academic major would interfere with his basketball career.

At one point in the Duke game Chicago had three pre-med students on the court.

At Chicago, explained coach Angelus, academics come first. He confided resignedly that his players even miss practice occasionally because they're attending a class.

Duke has ordered its priorities differently. It, too, has a long history of athletic accomplishment, a tradition it's tried to maintain despite rising costs and increasing questions about the integrity and purpose of big-time intercollegiate sports.

A member of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Duke regularly competes on a major college level. This past fall its football team, which finished 5-6, played five opponents who went on to post-season bowl games. Duke lost to all five.

But football losses at Duke, as elsewhere in the ACC, can be forgiven. It's basketball that matters.

Fans from Maryland to South Carolina and beyond insist ACC basketball has no peer. The seven league schools—Maryland, Virginia, Wake Forest, North Carolina, N.C. State, Clemson, and Duke—attract top Eastern basketball players as a matter of course.

Except for a few teams in Washington and Baltimore, no major league pro sports compete for attention with ACC basketball. As a result, the game is widely popular. Last year the league played before 89 percent of capacity in all home games. This season more than half the league's games will be televised.

Fan interest runs so high it's often only

those who contribute large sums of money to a school's athletic program who get a chance to purchase tickets. At North Carolina, for example, tickets are so scarce lifetime contributors of \$50,000 or more (35 people at last count) may will their ticket rights to their children.

"Basketball down here is an amazing thing," observed Jim Spanarkel, a junior guard from Jersey City and Duke team captain. "People take it like a pro sport... People here come to see Duke win at all costs."

Disappointments recently.

Duke basketball has disappointed its fans recently. Last season's 14-3 mark was the school's best since 1972; the team still finished at the bottom of the ACC.

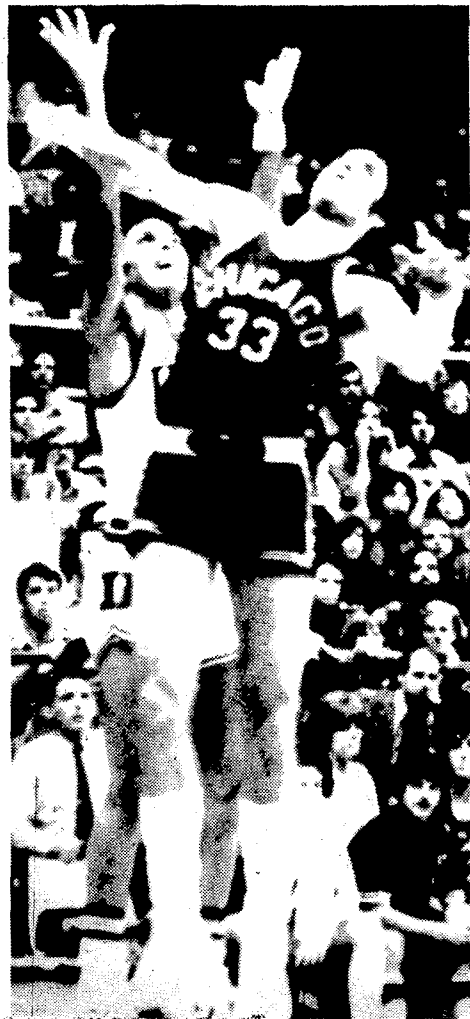
Today's failures are all the more glaring because, not long ago, Duke was a national basketball power. In the 1960s coach Vic Bubas, now commissioner of

Chicago and Duke have taken different approaches to athletics. Despite an illustrious sports heritage Chicago has deemphasized athletics, while Duke, similar to Chicago in other ways, has not.

the Sun Belt Conference, led the school to 213 wins and only 67 losses.

During that period, Duke took four ACC regular season crowns, three ACC Tournaments, and advanced to the final four in NCAA play three times, once reaching the championship game. Bubas' teams ranked in the top 20 in all but his final season.

During those years integration transformed basketball. When Bubas stepped down in 1970 black athletes were starring on many college squads. By "discovering" blacks, schools like the University of Alabama rose from obscurity to instant basketball prominence.



But while others were signing top black athletes, Duke was not—coaches couldn't sell a student body which even today, more than a decade after integration, is barely five percent black.

In a game increasingly dominated by blacks, Duke's nearly all-white teams quickly ceased being competitive.

It also turned out that Duke's worst selling point with modern hot-shot high schoolers, whatever their race, was its vaunted academic reputation.

Dr. Allen Kornberg, a political scientist and former faculty chairman of Duke athletics, commented, "At Duke, we have one standard for everybody. Unlike most other schools, if an athlete gets in here, it's because he meets the academic requirements."

Coach Bill Foster, as a result, found himself recruiting at a distinct disadvantage when he left a successful Utah program to come to Duke in 1975.

Foster claims 70 percent of the top basketball prospects in any given year can't get into Duke. Of the rest, 10 percent lack what Foster calls "the academic interest" to make it at Duke. The coach says he wants only those who can graduate in four years—during his tenure, all his players have graduated on time—while remaining competitive big-time basketball players. It's a tall order, and most young athletes shy away.

"There is a fear of the academic pressure here," Foster admitted in a recent interview, "that the players can't spend enough time working on their game. I don't think it's true."

Athletics vs. academics.

Kornberg saw it differently. "It's my impressionistic view, grounded in 12 years of teaching these kids, talking to them, watching them, that they're under great emotional pressure. They have internalized the values we have tried to sell them on, so that they choose the academic over the athletic when it comes down to making a choice."

As if to bear out Kornberg's assessment

(which Foster complained would hurt recruiting if it made it into print), reserve forward Cameron Hall quit the Duke basketball team after the Chicago game, announcing, "As the season has progressed, I have found it increasingly difficult to adjust to the pressures that one experiences as a member of the Duke team. Most of these pressures have been self-inflicted. Regardless of that fact, a tremendous increase in anxiety and tension has resulted, making my existence miserable."

The academic/athletic tug of war was not lessened by the fact that Hall, a sometimes starter last season, was supplanted by two freshmen whose presence transformed Duke from an also-ran to a contender for the ACC title.

One newcomer was hustling 6'7" Kenny Dennard, North Carolina's top prep player. The other was 6'7", 205-pound power forward Eugene Banks of West Philadelphia, considered by many the top freshman prospect in the nation this year.

With Banks' arrival—he's the first top-notch black basketball player ever to attend Duke—excitement about the team's prospects rose to a fever pitch.

In the past, fans from other ACC schools contributed to Duke's athletic program because Duke's weak teams attracted few boosters, and a small contribution (say a mere \$500) earned the right to purchase tickets allotted to Duke for events like the season-ending ACC Tournament. No more. With Banks and Dennard joining Spanarkel and 6'11" center Mike Gminski, both past ACC rookies of the year, the school suddenly has more boosters than tickets. Home games are all sold out. Boosters now dish out amounts comparable to their compatriots at other ACC schools for the chance to watch tournament play.

It looks as though Duke is headed back into the limelight. That's where the prestige and money are. And that, sports fans, is what big-time athletics is all about.

Barry Jacobs is a free-lance writer in Durham, N.C.

ART «» ENTERTAINMENT

Records

JAZZ WOMEN: A Feminist Retrospective
(Stash 109)

Just as women and their achievements have been conspicuously absent from standard American history accounts, jazz historians have also failed to give adequate credit to the contributions of female artists to the mainstream of the music. The two-record set under review, however, marks a first step towards reclaiming the rich heritage of women in jazz.

In order to aid in this venture, the album includes liner notes by the formidable jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams who has played in every jazz context from her Kansas City beginnings, through bop, to her recent duet concert with "free jazz" pianist Cecil Taylor. In addition to her playing and recording career, Ms. Williams is currently a professor of music at Duke University. *Women in Jazz: A Survey* by Frank Driggs, a 24-page companion booklet, is available as a separate purchase from Stash Records, Inc. (P.O. Box 390, Brooklyn, NY 11215).

The album includes 34 cuts in all and ranges from the rough and ready country blues of guitarist/vocalist Memphis Minnie to the more sophisticated Christianesque guitar work of North Dakotan Mary Osborne. Piano stylings span the decades from the New Orleans style of the late Lil Hardin (who played with such early jazz greats as Freddie Keppard, King Oliver and her husband, Louis Armstrong) to the relatively more contemporary sound of Marian McPartland, an Englishwoman who has been playing jazz for many years, and who now records for her own Halcyon label, which gives special emphasis to women musicians.

There are several cuts by the so-called "all-girl bands" that flourished during the Swing Era. What was it like to be a pioneer woman jazz musician with such a band? As trombonist Althea Conley (who played with Ina Rae Hutton's Melodians) puts it in *Women in Jazz*, "On our trips we always had a ball. We went through tornadoes, and had breakdowns and sometimes we had to get out and push the bus when the grades were too much. Had to change tires and have had to siphon gas from the tank and put it into the distributor to keep going. The going got rough sometimes, but we enjoyed every minute of it."

But women musicians didn't merely have to contend with the hassles of being "on the road." They had also to deal with critical disdain as artists. In an unsigned 1938 *Downbeat* piece entitled, "Why Women Musicians Are Inferior," the author wrote: "Why is it that outside of a few sepia females, the woman musician never was born capable of sending anyone further than the nearest exit? It would seem that even though women are the weaker sex they would be able to bring more out of a poor, defenseless horn than something that sounds like a cry for help. You can forgive them for lacking guts in their playing but even women should



be able to play with feeling and expression and *they never do it.*"

In that same issue, Rita Rio, one of the more successful all-women band leaders, who later went on to a movie career under the name Donna Drake, responded, "I think our mutual public will agree that a warm vibrant tone is much more pleasing than the masculine sock so often emphasized by our men bands."

Downbeat has continued to give short shrift to women jazz musicians, both in terms of its historical analysis and its ongoing coverage of the current jazz scene. Perhaps the publicity that is bound to accompany the first Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival on the weekend of March 19, 1978, will lead to a more balanced approach in the future.

After all, jazz women today are still going strong, and their music can be heard in the big band arrangements of pianist Toshiko Akiyoshi, the bop sounds of alto saxophonist Vi Redd, the vocal stylings of Betty Carter, and the "new music" approach of pianist/composer Carla Bley—just to name a few.

—Ron Sakolsky
(For ticket information write Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, PO Box 22321, Kansas City, MO 64113.)

SLOWHAND
Eric Clapton
(RSO)**ROUGH MIX**
Peter Townshend/Ronnie Lane
(MCA)

Heavy metal freaks must be gnashing their teeth as Clapton continues to steer away from the fury of Cream and continues to explore country and blues. And Who lovers will bring mixed feelings to *Rough Mix*, the collaboration between Who master Town-

shend and Lane, a Small Faces mainstay.

The albums share modesty of intent, Glyn Johns production, and Clapton, who is featured on the Townshend/Lane collaboration as one of many sidemen.

Clapton rocks hard with co-vocalist and co-writer Marcy Levy on "The Core," and his guitar shines in interplay with rhythm guitarist George Terry on J.J. Cale's "Cocaine." But the rocking is characterized by workmanship, not flash. *Slowhand* is an album of small pleasures: the understated blues, "Mean Old Frisco"; the way Clapton alternates between yearning and threatening on his "Next Time You See Her." He continues to play with precision, economy, and a tone that is a result of conscious dynamic control.

Only one clinker mars *Rough Mix*: The Townshend "Street in the City," which sounds like an update of the Beatles' "A Day in the Life." It's banal and grossly over-arranged.

The musicianship and innocence of these albums is what makes them pleasing. These artists are secure in their craft and do not have to impress. If anything, Clapton's a little too laid back; there's great dynamic control and variety within each song, but not enough difference between them. Variety might help his strengths come across.

The Townshend tunes are mystical, loving; the Lane tunes are more down to earth. The reason the "rough mix" between these two musicians works is that both are humble, both celebrate their pleasures in love, work, the family by writing and playing straightforward, simply-framed music that belies craft and joy.

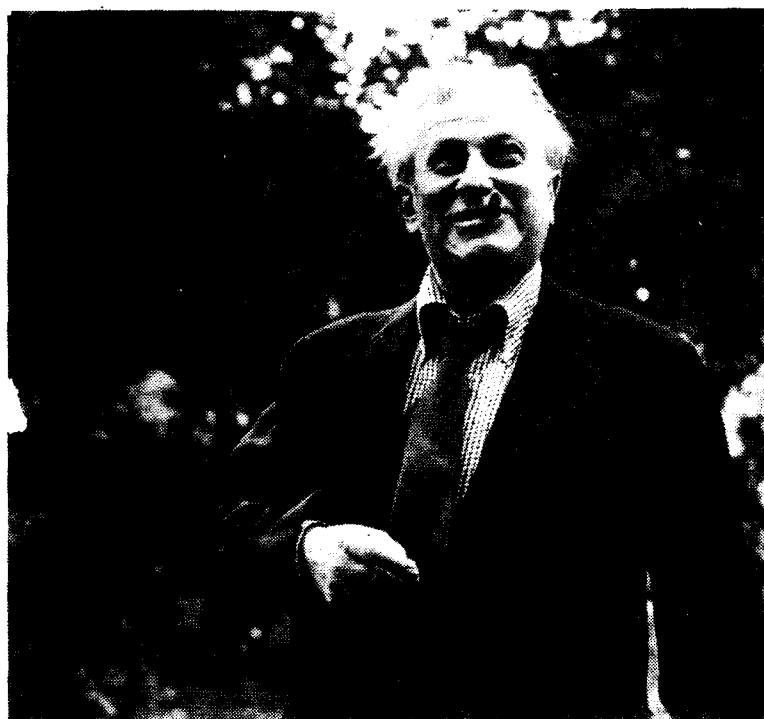
As the saying goes, good things come in small packages.

—Carlo Wolff

Carlo Wolff is the editor of the *Vermont Vanguard*.

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—Studs Terkel

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