

Questions raised by club's actions

By HAL BOCK
AP Sports Writer

Aesop had it right. Slow and steady wins the race. Progress doesn't take forever, it only seems that way.

Two weeks ago, the University of Tennessee made major progress in the business of Southeastern Conference basketball, appointing former Louisville assistant Wade Houston as its new coach. Houston is the first black ever hired at that level in the SEC.

And then last week, that dramatic move was followed by more progress when Tennessee Athletic Director Doug Dickey and football coach Johnny Majors terminated their memberships in the all-white Cherokee Country Club.

Those decisions stunned Hank Bertelkamp, president of the club, who said Cherokee had no exclusionary policy based on race and that Houston couldn't have been rejected for membership because he hadn't even applied.

But the fact of the matter is that the next black Cherokee admits to the club — for a hefty \$15,000 initiation fee and \$225 monthly dues — will be the first. Come to think of it, there probably aren't any Indians on Cherokee's membership rolls, either.

When Tennessee realized all this, it moved quickly.

"The university cannot be a party to any

membership of any organization that even raises the possibility that a white coach can be treated one way and a black coach another," said Lamar Alexander, president of the university.

Slow and steady had won a race.

Tennessee's decision means Majors and Dickey now must find some other place to play their golf. And if everything goes well in their hunt, they may even be able to bring the school's new basketball coach along for a game.

There are two questions that occur here. First, you must wonder if, in all the years that they were members at Cherokee, playing their occasional 18 holes, Majors and Dickey didn't once look around, notice the absence of any blacks in the club and inquire about it. Discreetly, of course.

And then you must wonder about the propriety of the university handing out hefty dollars for country club memberships in the first place.

Let a player commit the most innocent misdemeanor — remember the Steve Alford calendar suspension a couple of years ago? — and the NCAA gumshoes are all over the place, screaming foul. But an athletic department spends big bucks for fancy — and apparently restrictive — country club memberships and nobody in Mission, Kan., says boo.

Kids see big bucks being casually tossed around by their schools and wonder why they shouldn't get

a piece of the action.

Who can blame the players? They may not be rocket scientists, but they're smart enough to know that's not exactly monopoly money the colleges are collecting from fiercely competitive networks for football and basketball television rights.

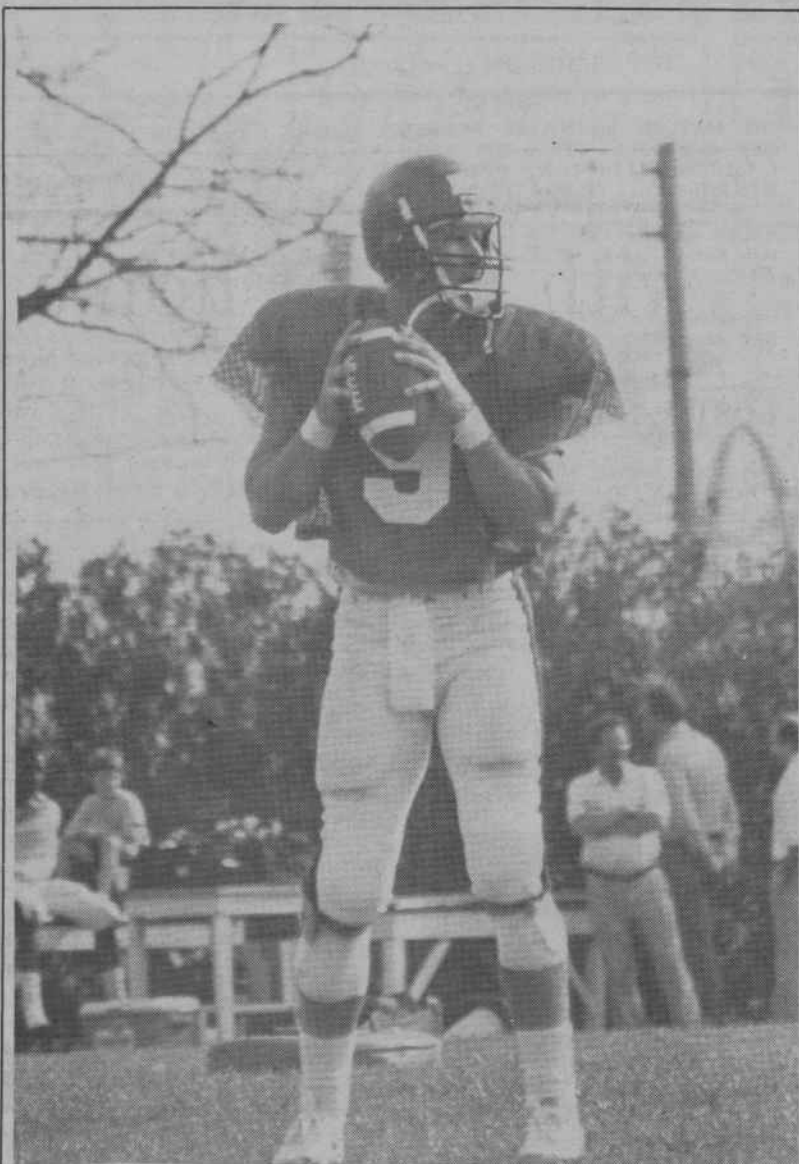
Tennessee, in fact, picked up a cool \$250,000 for its cameo appearance in the recently concluded NCAA tournament. That's enough to pay initiation fees and a year's worth of monthly dues for 14 memberships at Cherokee, with a couple of thousand left over for tips. This assumes, of course, you had 14 people approved for membership.

Despite this economic windfall, the university still dismissed longtime basketball coach Don DeVoe, an action criticized by his colleagues who applauded DeVoe's spotless record in a profession that sometimes is less than squeaky clean. That firing led to the hiring of Houston and the ensuing country club flap.

All of this might have been avoided, of course, if Tennessee hadn't felt obliged to break barriers by hiring a black basketball coach.

There were other options available for the university. One of the names briefly mentioned for the job was ex-Volunteer star Ernie Grunfeld, who is white.

And Jewish.



TERRY HUNTER/The Gamecock

Looking to improve

USC senior quarterback Todd Ellis prepares to throw a pass in spring drills, which ended Sunday. The Gamecock open their 1989 season with a Sept. 2 matchup with Duke at Williams-Brice Stadium.

USC football team ends spring drills

The USC football team concluded their spring drills Sunday afternoon with a two-hour workout at Williams-Brice Stadium.

The four-week session ended just one week after the annual spring game last Saturday. In the spring game, USC received a touchdown from tailback Mike Dingle and a Col-lin Mackie field goal, but USC head coach Sparky Woods saw some areas of improvement before spring drills had ended.

"We improved as a football team throughout the spring," Woods said. "All the players were very positive in every workout, and we came together as a team — on both sides of the football — especially in the final week of the spring workouts."

"I feel we've got further to go off the field than we do on it," Woods added.

Woods does feel optimistic, however, as the Gamecocks look

ahead to this season's opening game. USC will face Duke in a Sept. 2 matchup at Williams-Brice Stadium.

"We've got a lot of athletic ability and talent, we just need to channel it for good performances on the field," Woods said. "We made a lot of improvement this spring because we had so far to go. The real test will be this fall when we need to see that kind of improvement every day in preparation for the season opener."

Women's golf team takes eighth place

USC's women's golf team finished in eighth place out of nine teams at the Woodbridge Collegiate Invitational in King's Mountain, N.C. USC had a three-round total of 972.

The Lady Gamecocks were led by freshman Debbie Eckroth, who finished in a tie for 13th place with an individual total of 236. Other Lady Gamecocks who participated were Aileen Robertson with 244; Cathy Rumpf, who shot 245; Kim Belk

SPORTS BRIEFS

with 250; and Vikki Valentine, who scored 256.

North Carolina won the tournament with a team total of 924, and Duke's Jean Batholomew won individual honors with a tournament total of 220.

FINAL TEAM STANDINGS:

1. North Carolina 924, 2. Duke 936, 3. Kentucky 942, 4. Miami (Fla.) and Georgia 949, 6. Wake Forest 950, 7. South Florida 960, 8. USC 972, 9. Furman 978.

Lady Gamecocks sign top prospect

USC women's basketball coach Nancy Wilson announced late last week the signing of 6-foot-3 center Michelle Murray from A.C. Flora High School in Columbia.

During Murray's senior year, she averaged more than 21 points and

more than 20 rebounds per game. She was also named all-conference and all-area by The State newspaper, while leading her team to a 22-5 record this season.

Murray was successful on 45 percent of her shots from the field and was a 70 percent free throw shooter. She was the Lady Falcons' most valuable player the past two seasons.

"We're very happy to have signed Michelle during this signing period," Wilson said. "We think she will make a fine addition to the team. Michelle has excellent potential. She has a natural aggressiveness on the court which could help her to become a fine college player."

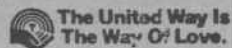
Murray chose USC over Clemson and North Carolina. Her signing brings the total number of recruits to four for the Lady Gamecocks.

Wilson also signed Lower Richland's Pam Johnson, a 6-foot-1 forward; Sheyla Wilkins of Gaffney, a 5-foot-10 forward; and Marsha Williams, a 6-foot-4 center, during the early signing period in November.

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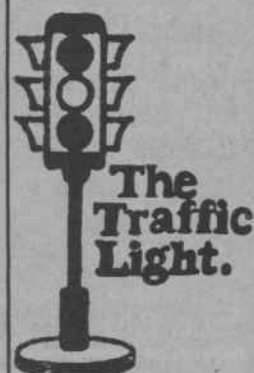


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