

SPORTS

'Hashing' makes sport out of running, beer drinking

By MATTHEW VALLEE
Staff Writer

Combine cross-country running, fox hunting, and tailgating and you have the sport of Hashing.

Hashing is played by a group of 15-20 people every other Sunday here in Columbia. The group is led by Vernon Bowen, the Grand Master of the Columbia Hash House Harriers.

Bowen said Hashing is a version of an English game called Hares and Hounds. An Australian officer named A.S. Gispert started the game of Hashing in 1938 while stationed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Gispert sometimes drank too much on the weekends at a local pub. Later, he and his fellow officers would go running in the pub-

lic park to sweat off what they drank. The run finished at a pub called the Hash House where the officers would drink back what they sweat off.

The officers eventually became bored with their run through the park. But then the owner of the Hash House started following them on their run with a truck full of beer.

The current game starts with two people, the Hares, who set out with a 15-minute head start to lay a trail to the finish, which is called a "down-downs." The "down-downs" is a type of post-race tailgate party.

The rest of the people, the Harriers, then set out on the trail to find the "down-downs." But they must be careful because the hares can lay false trails making the Harriers backtrack.

Harriers follow a trail by looking for large circles with an 'X' in them, these are the checkpoints. The Hares can delay the

Harriers by leaving them an auto-stop. An auto-stop is a cooler full of beer, soda and water. Custom says the contents of the cooler must be consumed. Bowen said the beer stop is usually half way along the run.

If a Hare gets caught on the trail he or she will be punished. "An example of punishment is the taking of the Hare's shorts," Bowen said.

Once everybody is at the post-race party, the Hares and Harriers — first-timers and veterans — are honored with a down-down, which means the chugging of a beer while being serenaded with a hashing song.

Those who made a blunder during the run are given the Hash-It award, which is a toilet bowl plunger. According to custom, a down-down must be done from the plunger.

Mike Kroening, another hasher, said the Columbia Hashers have been in existence for

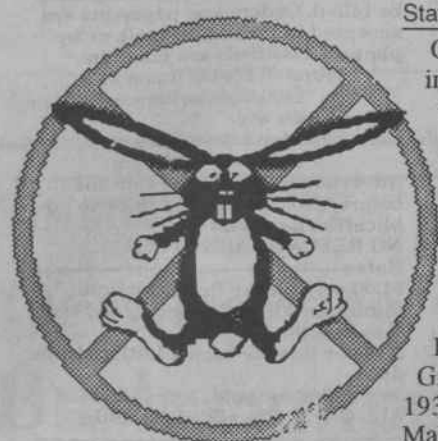
about six years.

Bowen said the Columbia Hash House Harriers just had their 150th run.

Kroening said the group usually meets at someone's house and then goes to the location of the run.

Bowen said all that was required to join in the fun was \$3 for beer and soft drinks, and a covered dish.

Anyone interested in Hashing can go to Strictly Running at 736 Harden St. for more information.



Roller coaster ride for Columbia

By JACK DUNN
Sports Editor

Columbia began last week with two wins against the Gastonia Rangers. The Mets lost two over the weekend to Asheville and came back to town Sunday to rally wins against the Albany Polecats.

The Mets drove the Rangers out of town 4-2 to take the two-game series during their short homestay at Capital City Stadium. Starter Jim Popoff pitched 7 scoreless innings of 3-hit ball, striking out 6 and walking only 3 for his first home win in Columbia. Ricky Otero knocked in Omar Moreno from third base for the winning run on a one-out single in the fifth inning off of eventual loser Dave Gandolph.

On the road the Mets came up empty losing 4-2 and 8-7 to



Asheville Friday and Saturday nights.

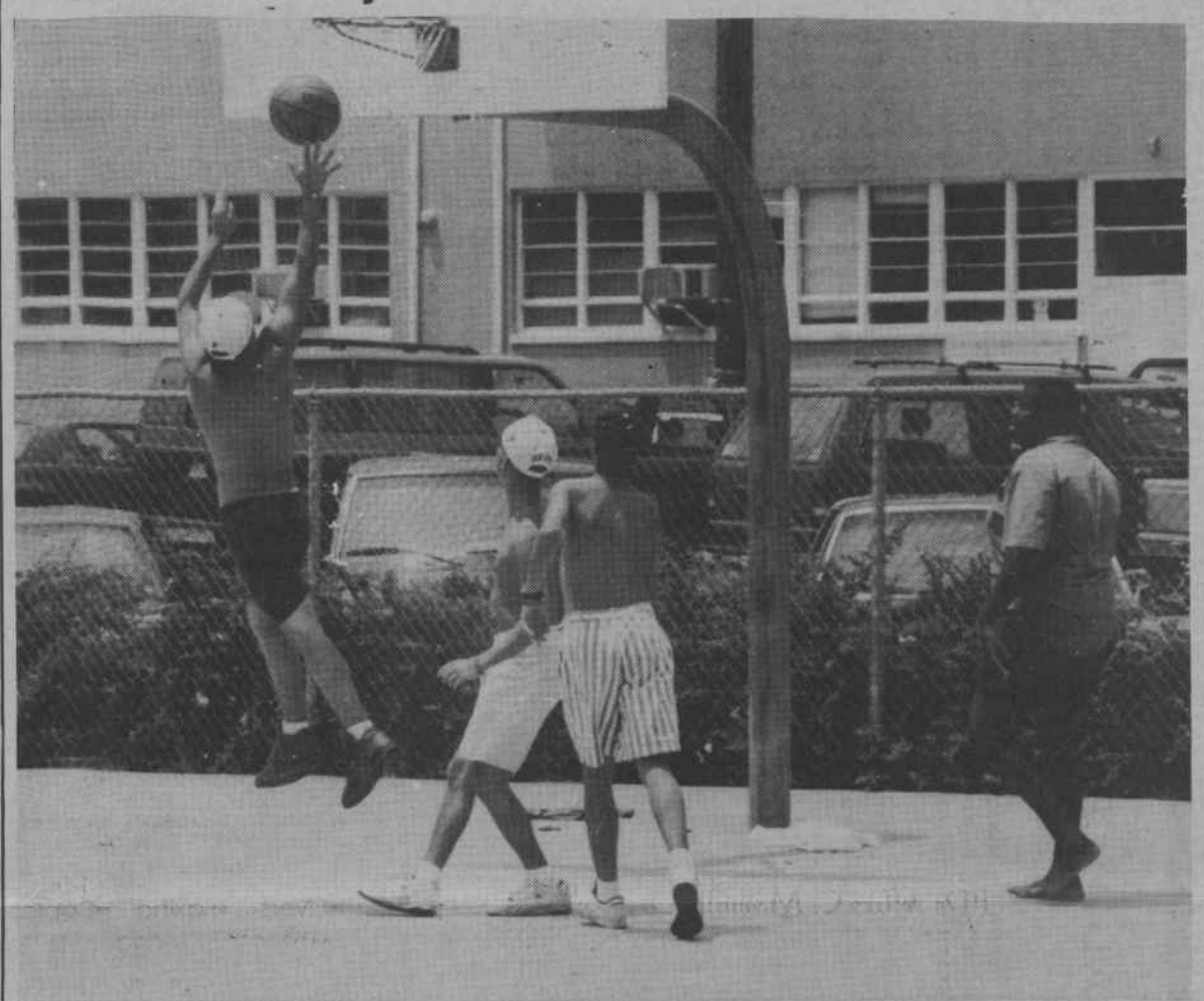
The Mets returned for a Sunday afternoon game, outlasting the Albany Polecats 6-5 in what proved to be an error-laden match. Jerome Tolliver scored the winning run from third on a throwing error by 'Cats first baseman Chris Hmielewski. Darian Lindsay

retired the last 6 batters (in relief), striking out three en route to victory.

Monday night, Columbia beat Albany 5-1 for the second game in a row at Capital City Stadium. Starter Eric Reichenbach held the Polecats to one run on three hits through the first 6.2 innings. Danilo Mompres knocked in Omar Garcia for the game-winning run on a two-out single off of eventual loser Rodney Pedraza in the sixth inning. The Mets added an insurance run on a throwing error on the play and would go on to pad the total later in the inning with another run. Columbia scored their final run in the seventh.

As of Tuesday Columbia's record is 15-11 as the Mets take on Albany again tonight. Game time is 7:05 p.m.

Outdoor Activity



Explorer scouts Fernando Alvarez, Curtis Krauel, James Starks and Michael Carr enjoy a break by playing some basketball. The National Law Enforcement Conference is meeting all this week.

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