

A solid red vertical bar runs along the right edge of the page.

Julius Peppers



NFHS HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF FAME

NOMINATION PACKAGE

SUBMITTED FRI. NOVEMBER 18, 2022

AMENDED NOV. 14, 2023



JULIUS FRAZIER PEPPERS

SOUTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL | BAILEY, NC

CLASS OF 1998

COLLEGE: UNC-CHAPEL HILL FOOTBALL (1998-2001) & BASKETBALL (1999-2000)

NFL: CAROLINA PANTHERS, CHICAGO BEARS, & GREEN BAY PACKERS

2002 NFL DRAFT #2 OVERALL PICK | RETIRED 2018

Nomination Form



HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Julius Frazier Peppers
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Brandon Moree

Phone: 919-240-7367

Street Address: 222 Finley Golf Course Road

City, State, Zip Code: Chapel Hill, NC 27517

Signed: 

Date: Nov. 14, 2023

Email: brandon@nchsaa.org

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

☒ Athlete ☐ Coach ☐ Official ☐ Administrator ☐ Performing Arts ☐ Others

Name of Nominee: Julius Frazier Peppers
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: C/O Bessie Brinkley (Mother) 3017 New Watkins Lane
(street address)

Raleigh, NC, 27616
(city, state, zip)

Email: CarlCoreyJr@gmail.com (agent)

Phone: 919-201-0096

Date of Birth: 1/18/1980

School Affiliation (if any) Southern Nash High School

City: Bailey

State: NC

Place of Birth: Wilson, NC

Date of Retirement: 2018

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please explain:

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: Mother: Bessie F. Brinkley

Address: 3017 New Watkins Lane, Raleigh, NC, 27616

Phone: N/A

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Southern Nash High School	Bailey, NC	1998	Diploma
College/University: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill, NC	2002	B.S.
Post Graduate School: N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

- ☐ Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)
☐ Letters of Recommendation Attached
☐ Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

ATHLETE

Athletic Participation in Senior High School [give complete details concerning specific performances, years, records, etc. Please note the classification of the high school (A, AA, etc.) and how many classes the state had in that sport.]

Julius Peppers attended Southern Nash High School in Bailey, NC. He played football, basketball, and ran track at the 3A school (NC has 4 classifications). Peppers never played football until his high school coach, Ray Davis convinced him to come out for the football team his sophomore year. Peppers was 6' 7", 250 pounds and ran a 4.6 second 40-yard dash as a sophomore, so naturally he chose to play running back. In his first seasons playing football, Peppers rushed for 1,044 yards and 15 touchdowns on the varsity team. He finished his football career at Southern Nash with 3,501 yards and 38 rushing touchdowns, catching six more scores.

Peppers was the Big Eight Conference Player of the Year in basketball in 1996, finishing his career at Southern Nash with more than 1,600 career points, 1,000 career rebounds, and more than 500 assists. Peppers was a four-event threat in track as well, participating in the triple jump, shot put, 400 meters, and the 4 X 400 relay. He finished third in the state meet in the Triple Jump in 1996 and was a part of the state championship 4x400 meter relay team from Southern Nash in 1998, helping the school win its first team State Championship in men's Track & Field program history.

Peppers was the NCHSAA Male Athlete of the Year in 1998. He was a first-team Parade All-American in 1997 (football), and was the football team's Most Valuable Player for three straight years.

Honors (give complete details of high school and post-high school athletic honors and achievements, awards, and recognition received as a result of high school achievements)

Peppers attended the University of North Carolina on a football scholarship and also played on the University's Basketball Team. As a member of the Tar Heels 1999-2000 Final Four, he averaged 15 minutes a game and just under 5 points per contest. Peppers is the only athlete to play in both an NCAA Final Four and the Super Bowl. (Donovan McNabb was a part of a Final Four team as a reserve, but did not see the floor at the Final Four as a walk-on reserve for Syracuse). After two years of playing football and basketball at UNC, Peppers decided to focus on football, where he ranks as 2nd all-time in school history with 30.5 sacks in his career.

His list of awards at the collegiate level is extensive:

- First-team All-ACC as a sophomore
- Led the nation in QB Sacks with 15 as sophomore (2000)
- Second-team All-American honors (sophomore)
- First team All-ACC (junior) (2001)
- Unanimous First Team All-American (junior)
- Won 2001 Chuck Bednarik Award (Nation's top defensive player)
- Won 2001 Bill Willis Trophy (Nation's best defensive lineman)

Peppers went on to play professionally in the NFL, playing from 2002-2018, in three different franchises. Peppers was drafted with the second overall pick by the Carolina Panthers in 2002, staying with the franchise through 2009, returning to the team from 2017-2018. Peppers also spent time with the Chicago Bears (2010-2013) and the Green Bay Packers (2014-2016).

Much like his list of collegiate accolades, his list of awards in the NFL is lengthy:

- NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year (2002)
- 3x First-team All-Pro (2004, 2006, 2010)
- 3x Second-team All-Pro (2008, 2009, 2012)
- 9x Pro Bowl selection
- NFL 2000s All-Decade Team
- NFL 2010s All-Decade Team
- Pro Football Writers Association (PFWA) All-Rookie Team (2002)
- 100 Greatest Bears of All-Time
- North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame inductee (2021)

Other information (*not previously listed*)

Peppers is an outstanding humanitarian as well. He was nominated by the Carolina Panthers in 2018 for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award for his efforts in eastern North Carolina after a pair of devastating hurricanes hit the state in the fall of that year. After retirement, Peppers has been a regular contributor to three charities the Center for Community Transitions, Girl Talk Foundation, and the Young Black Leadership Alliance.

Letters of Recommendation



Inspiring individuals, encouraging excellence through education-based athletics

*Sportsmanship • Developing Student-Athletes • Equity • Fair Competition
Fair Play • Honesty • Integrity • Respect*

Thursday, November 10, 2022

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Burt Jenkins
N.C. Department of Public Instruction

Dear NFHS Hall of Fame Committee:

It is my honor to submit Julius Peppers from Southern Nash High School in Bailey, North Carolina as a candidate in the athlete category for consideration of inclusion in the NFHS High School Hall of Fame. North Carolina has a proud tradition of high school athletics, and we firmly believe that Julius Peppers' accomplishments in high school, college, and professional athletics as well as his character, philanthropy, and his support of young people make him a highly qualified candidate for inclusion as North Carolina's first inductee in the athlete category.

Amazingly, Peppers never played football until his sophomore year in high school when his school's football coach, Ray Davis, talked him into coming out for the team. What an incredible difference this decision and relationship made in the life of Julius Peppers! Without the influence of Coach Davis talking Julius into playing football the Carolina Panthers would never have reached the Super Bowl in 2003, as Peppers was a disruptive force on that defensive team that went from worst defense in the league in 2001, to second-best defensive unit in the league in Peppers' rookie season of 2002. Maybe without that nudge from Coach Davis in high school, we still would never have seen an athlete play in both the Final Four and a Super Bowl!

As a 6'7", 250 pound running back at 3A Southern Nash, Julius rushed for over 1,000 yards in his first season playing football and amassed more than 3,500 career rushing yards and 44 total touchdowns. If you view the video, included in the supporting materials as a link to a story from WRAL-TV, you'll find that Peppers was a rare combination of power, speed, and grace at the running back position.

He also participated in basketball and track at Southern Nash. He helped the Firebirds Men's Track Team to the school's first team State Championship in the sport in 1998. Peppers ran as a member of the school's 4 X 400 Relay team that won the 3A State Championship in the event by more than a second at 3:23.10. He also finished second in the Triple Jump with a performance that spanned 46' 10".

Peppers was an outstanding basketball player for Southern Nash as well, scoring more than 1,600 points and grabbing more than 1,000 rebounds during his career at the school. He went on to play football and basketball at the University of North Carolina, averaging 16 minutes per game on the Tar Heels 2000 Final Four team under Bill Guthridge before choosing to focus on football after two years playing both sports for the university.

It is easy to see how high school athletics made an impact in the life of Julius Peppers; and it is even more apparent how Julius is committed to making an impact in young people's lives as he seeks to give back to his community. Peppers was a finalist for the NFL's Walter Peyton Man of the Year Award in 2018, selected by the Panthers as their nominee for that prestigious honor, because of the charitable work that Peppers did when two destructive hurricanes ravaged eastern North Carolina in 2017.

Peppers is a regular contributor to his community, supporting three charities that seek to support young people and families in our state. Peppers has donated

to the Young Black Leadership Alliance and the Girl Talk Foundation, both groups empowering young leaders and helping equip them to be successful in school and life. He has also been involved with the Center for Community Transitions, a group that offers assistance to families dealing with someone who has been incarcerated.

As one of the top five members of the NFL's all-time sack list, a multi-sport athlete throughout high school and college, and a generous, active, and involved community leader, we believe that Julius Peppers' accomplishments, life's work, and connection to Southern Nash High School more than qualify him for inclusion in the NFHS Hall of Fame. It would be my distinct honor as Commissioner of the NCHSAA to hang the NFHS Hall of Fame medallion on Julius Peppers as the first individual from the athlete category from our great state to join this prestigious Hall of Fame.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Que Tucker", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Que Tucker
NCHSAA Commissioner



NASH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
930 EASTERN AVENUE, NASHVILLE, NC

To: NFHS Hall of Fame Committee

From: Angela Miller, Executive Director of Athletics

Re: Julius Peppers

Date: 11/1/2022

I am writing to endorse the nomination of Julius Peppers to the NFHS High School Hall of Fame. Peppers began his high school career at Southern Nash High School in Ralley, NC, in 1994. He was 6 ft. 5 in. and weighed 225 lbs. Peppers had never played organized football before. With his size and athleticism, the coaches felt he would bring a strong presence to the gridiron for the Firebirds. During his high school years, he played running back and defensive lineman, and his career finish was 3,501 rushing yards and 46 touchdowns. He was one of the biggest threats as a lineman in the state of North Carolina. Also as a Firebird, he excelled at basketball, lettering and being voted All-Conference for four consecutive years. As a Track and Field sprinter, Peppers helped Southern Nash High School win the state championship for the first time in the school's history. He won in the 4x200 meter team relay and as a triple jumper. His senior year, Peppers was named to the Parade magazine high school All-American team in football as an all-purpose talent. In 1998 Julius Peppers was named Male Athlete of the Year by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, which listed Nash County Public Schools. During his high school stint he was named by the Rocky Mount Telegram as one of the 50 Greatest Athletes from the Twin Counties (i.e., Nash and Edgecombe).

Peppers has been a dedicated supporter of the Southern Nash Firebirds and of all of the Nash County Schools athletes and teams. He continues to mentor and guide fellow athletes in his hometown as an adult. Peppers is a dedicated, remarkable gentleman with outstanding character. We at Nash County Public Schools highly recommended him for this prestigious award.

Sincerely,

Angela Miller, Executive Director of Athletics and Wellness
Nash County Public Schools

Southern Nash High School

6446 Southern Nash High Road

Salley, North Carolina 27867

"Students First"



To: NFHS Hall of Fame Committee

From: Ray Davis, Former Head Football Coach & Athletic Director

Re: Julius Peppers

Date: 11/12/22

As the athletic director and head football coach of Southern Nash High School during Julius Pepper's attendance, I would like to recommend him for induction into the NFHS High School Hall of Fame. I want to focus on his character, which is clearly his best attribute and defines him as a respectable man.

Julius was blessed with the physical stature and athleticism to give him a natural advantage over most competitors. He was also blessed with hard-working parents who taught him early in life the value of effort. His parents also taught him to respect others, and that kindness was necessary to be successful in life. I met Julius when he was in the ninth grade, and I immediately thought of him as a gentle giant. Despite his overwhelming size and formidable talent, he never looked down on anyone, and never tried to gain attention just because he could. Julius was always a team player, not a one-man show. No matter what position or role he had on a team, he wanted to be a value to the whole team and do his best. To this day, I've never known him to depart from that way of thinking.

Julius is highly respected by everyone who has had the pleasure to compete with and against him. Furthermore, he continues to do for others, mentoring in his hometown community, and he is a loving father and husband. He is the epitome of a strong athlete, role model, and leader, and I highly recommend him for this outstanding honor as a NFHS High School Hall of Fame candidate.

Sincerely,

George Ray Davis
Former Head Football Coach and
Athletic Director of Southern Nash High School



503.255.4144
Carolina Panthers

1 704.246.2005
2 704.246.2401

November 18, 2022

NFHS Hall of Fame Committee
PO Box 680
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear NFHS Hall of Fame Committee:

From Bailey to Southern Nash High School to the University of North Carolina to the Carolina Panthers, Julius Peppers has made a tremendous difference in communities across North Carolina. Julius' support of various initiatives has enabled him to touch the lives of countless citizens in the Tar Heel state. His impact makes Julius a unique and highly qualified candidate for induction into the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame.

Our relationship with Julius began when the Panthers selected him in the first round of the 2002 NFL Draft, continues for 16 years until his retirement following the 2018 season and continues today as a Panthers Legend, where he uses his platform to serve the needs of communities throughout his home state. There are many recent examples.

After seeing photos and videos of damage along the coast of North Carolina and areas in the eastern part of the state caused by Hurricane Florence in 2018, Julius started the Hurricane Florence relief fund to provide relief to victims of the storm. Many of the hurricane ravaged towns reminded him of his hometown, which prompts him to spend several days in Robeson County in North Carolina and Marlboro County in South Carolina helping clean up.

Even after retiring, Julius has remained involved. In the spring of 2019, he supported local non-profit organizations that serve individuals transitioning from incarceration back into society, provided bail assistance for qualified non-violent offenders, helped young single mothers, and worked to improve police and community relations. Leading us to the 2020 presidential election, he lent the strength of his voice and stature to a PSA for the team's voter engagement initiative that aimed to educate, register and mobilize voters in the Carolinas.

Thank you for the opportunity to share a firsthand perspective of Julius' legacy with the selection committee. We appreciate you considering him for inclusion in the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame Class of 2023.

Sincerely,

Keith Coleman
President
Carolina Panthers



Support
Data

THE WILSON DAILY TIMES

Sports



Babe Ruth Southeast Regional Commissioner James Penland, right, listens as Kent Montgomery talks about Fleming Stadium. Joining the two are, from left, Babe Ruth District 4 commissioner Nathan Stallings and WCYAA director Mickey Davis. Fleming is the proposed site for the Babe Ruth ages 13-15 Southeast Regional beginning in July.

(Photo by Phil Goble Jr.)

WCYAA takes biggest step, to host regional

By Phil Goble Jr.
Daily Times Sports Editor

For five days this summer, Wilson will become the final step to the World Series — the Babe Ruth ages 13-15 World Series, that is.

The Wilson County Youth Athletic Association was officially awarded the league's Southeast Regional Tournament Saturday in a ceremony at the office of Athletic Director Mickey Davis.

"Our organization has come a long way in the last six or seven years and we're ready for it," said Davis. "We know we did real well with the state and district tournaments last year. We've hosted a 9-10 state tournament in Tar Heel (League) and a 15-17 state in Tar Heel."

"This is the biggest tournament yet, but I think we're prepared for it."

The event will run July 30-Aug. 5 and will be played in Fleming Stadium. Alternate sites will be used if weather interferes with the double-elimination event.

"When you walk into Fleming Stadium, it's baseball; it shouts baseball," said Davis, who hopes to use the Fike, Hunt and Beddingfield high school diamonds for practices. "It's a great facility."



The tournament will field nine teams — Eastern North Carolina, Western North Carolina, Tennessee, defending champion Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Florida. The final squad is an automatic entry from the host league.

The winner advances to the World Series in Little Rock, Ark., the week after the Regional.

"As far as I'm concerned, this (Fleming Stadium) is one of the top three facilities I've been in (for Babe Ruth)," said Babe Ruth Southeast Regional Commissioner and International Board Member James Penland, who represented Babe Ruth at the contract signing. "We appreciate Wilson County being a part of Babe Ruth. We'd like for

the people to come out to the ball park and see some good games."

Many area families may also have a reason to go Fleming — Babe Ruth requires all players to be housed in private homes during the tournament.

That means the WCYAA is facing a daunting challenge — to find rooms for approximately 125 players.

"The biggest thing we take pride in is host families," said Penland. "We require

See Babe Burth, page 2B

WDT salutes Peppers

SNSH multi-sport star named Athlete of Year

By Phil Goble Jr.
Daily Times Sports Editor
STANHOPE — For four years, the name Julius Peppers has been synonymous with Southern Nash athletics.

The 6-foot-7, 250-pound standout excelled on the football field, basketball court and track, raising eyebrows with every touchdown run, two-handed slam, race and triple jump.

From all-area teams to all-conference squads, state and national honors, Peppers, said his former football coach and athletics director Ray Davis, has brought nothing but honor to the Class 3-A school in the tobacco fields of Nash County.

Monday morning, in front of more than 300 classmates, teachers and family, Peppers brought honor again, this time being named the 1998 Wilson Daily Times Athlete of the Year.

Peppers was chosen from among more than 1,200 athletes at 11 area high schools that comprise the Daily Times coverage area. The graduating senior headed a list that included Mark Strickland and Jennifer Laughridge of Hunt; Shemkia Reid of Fike; Antwane Yelverton of Greene Central and Roger Stone of Greenfield.

Peppers, the 25th recipient, becomes the second straight athlete from Southern Nash to be honored, following Rikki Cockrell in 1997. He also ends a run of four female winners, becoming the first male named since Beddingfield's Corey Thomas in 1993.

"He is one of those individuals that come along one in a million," said Davis, who coached Peppers for three years in football. "You don't find too many people who have that God-given ability and are that good a person."

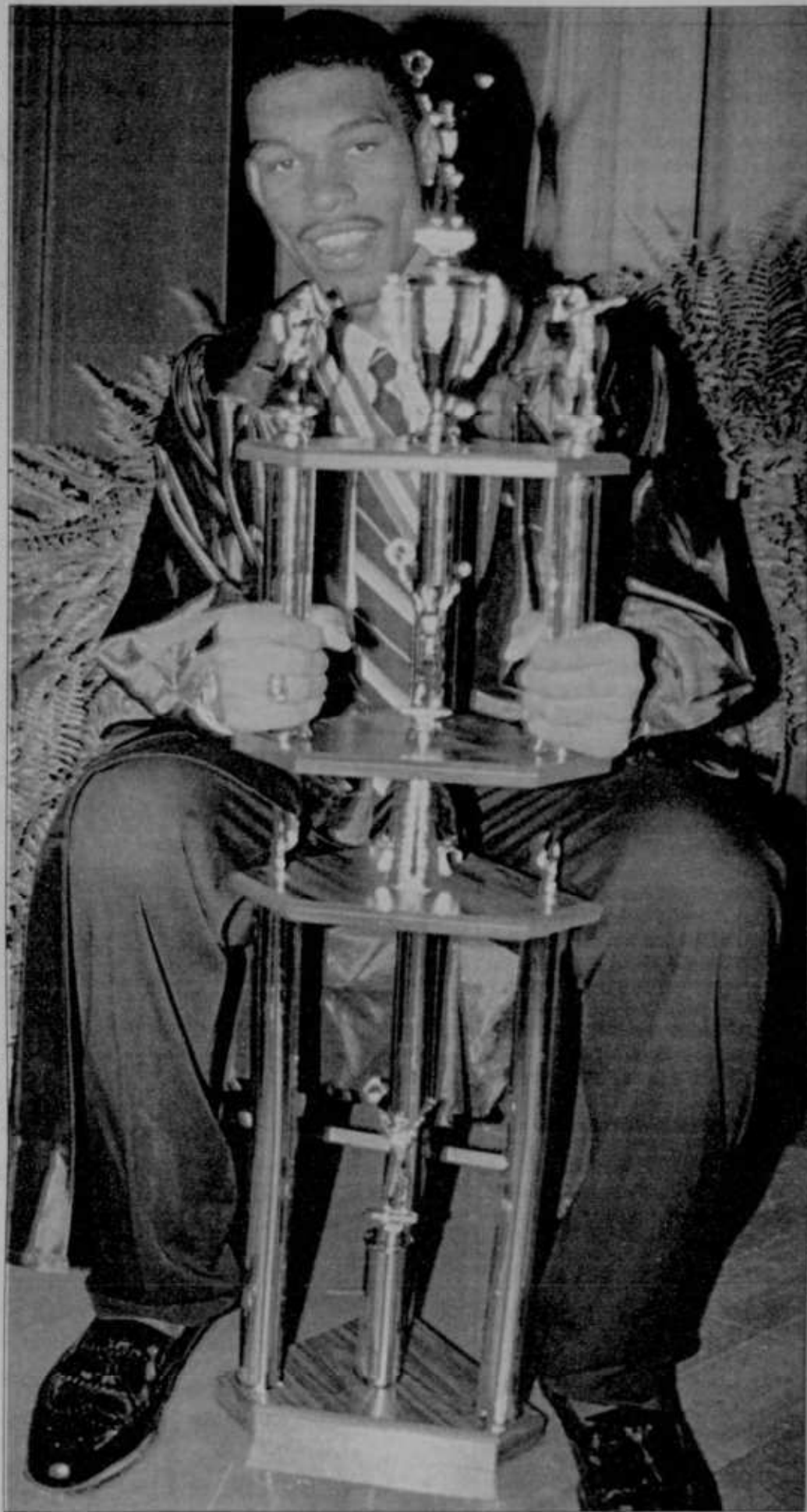
Known as shy and quiet around campus, Peppers is by far that on the field of athletic competition.

In football, the son of Bessie Faye Brinkley and George Peppers rushed for 3,501 yards and scored 38 touchdowns.

In 101 high school basketball games, Peppers scored 1,661 points, hauled down 876 rebounds; handed out 215 assists; had 151 steals; and blocked 142 shots.

On the track, he won the 1996 and 1998 N.C. High School Athletic Association Eastern Regional triple jump championship and was a national Junior Olympic long

See Peppers, page 2B



Southern Nash's Julius Peppers
... Wilson Daily Times Athlete of the Year

Warriors grind to first 3-A regional golf title



Hunt's Chris McKeel won a playoff to finish the individual runner-up.

(Photo by Tom Ham)

Hunt a state qualifier for fourth straight year; Demons' Parker earns first trip to Chapel Hill

By Tom Ham
Executive Sports Editor
PINETOPS — The abundant array of championship banners adorning the Hunt High School gymnasium wall will soon include the only one missing in the sport of golf.

Hunt now owns a regional championship.

The Warriors, Big Eight Conference champions in all five years of the league's existence, grinded down the stretch to add the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A Eastern Regional championship to their lengthy list of laurels on a cloudy Monday and in occasional light rain at Maceripine Country Club.

Coached by Jeff Best, Hunt posted a 309 total for its low four individuals to qualify for the NCHSAA 3-A Championship for the fourth consecutive year.

The Warriors trimmed North Lenoir of the Coastal Conference. Led by medalist Matthew Denmark, a junior, the Hawks carded a 311. Hunt and North Lenoir were joined by Coastal Conference champion White Oak in seizing state berths. White Oak finished third at 322.

Manteo finished fourth at 333, followed by Southern Nash at 335, Fike, in third place after nine holes, at 336, Beddingfield at 343, Kinston at 344 and Havelock at 366.

Beddingfield players dealt with the grief that resulted when fellow athletes/classmates Rebekah Anderson and Benji Edmondson lost their lives in a traffic acci-



Beddingfield golfers wore wrist bands in memory of two classmates who died in a weekend auto accident.

(Photo by Tom Ham)

with a 37-37-74.

Denmark, playing in the same group with senior Will Pope and junior Chris McKeel of Hunt, turned in a machine-like performance in firing a 35-35-70, 1-under-par over the 6,200-yard Maceripine layout that played at near-maximum difficult with testy pin placements and faster-than-usual greens that had been double-cut three consecutive days.

McKeel birdied the first hole of a sudden-death playoff to best Eisner for second place. McKeel fashioned a 38-35-73 in a round that included two birdies. Without a birdie for his second straight round, Pope, headed to East Carolina University, came in with a 38-38-76.

The Warriors also counted a 41-38-79 from freshman Scott deKeyser, while junior Taylor Lyon and sophomore Hyatt Field each shot 81. Senior Dwayne Baker

See Hunt, page 2B



Matthew Denmark of North Lenoir fired a 70 to pace the regional field.

(Photo by Tom Ham)

THE WILSON DAILY TIMES

Sports

Firebirds capture state championship

So. Nash wins with total package

By Scott Jones

Daily Times Staff Writer

RALEIGH — Without a doubt, this year's Class 3-A boys track state champion has the best team in the state.

More often than not, the N.C. High School Athletic Association track team title is more representative of which team has the most premier athletes, rather than a true gauge of depth and overall superiority. However, Friday at N.C. State's Paul Derr track, Southern Nash showed the rest of the state that, indeed, it has the total package in rolling to the school's first ever track state championship.

Southern, whose previous best state finish was 8th in 1995, blasted the competition just as it has all year, with this performance being much more impressive since it came against the best the state has to offer. The Firebirds rolled to 76 team points, easily outdistancing runner-up Greensboro Dudley's 45. Rounding out the top five were long-time 4-A powerhouse Durham Hillside (35), North Buncombe (34), and last year's champion, Skyland T.C. Robertson (33).

Fike posted the next highest finish for area schools, amassing 16 points to finish tied for 11th. Southwest Edgecombe rode Deshaun Richardson's second-place showing in the 110-meter hurdles to tie for 23rd with eight points, and Edgington rounded out the area scoring by tying for 34th with 0M points.

"It's been a team effort all year long," proud Firebirds head coach Alton Tyre beamed. "It helped us having an all-around program. Robertson did well in the field, but couldn't score much on the track. Dudley was strong on the track but didn't have any field events. But we had them both — track and field. We had the total package."

Evidence that the Firebirds indeed possessed the total package is that Southern could roll to such an easy team victory while winning just two events after having qualified in 16 of the 18 events. However, second, third, and fourth places proved to be Firebird Country, and the rest of the state quickly found out that those points can add up in a hurry.

Southern's only individual champions was senior Arthur Deans. Deans edged a very familiar competitor, Richardson, to win the 100 hurdles. Both runners posted a 14.2 second hand-time performance, but Deans won with the lean. Deans tripped on a hurdle in last year's regionals and did not qualify for the 110's, his specialty, and that trip up proved to be this year's motivating factor.

"I was making up for lost time," Deans said of his personal victory. "This is a great



Southern Nash coach Alton Tyre raises his hands in victory after being doused with a water cooler by his athletes.

"All these guys have worked so hard since they've been here, it really makes me proud to see them achieve such an outstanding accomplishment."

— Alton Tyre
Southern Nash boys track coach

attitude that prevailed throughout the meet. High's surprise second place finish in the 200 dash turned Tyre's worried anticipation into a victorious grin. However, High's performance (he set the school record with a time of 21.96 in the trials) was just the cap on a day that saw Southern athlete's rise to the occasion time and again.

"We came into the meet not knowing for sure we could win, but Coach Tyre had us believing," High said. "We just ran with everything we had, and it all just fell into place."

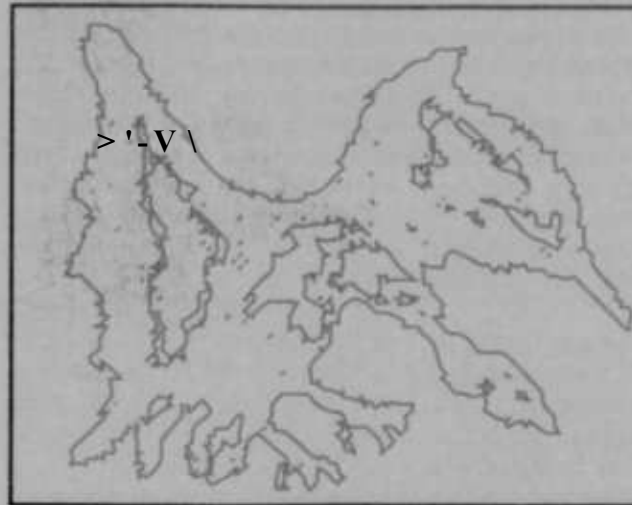
Senior Demaryland Cooper could not match last week's regional championship performance of 6-feet-10 in the high jump, instead he settled for runner-up status with a leap of 6-8. He more than made up for that slight regression, however, by posting career-best performances in both the long and triple jumps. Cooper, a Western Carolina recruit, soared 22-7 to place fourth in the long jump, then bounded 45-1 to take fifth in the triple jump. Peppers, the NCHSAA Athlete of the Year, nearly matched his career best with a leap of 46-10 to place second in the long jump. Robertson's William Montgomery, the meet's MVP, won each of the three events.

Southern took on the look of a winner with a blistering performance in the 800 relay. The unit of Gary, Jones, High, and Deans, which had already shattered the school record last week, re-set the school record with a blistering time of 1:27.78, good for a close second behind Dudley.

Deans posted a runner-up showing in the 300 hurdles after setting a school record with a time of 39.4 in the trials.

"All these guys have worked so hard since they've been here, it really makes me proud to see them achieve such an outstanding accomplishment," Tyre said. "We've worked since Day One with the goal of winning a state championship. All the time, all the effort has really paid off. These kids sacrificed a lot to be here. They don't have the fancy cars that other kids do because they practice instead of working. They gave up a lot for this team, and it really is good to see all that hard work pay off with something like this."

The only other area hurrah came when Fike's Tim Wells came from nowhere to sprint to victory in the 400 dash. Wells was seeded just sixth coming into the finals, but he blazed past the field coming out of the last turn, outstriding Burlington Williams to the line with a time of 50.05.



Top 10

1. Southern Nash 76
2. Greensboro Dudley 45
3. Durham Hillside 35
4. North Buncombe 34
5. T.C. Robertson 33
6. East Rowan 26
6. Kings Mountain 26
8. Havelock 22
9. Ragsdale 18
10. North Gaston 17



Southern Nash's Arthur Deans, left, and Southwest Edgecombe's Deshaun Richardson race to the 110-meter hurdles finish. Deans won the event and Richardson took second.

(Photos by Grant Robertson)

Demons advance

By Jay Mumford

Daily Times Staff Writer

FUQUAY-VARINA — Fike High School's version of "Murderer's Row" came to the rescue Friday night in pounding out out a 15-12 win over Fuquay-Varina in a second round game in the N. C. High School Athletic Association's 3-A baseball playoffs.

Led by the home run power of seniors Brandon Godwin, Gerry Grimes and Jon Stancil, the Demons overcame erratic pitching in advancing to the Eastern semifinals at home Tuesday night against Southern Durham, a 5-3 winner over Washington.

Fike (16-6), the Big Eight Conference co-champion and No. 1 seed, pounded out 18 hits and needed them all to offset a combined mound effort which produced six wild pitches and four passed balls.

Fuquay-Varina (17-6), the Five County Conference's champion and No. 1 seed, fared badly as well, releasing eight wild pitches, including five by losing right-hander Neil Soars in a five-run, sixth-inning rally.

Fike never trailed, although a fifth-inning error allowed the Bengals to eventually score four unearned runs and tie, 8-8. The Golden Demons held leads of 5-1, 8-4, 13-8 and 15-10.

"It was a struggle," said Golden Demons' head coach Will Flowers. "No lead was safe, because this game had a lot of stuff in it. Sometimes it was ugly; sometimes it was pretty."

Fike's decisive rally started with center fielder Brent Bissette walking, advancing to second on a wild pitch and scoring on Godwin's fourth hit, a single to center.

Soars, who had come on in relief of right-handed reliever Jeremy Cotten, became unglued, unleashing another wild pitch, then surrendering a one-out, two-run homer to left by Stancil. Chris Harrell and senior Justin Toms faced consecutive singles, then

Fike 15
Fuquay-Varina 12

FIKE	AB	R	H	B	FI	FUQUAY-VARINA	AB	R	H	B	FI
Mason, dh	5	0	0	0	0	Carroll, 2b	2	2	1	0	0
Wilson, 2b	0	0	0	0	0	Faucette, lf	5	0	3	2	0
Davis, p	0	0	0	0	0	Cotten, 3b-p2	1	1	1	1	0
Bissette, cf	4	2	2	2	2	Ryan, 1b-p	3	1	1	0	0
Bass, rf	0	0	0	0	0	Soars, p	1	0	0	0	0
B.Godwin, rf-p4	4	4	4	2	2	Smith, p-3b	3	2	0	0	0
Grimes, 1b	5	3	2	2	2	Ellis, ss	5	0	2	5	0
Stancil, c	4	2	4	4	4	Matthews, rf	5	1	2	1	1
Harrell, 3b	5	1	2	2	2	Walton, C	0	0	0	0	0
Toms, lf	5	1	1	1	1	Griffin, c	4	1	1	0	0
Bk.Godwin, ss4	2	2	2	2	2	Evans, p	0	0	0	0	0
Eldredge, p-2b3	0	1	0	0	0	Stephenson, df	2	0	0	0	0
						King, ph	1	1	0	0	0

Totals 39 15 18 10 Totals 33 12 11 9

Score by innings:
Fike 302 125 2 — 15
Fuquay-Varina .. 103 042 2 — 12

E—Cotten, Ryan, Grimes. DP—Fike 1, Fuquay-Varina 1. LOB—Fike 6, Fuquay-Varina 11. 2B—Matthews, Ellis. HR—Bn. Godwin, Ellis, Stancil, Grimes, Matthews. SB—Ryan, Eldredge, Stephenson 2, Carroll. SF—Eldredge.

Pitching
Eldredge 4 7 5 4 5 4
Davis (W, 5-2) 1 1 3 0 3 2
Godwin 2 4 4 3 4 2
Smith 21/3 5 5 3 4 0 0
Cotten 21/3 6 3 2 2 1 1
Soars (L, 1-3) 1 5 5 2 1 1
Ryan 11/3 2 2 2 2 1 3

WP—Smith, Eldredge, Cotten 2, Davis 2, Soars 5, Bn. Godwin 3, Ryan. PB—Stancil 4.

proceeded to score as three more of Soars' pitches soared over the head of Bengals' catcher Joe Griffin.

"We certainly hurt ourselves with the wild pitches," Fuquay-Varina head coach Milton Senter said. "But we didn't expect Fike to hit the ball as well as they did tonight. We just didn't have the pitching to get their big guys out."

Stancil was one of Fike's biggest guys, enjoying a 4-for4 night with four RBL Godwin, who belted a three-run homer in the third inning, also went 4-for4 for the Golden Demons, who equaled their farthest advance in the playoffs at the 3-A level.

Harrell, freshman Brock Godwin and Bissette added two hits each for the Golden Demons.

The surge left the Golden Demons with a 13-8 lead, and the Bengals never came closer than three afterward, much to Senter's disappointment.

"We kept coming and coming at them (Golden Demons)," he said. "But we could never come far enough. I thought we had turned the corner when we tied the game in the fifth, but they got that big rally in the sixth, and there we

See Fike, page 2B



Southern Nash's Felicia Harris runs a leg of the state championship 800-meter relay.

(Photos by Grant Robertson)

SN girls take 2nd

From staff reports

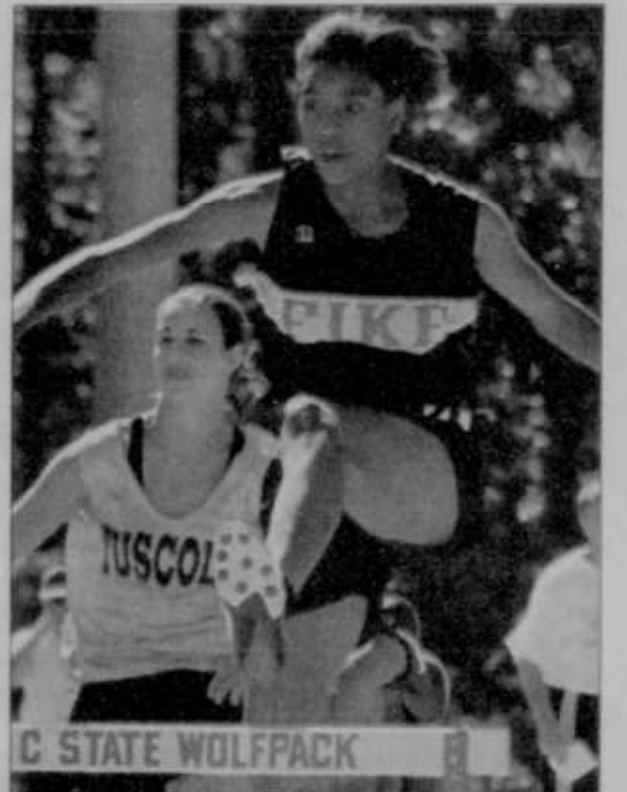
RALEIGH — Led by a championship performance from the 800-meter relay team, Southern Nash finished the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A girls track runner-up for the second straight year on N.C. State University's Paul Derr Track Friday.

T.C. Robertson was again the state champion with 66 points, followed by the Ladybirds of coach Brian Foster with 58. Going into the 1,600-meter relay, the final event, Southern Nash could have shared the title by finishing three positions ahead of Robertson.

Tresha Hunter, Meka Battle, Felicia Harris and Thomasina Parker comprised the Ladybirds' 800 relay that posted a first-place time of one minute, 42.2 seconds.

Fike also claimed a state champion in junior Tiffany Smith, who scorched the 300-meter intermediate hurdles field with a time of 44.87.

A detailed report of the girls' championship meet will appear in Monday's Daily Times sports section.



Fike's Tiffany Smith leaps over a hurdle in the 300-meter finals. Smith won the title.

Lady Warriors oust Bertie, 3-2

By Tom Ham

Executive Sports Editor

WINDSOR — Hunt returned to the scene of its poorest 1998 outing to turn in one of its sharpest performances on a gorgeous Friday afternoon.

The effort was enough to boost the Lady Warriors of head coach Teresa Allen into the third round of the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A fast-pitch softball playoffs for the first time in the 20-year history of the softball program with a 3-2 squeaker over Big Eight Conference rival Bertie.

Hunt, 15-3 and victorious in 15 of its last 16 games, conquered the Lady Falcons for the second time in three meetings this season in reaching the Eastern semifinals on the road Tuesday at 7 p.m. against Charles B. Aycock, a 6-2 winner in eight innings over Washington Friday. The Lady Warriors and Bertie, which concluded 14-6, deadlocked for second place in the regular season.

The Lady Warriors, the Big Eight's No. 2 seed, constructed a 3-0 lead and withstood a Bertie bunting spree in the sixth inning.

The Lady Falcons, making their first fast-pitch playoffs appearance and qualifying for the softball postseason for the first time in seven years, did not resort to the bunt in

See Hunt, page 3B



Hunt pitcher Jessica Tedder struck out 10.

(Photo by Tom Ham)

Inside...



C.B. Aycock triumphs over Washington, 6-2, in 3-A softball 2B.



Greenfield advances to the NCISAA girls soccer championship with a win over Carolina Day 2B.



Fike's Whitaker Askew smashes a shot during his championship victory Saturday afternoon.

(Photo by Jay Mumford)

Askew grabs crown

Fike junior beats No. 1 seed to win regional

By Jay Mumford
Daily Times Staff Writer

Fike's Whitaker Askew had two dilemmas Saturday afternoon.

His first one would be whether he would have the stamina to play three singles matches in one day in the N. C. High School Athletic Association's Class 3-A Eastern Regional boys tennis tournament.

The junior's second dilemma was where to put the wall chart, signifying his march to the championship, punctuated by a 7-6 (7-5), 6-4 victory over top-seeded junior Henrik Teiwik of White Oak, an exchange student from Limoping, Sweden.

Beddingfield's No. 1 doubles team of Lee Vaughn-Beaty Bass failed to match the No. 2-seeded Askew's title accomplishment, falling 6-2, 6-1 in the finals to Washington's top-seeded duo of Vinnie Maurizio-David Cook. Vaughn-Bass entered the tournament as the No. 2 seed.

The semifinalists in singles and doubles advanced to the NCHSAA 3-A championship at the Burlington Recreation Tennis Center Friday and Saturday.

"I wasn't worried about playing three matches in one day," said Askew, who occupies the No. 1 position on the Golden Demons ladder. "Coming into the finals, I didn't feel tired. I felt like I was in pretty good shape."

The final five games were a testament to Askew's efforts. Hampered by cramping muscles, he staved off a rally

3-A results

N. C. HIGH SCHOOL
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
Class 3-A
EASTERN REGIONAL
Tennis Tournament
(on Wilson Rec. Courts)

SINGLES
Quarterfinals
(No. 3 seed) Jeremy Jones (Kinston) d. Anil Vernia (Fike), 6-2, 6-4; (No. 2) Whitaker Askew (Fike) d. Marcus Jones (Washington), 6-0, 6-0

SEMIFINALS
(No. 1) Henrik Teiwik (White Oak) d. J. Jones, 6-0, 7-5; Askew d. (No. 4) Braxton Patterson (Southern Nash), 6-1, 6-1.

FINALS
Askew d. Teiwik, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4

DOUBLES
SEMIFINALS
(No. 1) Vinnie Maurizio-David Cook (Washington) d. Brent Bennett-John Parker (Manteo), 6-4, 6-3; (No. 2) Lee Vaughn-Beaty Bass (Beddingfield) d. (No. 4) Jason McDaniel-Robert Strickland (North Lenoir), 1-6, 6-3, 6-4.

FINALS
Maurizio-Cook d. Vaughn-Bass, 6-2, 6-1.

by Teiwik, taking momentary breaks between points to attempt to stretch his legs in order to continue.

Teiwik couldn't take full advantage of Askew's physical problems, however, despite closing within 5-4 after falling behind 4-0.

He said Askew's tenacity was a major contributor to the outcome.

"He's a great player," Teiwik said. "The players in my conference (Coastal) would hit the ball maybe two or three times, and give up on a point. He hit the ball hard, kept it in play and kept me running."

"It was very tiring."

After routing Washington's Marcus Jones, 6-0, 6-0 in the quarterfinals and Southern Nash's fourth-seeded Braxton Patterson, 6-1, 6-1 in the semis, Askew dominated Teiwik, who entered the match with a 21-0 record.

Askew mixed crisp down-the-line and cross-court forehand volleys to build a 5-2 first-set lead, but Teiwik stormed back to take a 6-5 advantage.

"I was getting a little concerned when he started to come back," Askew said. "But I didn't want to second-guess myself, because, when you do that, you penalize yourself by losing your focus."

"But I was real concerned when he took the 6-5 lead. Somehow I managed to break his serve and force the tiebreaker."

The undefeated Askew (17-0) forged a 6-2 lead in the tiebreaker then held on to win the set.

The second set began as a carbon-copy of the first, with Askew racing to a 4-0 led, capitalizing on what he said was a weak backhand attack by Teiwik.

Teiwik battled back again, but there would be no tiebreaker this time.

"It was same old, same old," Askew said. "But I wasn't about to let him come back all the way again."

"I lost concentration in the first parts of both sets," Teiwik said. "It's very hard to come back from those deficits and have a shot at winning."

Vaughn-Bass rallied from a one-set deficit to win the semifinal encounter

See Askew, page 2B

Fike makes best of second chance

Golden Demons rides bats, Davis' arm to Big Eight top seed

By Phil Goble Jr.
Daily Times Sports Editor

Fike High missed an opportunity to sew up the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference regular-season title when it slipped at archrival Hunt two weeks ago.

Saturday night, the Golden Demons did not let a second chance get away.

Behind an eight-hit offensive and the pitching of right-hander David Davis, the Golden Demons wrapped up the league's top seed in the N.C. High School Athletic Association playoffs with a 4-0 victory over the visiting Warriors.

The contest became necessary when both finished the Big Eight tied for first with 10-4 worksheets.

The co-champions get home games in the first round Tuesday night — Fike entertains Durham Hillside while Hunt welcomes Southern Durham. Both games are set for 7 p.m.

"We should have won over at Hunt," said Fike senior second baseman Matt Eldredge. "We felt we shouldn't have had to play this game tonight."

But play they did — in every aspect of the game.

In the field, Davis was king of the hill. Using a fastball and curveball, the junior befuddled Hunt batters most of the night, striking out nine while walking just three. He hit one batter.

"He's got a good curveball and a good

fastball and he blended them well tonight," said Fike head coach Will Flowers, whose team improved to 14-6 overall.

The Warriors had both their hits in the first inning and had their biggest threat in the second, when they loaded the bases.

That, however, was all the offense Hunt could muster.

Davis worked out of the bases loaded jam with a strikeout — an out that started a string of 12 straight.

Hunt got runners on in the final two innings due to errors and walks.

"I only threw two pitches — fastball and curveball," said Davis, who improved to 4-2. "I was mixing it up well to their good hitters. We've been talking about it (rematch) since we lost over there. They (Demons) were pumped up when we got here, so I knew we had a good chance."

The chance got even better when Fike came to the plate.

Despite hitting into three double plays, the Demons rapped eight hits and benefited from four Hunt errors.

Senior first baseman Gerry Grimes

HUNT												
AB	R	H	B	I	AB	R	H	B	I	AB	R	H
High, 2b	4	0	1	0	Home, lf	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Boswell, ss	4	0	1	0	Bissette, cf	2	0	2	1	0	0	0
Daniels, 3b	3	0	0	0	Bro.G'win, rf	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tant, 1b	2	0	0	0	Grimes, lf	3	2	2	0	0	0	0
Skinner, dh	3	0	0	0	Stancil, c	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Williams, p	2	0	0	0	Harrell, 3b	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Weller, lf	2	0	0	0	Toms, dh	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballance, c	3	0	0	0	Bro.G'win, ss	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Langston, cf	2	0	0	0	Mason, ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
					Eldredge, 2b	3	2	2	0	0	0	0
Totals	25	0	2	0	Totals	24	4	8	1	0	0	0

FIKE												
AB	R	H	B	I	AB	R	H	B	I	AB	R	H
High, 2b	4	0	1	0	Home, lf	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Boswell, ss	4	0	1	0	Bissette, cf	2	0	2	1	0	0	0
Daniels, 3b	3	0	0	0	Bro.G'win, rf	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tant, 1b	2	0	0	0	Grimes, lf	3	2	2	0	0	0	0
Skinner, dh	3	0	0	0	Stancil, c	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Williams, p	2	0	0	0	Harrell, 3b	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Weller, lf	2	0	0	0	Toms, dh	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballance, c	3	0	0	0	Bro.G'win, ss	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Langston, cf	2	0	0	0	Mason, ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
					Eldredge, 2b	3	2	2	0	0	0	0
Totals	25	0	2	0	Totals	24	4	8	1	0	0	0

Score by innings:												
Hunt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fike	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

E—Weller, Williams, High, Boswell, Eldredge
LOB—Hunt 8, Fike 7. DP—Hunt 3. 2B—Boswell, Grimes, Weller. S—Horne

Pitching	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Williams (L, 2-1)	6	8	4	1	1	1
Davis (W, 4-2)	7	2	0	0	3	9
HBP—Langston (by Williams).						
T-1:41 A-300.						

opened the second with a double, went to third on a single by junior catcher John Stancil and scored when Hunt left fielder Blake Weller over ran the ball.

Eldredge scored the second run in the second inning, singling, then moving to second on an errant pick-off attempt and scoring on an infield error on a grounder from senior right fielder Brandon Godwin.

Junior center fielder Brent Bissette earned theonly RBI — slapping a double to left-center field that scored Eldredge in the fifth inning.

Fike's final run came in the sixth on two singles and a two-out error.

"As far as our team, it's good to see them step up and play that way (hard)," said Flowers. "It shows the coach they care."

Eldredge and Grimes each wound up 2-for-3 with two runs scored while Bissette wound up 2-for-2.

Cedric Williams suffered the pitching



Fike center fielder Brent Bissette rips a single in the first inning Saturday evening.

(Photo by Phil Goble Jr.)



Southern Nash senior DeMaryland Cooper soared to the high jump championship with a leap of 6-feet-10.

(Photo by Scott Jones)

Southern sweeps track regional

Boys catch field unprepared

By Scott Jones
Daily Times Staff Writer

STANHOPE — Maybe now that the state track meet is on the horizon, Southern Nash will finally be able to find some competition.

In a scene so repetitive that it now almost borders on monotony, Southern Nash's boys track team has followed the same formula for success all season long: show up, find the competition unprepared for the impending onslaught, and race to victory by a ridiculous margin.

Such was the case Saturday afternoon as the host Firebirds blitzed the Class 3-A Eastern Regional field in preparation for what Southern hopes will be the school's first-ever N.C. High School Athletic Association track championship Friday at N.C. State's Paul Derr Track Complex.

If numbers count, Southern will possess a decided advantage in its championship quest. The Firebirds are qualified to compete in a gaudy 16 of the 18 events, with the 100- and 400-meter dashes being Southern's only non-qualifiers. The top four finishers in each event qualified for the state meet. All six area members of the Big Eight, with Fike, Hunt, Beddingfield, Southwest Edgecombe, and Charles B. Aycock joining the Firebirds, will be represented at the state meet. Pike will have the area's second largest contingent as the Golden Demons are qualified in six events.

Such domination equaled 171 team points for the Firebirds Saturday, a total that decimated runner-

See Firebirds, page 2B

Ladybirds crush foes again

By Scott Jones
Daily Times Staff Writer

STANHOPE — The season has already been ultra successful, but Southern Nash's girls track team has completed all season with a sense that it had some unfinished business to handle. The opportunity is now a week away.

The Ladybirds came close last year to experiencing the ultimate in prep competition — a state championship. Southern finished 14 points behind TC. Roberson, taking home the silver runner-up plaque. All season long the Ladybirds have pointed towards bringing home the gold first-place plaque.

If Saturday's N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A Eastern Regional, held at Southern Nash, is a true indicator, the Ladybirds are definitely poised for a championship run.

Southern, as has been the case all year, out-classed the competition in romping to 170 team points, easily outdistancing runner-up Fike's 78. Thanks to a strong showing in the field events, the Ladybirds needed just seven events to amass a point total high enough to win the meet. Southern had 70 points coming out of the field, and Tish Pope's third place finish in the 100-meter low hurdles effectively sealed the outcome, giving Southern 82 points.

However, Southern's success was not limited to the field. The Ladybirds qualified in a staggering total of 16 of the 17 state championship events that will be contested Friday at N.C. State's Paul Derr

See Ladybirds, page 2B



Fike's Calin Burkett en route to one of her three victories.

(Photo by Scott Jones)

Jackets add two titles

By Jay Mumford
Daily Times Staff Writer

The staple of Roanoke Rapids' proud tennis tradition has been the play of its doubles teams.

Saturday afternoon at the Barton College Tennis Complex, the Yellow Jackets continued to build on the program's rich heritage by adding the N. C. High School Athletic Association's 2-A Eastern Regional boy's tennis singles and doubles championships.

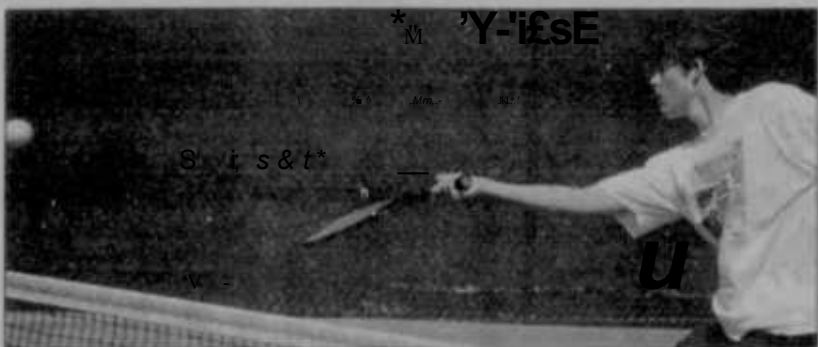
The Yellow Jackets placed both of its doubles teams in the finals, doing so at the expense of Eastern Plains Conference member Greene Central, which held the top two tournament seeds.

The Rams' No. 2-seeded team of Lance Miller-Ken Morgan dropped a 6-1, 6-2 decision to eventual tournament champions Philip Artmann-Adam Swecker; while No. 1 seeds Steven West-David Monroe dropped a three-set, 6-1, 2-6, 6-3 marathon to Will Spears-Brad Young.

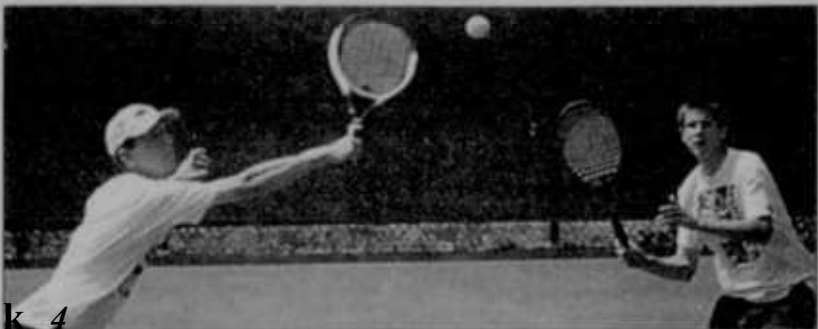
Artmann-Swecker defeated Spears-Young, 6-2, 6-4 for the title.

All four teams, as well as the individuals who reached the semifinals of the singles event, into the NCHSAA 2-A state championship tournament, which begins Friday at N. C. State University.

Claiming the singles championship was the Yellow Jackets' top-seeded Dennis Lerchl, who ripped Northern Vance's fourth-seeded Spencer Delbridge, 6-0, 6-0 in the finals. So overpowering was Lerchl, that two consecutive games lasted a combined time of



Dennis Lerchl smacks a shot. (Photos by Jay Mumford)



Adam Swecker, left, and Phillip Artmann coordinate in doubles.

2-A results	
N. C. HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION Class 2-A EASTERN REGIONAL Tennis Tournament (on Barton College Courts)	Finals Lerchl d. Delbridge, 6-0, 6-0.
SINGLES Semifinals (No. 1 seed) Dennis Lerchl (Roanoke Rapids) d. Adam Fields (Warren County), 6-2, 6-0; (No. 4) Spencer Delbridge (Northern Vance) d. (No. 2) Jay Carraway (Swansboro), 6-0, 6-0.	DOUBLES Semifinals Will Spears-Brad Young (Roanoke Rapids) d. (No. 1) Steven West-David Monroe (Greene Central), 6-1, 2-6, 6-3. (No. 4) Phillip Artmann-Adam Swecker (Roanoke Rapids) d. (No. 2) David-Ken Morgan (Greene Central), 6-1, 6-2.
	Finals Artmann-Swecker d. Spears-Young, 6-2, 6-4.

one minute, 45 seconds.

Lerchl, a junior and an exchange student from Germany, who ripped Northern Vance's fourth-seeded Spencer Delbridge, 6-0, 6-0 in the finals. So overpowering was Lerchl, that two consecutive games lasted a combined time of

Askew leads state qualifying contingent

(Continued from page one)

against fourth-seeded Jason McDaniel-Robert Strickland of North Lenoir, 1-6, 6-3, 6-4. Vaughn raced across the court to make a lunging return, which whistled past a ducking Bass and over the net to set up match point.

"I just ran as hard as I could and got it back over," Vaughn said. "Our last two sets were a lot better than the first. It was very ugly."

The Bruins' duo said they were able to get their

ground strokes down in the final two sets, which wasn't working for them at the outset of the match.

However, nothing worked well for them in the finals, while Maurizzio-Cook performed like a well-oiled machine in racing to the championship.

"We used a lot of aggressive play at the net," Maurizzio said. "Last night's (Friday) quarterfinal against Beddingfield's John Green-Jeff Bryant) was our toughest match of the tournament. Today was a lot of fun."

Firebirds rule regional roost

(Continued from page one)

up Coastal conference representative Washington's 60. Southern's fellow Big Eight conference member Fike was third with 48 points. The meet was comprised of the Big Eight and Coastal conferences, plus Northeastern-Albermarle misfit Manteo. The Redskins are the only 3-A member of the Northeastern-Albermarle conference.

As the score indicated, Southern found the competition lacking. As a matter of fact, the Firebirds had enough team points (68) after the first five field events were in the books. However, the final field event, the high jump, provided the day's best competition, and a Firebird rose to the task there as well.

Southern senior DeMaryland Cooper, a Western Carolina signee, wowed a gathering that grew with each raising of the high jump bar by clearing a school-record six feet, 10 inches. The competition Cooper faced was familiar — Hunt's Mark Strickland and Beddingfield's Brian Blount, each of whom cleared 6-8. The trio has switched off big-meet titles all season, with Blount taking the Wilson Daily Times Track Classic title and Strickland claiming top honors in the Big Eight conference meet. Cooper

3-A boys results	
N.C. HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION Class 3-A EASTERN REGIONAL Boys Track Meet (at Southern Nash High School)	Daniels, McGarvey, Evernham), eight minutes, 33.4 seconds; White Oak, Havelock, Hertford Co., Beddingfield, C. B. Aycock.
TEAM RESULTS Southern Nash (SN) 171; Washington (W) 60; Fike (F) 48; Havelock (Hav) 40; White Oak (WO) 38; Pender County (PC) 36; Charles B. Aycock (CBA) 33; Goldsboro (G) 22; Hunt (H) 22; Beddingfield (B) 22; Kinston (K) 20; Southwest Edgecombe (SWE) 17; Hertford County (HC) 14; North Lenoir (NL) 8; Manteo (M) 5; Bertie (Ber) 1.	110 HURDLES — A. Deans (SN), 14.4; Richardson (SWE), Gibbs (W), Dunn (CBA), Joyner (SN), Smith (SN).
SHOT PUT — Burgess (W) 51 feet, 8 1/2 inches; Earp (SN), Howell (PC), Rose (H), Brien (H), Peppers (SN).	100 — Hardy (K), 10.5; Macklin (F), Phelps (Hav), Musgrave (G), Dailey (Hav), Hardy (NL).
DISCUS — Rowell (PC), 162.1; Burgess (W), C. Rogers (SN), Reddick (W), Dickens (SWE), T. Rogers (SN).	800 RELAY — Southern Nash (Gary, Jones, High, Deans), 1:28.3; Fike, Pender Co., North Lenoir, Washington, Goldsboro.
LONG JUMP — Coleman (G), 21-11 3/4; Cooper (SN), B. Perry (SN), Langston (B), Dailey (Hav), Carver (M).	1,600 — Mollahar (WO), 4:42.4; Hubbard (CBA), McGarvey (SN), Long (H), Roseboro (NL), R. Perry (SN).
TRIPLE JUMP — Peppers (SN), 45-8 3/4; Cooper (SN), Atkinson (F), Foster (F), Perry (SN), Carver (M).	400 RELAY — Southern Nash (Gary, Jones, Peppers, High), 42.7; Fike, Goldsboro, Havelock, Kinston, North Lenoir.
HIGH JUMP — Cooper (SN), 6-10; Strickland (H), Blount (B), Joyner (B), Bowen (W), Coleman (G), Bass (Ber).	400 — Bowen (W), 50.8; Wells (F), Boney (PC), McKinney (SWE), Ward (K), R. Deans (SN).
POLE VAULT — Howard (SN), 11-6; Butler (CBA), Winstead (SN), Corbitt (CBA), Thomas (SN), Archbell (M).	300 HURDLES — Gibbs (W), 39.7; Gary (NL), Deans (SN), Butcher (H), Matthews (F), Willis (M).
3,200 RELAY — Southern Nash (Keen,	800 — Bell (Hav), 2:02.8; McNeil (HC), Williams (R), Evernham (SN), Valentine (HC), Dupree (SWE).

made two attempts at seven feet before passing on his final attempt to return to the triple jump competition.

"The high jump today was all motivation," Cooper said. "I didn't make it to the state meet last year, and that really upset me because I knew I should have been there. That pushed me a lot. I knew I could do it (clear 6-10) all along, but it did come as a surprise."

Cooper also posted second-place finishes in the long and triple jumps. He led the long jump until Goldsboro's Travis

Coleman topped him by an inch and 3/4 on his final attempt. Cooper's teammate, Julius Peppers, the NCHSAA Male Athlete of the Year, captured the triple jump.

"I'm awestruck," Southern head coach Alton Tyree said of his team's third regional title in the past four years. "These guys never cease to amaze me. We put on some outstanding performances today. We've practiced since Day One with the goal of winning the state championship. We feel really good about next week."

Reid, Brown spearhead Greene Central advance

SNOW HILL — Reginald Reid and Alfae Brown paced Greene Central's boys track team to a fourth-place finish in the N. C. High School Athletic Association's 2-A Eastern Regional at Greene Central High School Saturday afternoon.

Reid earned a pair of berths to

the NCHSAA 2-A Championship meet in Charlotte Wednesday with championships in the long and triple jumps. Reid leaped distances of 21 feet, nine inches and 44-6, respectively.

Brown claimed invitations with a first-place effort in the 200-meter dash (22.8 seconds), and a

tie for second (10.9) in the 100 meters.

Their respective showings, along with a first-place finish from the 400-meter relay team and a runner-up effort by Tony Darden in the 400-meter dash garnered the Rams a total of 57 points.

Damsels rule GPIC tourney

Greenfield blanks Hale High, 5-0

By Tom Ham
Executive Sports Editor

ROCKY MOUNT — State qualifiers had best not underestimate Greenfield's chances of repeating as the N.C. Independent Schools Athletic Association 1A girls soccer champion.

The Damsels of head coach Ben Forbes sent a warning on Rocky Mount Academy turf Saturday afternoon, blanking Coastal Plains Independents Conference regular-season champion Hale High of Raleigh, 5-0, to seize the tournament crown.

Junior Cindy Tetterton, proclaimed the tournament's Most Valuable Player, not only defused dynamite Hale eighth-grader Katherine Kelley, the CPIC Player of the Year, but recorded a hat trick (three goals) as Greenfield avenged its only regular-season CPIC loss and boosted seedings hopes for this week's state tournament.

Amy Sullivan, also a junior, knocked in the other two goals as the Damsels rocketed to a 2-0 halftime lead and then dominated deflated Hale (14-2).

Tetterton's primary responsibility was to mark Kelley, who has wrecked the Damsels in Hale's 3-2 regular-season triumph.

"When we played them the first time, we were not marking No. 8 (Kelley)," Tetterton said. "Forbes told me not to leave her _ to be like I was a part of her. She's a great player and she's their playmaker. Everything they do offensively starts with her. We knew we had to shut her down."

Kelley did not get off a shot until Tetterton and the Greenfield



Greenfield's Lauren Forbes, left, contests Hale's Elizabeth Rendleman for possession. (Hobby/AmH)

(12-8) starters had departed.

Forbes lauded Tetterton for being smart enough to know when to abandon Kelley and become involved in the Greenfield offense.

"She did a good job of marking me," Kelley said of Tetterton. "I kind of expected it. They were not ready for us the first time, but, today, they were prepared. It just was not our day."

Tetterton drilled both first-half goals, with sophomore Claire Smith assisting the first. Greenfield's offense turned to the attack mode once Smith was moved up front. Tetterton's second goal came on a penalty kick with just over three minutes remaining in the first half and she closed the scoring with an unassisted goal.

"I just happened to be there," Tetterton said of her goals. "Claire gave me a really nice square at the goal on the first one.

Then I got lucky and got a penalty kick. On the last one, I saw the ball coming and just went for it."

In between, Sullivan converted assists from freshman Elizabeth Bischoff and Tetterton.

Sophomore Rhia Aycock sparkled in goal with five saves and senior Lauren Forbes, wearing the scars of physical tournament play, and freshman Gretchen Barber turned in stellar performances.

Tetterton was joined on the all-tournament team by teammates Barber, Sullivan, Forbes and Aycock. Tetterton, Sullivan, Smith and Forbes were each named all-conference, while junior Tiffany Rudolph was accorded honorable mention.

"I'm happy," Tetterton said of being the tourney MVP. "But I knew we didn't have the Player of the Year and I just wanted somebody from Greenfield to get it (tourney MYP)."

Ladybirds get second crown

(Continued from page one)

Track Complex. The only event the Ladybirds did not post a top-four showing (the requirement for advancing to the state meet) was the 100-meter dash.

The Ladybirds will be joined by area rivals and fellow Big Eight conference members Fike, Beddingfield, Southwest Edgecombe and Charles B. Aycock at the state meet. Hunt was the only area school that failed to post a state qualifier.

"I think it is nice for the girls to be rewarded for their hard work," Southern head coach Brian Foster said. "I think these girls represent themselves well everywhere, not just on the track. It's good to see people like that win."

Southern posted just two individual wins, but Ladybirds were omnipresent in the second, third, and fourth places slots. Junior Kineta Williams captured the shot put competition, and sophomore Meka Battle soared past teammate Felecia Harris in the triple jump to give Southern its individual wins. Harris and Battle finished second and third, respectively, in the long jump. Havelock's Christia Wallace sailed 16 feet, 10 1/2 inches on her final attempt to edge Harris by a half inch.

The Ladybirds also took wins in three of the four relay races. Fike

3-A girls results	
N.C. HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION Class 3-A EASTERN REGIONAL Girls Track Meet (at Southern Nash Senior High)	100 HURDLES — Burgess (W), 14.8; Smith (F), Pope (SN), Schmidt (CBA), Anderson (K), Dawes (SN).
TEAM RESULTS Southern Nash (SN) 170; Fike (F) 78; Havelock (Hav) 62; Hertford County (HC) 58; Kinston (K) 27; Southwest Edgecombe (SWE) 26; Beddingfield (B) 25; Washington (W) 22; Charles B. Aycock (CBA) 12; North Lenoir (NL) 12; Hunt (H) 9; Manteo (M) 6; Pender County (PC) 4; Bertie (Ber) 3.	100 — Burgess (W), 12.4; Williams (K), Picott (HC), Jackson (K), Street (SWE), McNeil (HC).
SHOT PUT — Williams (SN), 37 feet, 5 1/2 inches; Sessions (HC), Whitley (SN), McNeil (Hav), Sparrow (NL), Dunston (SN).	400 RELAY — Southern Nash (Hunter, Harris, Battle, Parker), 1:44.8; Southwest Edgecombe, Fike, Hertford Co., Havelock, Kinston.
DISCUS — Sessions (HC), 112-10; McNeil (Hav), Sparrow (NL), Whitley (SN), Dunston (SN), Williams (SN).	1,600 — Burkett (F), 5:32.4; Bronars (Hav), Newsome (HC), Joyner (SN), McIver (M), Cook (WO).
LONG JUMP — Wallace (Hav), 16-10 1/2; Harris (SN), Battle (SN), Graham (NL), Burton (SN), Harrell (Ber).	400 RELAY — Southern Nash (Parker, Pope, Dawes, Hunter), 50.3; Southwest Edgecombe, Hertford Co., Beddingfield, Kinston, White Oak.
TRIPLE JUMP — Battle (SN), 37-9; Harris (SN), Hinnant (F), Fonville (WO), Williamson (SN), Corrigan (H).	400 — Davis (Hav), 1:00.3; Parker (SN), Harris (SN), Hayes (PC), Corrigan (H), Pope (B).
HIGH JUMP — Wallace (Hav), 4-10; Pierce (SN), Foster (SN), Lewis (HC).	300 HURDLES — Smith (F), 46.3; Schmidt (CBA), Burton (SN), Foster (SN), Joyner (HC), Pope (SN).
3,200 RELAY — Fike (Thomas, Bond, Moore, Burkett), 5 minutes, 37.4 seconds; Beddingfield, Southern Nash, Havelock, Hunt.	800 — Burkett (F), 2:31.1; Marshburn (SN), Hall (Bedd), Smith (K), Abell (WO), Newsome (HC).

took top honors in the 3200 relay to prevent the Southern sweep, and sophomore Carin Burkett was a big reason why.

Burkett turned in the day's most impressive individual performance by sweeping the distance events. As well as running the anchor leg on the 3200 relay, Burkett also placed first in the 800-, 1600-, and 3200-meter runs. Any track observer will testify that Burkett pulled off a grueling quartet of victories, Burkett only seemed to get stronger as the day went on. Her margin of victory in the 3200, her last race, was 30 seconds.

"When I first started running, I thought I'd have more competition than I had," said Burkett. "I just know that I have to keep everyone behind me. If they are behind me, I know I'm doing good."

Fike junior Tiffany Smith was the only other area competitor to capture a first-place finish. Smith bested Charles B. Aycock junior Stephanie Schmidt by nearly three seconds to take top honors in the 300-meter hurdles.

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Southern Nash three-sport standout Julius Peppers, left, accepts his award from former NCHSAA board member Ronald Chavis, center, and Que Tucker. (Photo by Phil Goble Jr.)

Peppers named top male athlete

By Phil Goble Jr.
Daily Times Sports Editor

CHAPEL HILL — For the past four years, Southern Nash three-sport star Julius Peppers has won nearly every award he could think of — All-Class 3-A Big Eight Conference in football and basketball; Wilson Daily Times all-area in football and basketball; Firebird (x)ball and basketball MYP; Parade football All-American.

Thursday afternoon in the Dean Smith Center, Peppers won one he did not know existed — and it may have been one of the sweetest.

In front of a crowd of nearly 300 coaches, athletics directors and administrators, the 6-foot-7, 250-pound Peppers was named the 1998 N.C. High School Athletic Association's Male Athlete of the Year.

The award, presented at the NCHSAA's annual meeting, is in its 13th year and has been bestowed upon such athletes as Robert Siler of Jordan Matthews (1986-87), Chester McGlockton of Whiteville (1987-88), Rusty LaRue of Northwest Guilford (1991-92), Na Brown of Reidsville (1994-95) and Tyrell Godwin of East Bladen (1996-97).



"I found out about it last week," said Peppers, accompanied to the ceremony by coaches Ray Davis and Brian Foster as well as a small army of family members. "I didn't even know they had one. I don't think it's sunk in yet."

Peppers was chosen from more than 120,000 athletes that complete in 22 NCHSAA-sanctioned events across the state. The final field for the Pat Best Memorial Award was narrowed to eight, according to NCHSAA Associate Executive Director Rick Strunk.

Receiving the Female Athlete of the Year award was Clifeteana McKiver of East Duplin High School. McKiver excelled in volleyball, basketball and track for the Lady Panthers of the 2-A East Central Conference. The two-time ECC Player of the Year led East Duplin's basketball team to a 29-0 record and the state 2-A title this year, finishing her career with 1,924 points, 1,330 rebounds and 555 blocked shots.

Peppers' basketball numbers were nearly identical — more than 1,600 career points, 1,000 rebounds and more than 500 assists!

See Peppers, page 3B

Championship day in the Big Eight

Pike, Hunt share soccer baseball titles; C.B. Aycock claims softball crown



Pike senior Stacey Radford (18) kicks ball as Hunt freshman Sara Beth Cox defends Thursday at Pike. (Photo by Scott Jones)

Demons tie for title with 1-0 decision

By Scott Jones
Daily Times Staff Writer

A few youthful Fike fans pointed towards the scoreboard and gave Hunt senior soccer player Camille Harrison a bit of a razzing as she walked down the sideline Thursday night, to which she replied, "It ain't over."

In a way she was right, but not on this night. With Fike leading 1-0 with six minutes and 30 seconds left, Harrison and the rest of the visiting Lady Warriors thought they were headed to their bus to wait for some still-distant bad weather to pass. However, 20 minutes later, the officials ended the game because of lightning, and the Lady Golden Demons broke into a celebratory frenzy when they learned their upset of the state No. 4-ranked Lady Warriors was official.

The controversial outcome left the two tied atop the Big Eight Conference standings at 1M — and co-champions. Fike, now 14-1-1 overall, travels to Hunt, 15-2, Wednesday night at 7 for a game to decide which team earns the Big Eight's No. 1 seed in the upcoming N. C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A playoffs. Hunt won a coin toss prior to last night's game to earn the right to be the home team.

So, as Harrison said, it ain't over yet.

But Thursday's game is definitely history, and a happy bit of history it is for the Lady Demons. Fike freshman Kelly Reid scored on a breakaway seven minutes into the second half, then the Golden Demons defense, anchored by junior Elizabeth Spencer and senior Stacy Radford, combined with the weather to hold Hunt scoreless for the first time in league play since Fike accomplished the feat in 1995.

As the played developed, Reid's gem did not immediately have the look of a Golden Demons goal. Fike freshman Jamie Crocker won a loose ball just on Fike's side of midfield and booted the ball long towards Hunt's goal, apparently to no one in particular. However, Reid quickly emerged with a burst of speed, controlled the ball, and looked goalward. A Hunt defender moved in, but Reid stopped and drilled the ball into the right portion of the goal

See Demons, page 2B

Warriors top SN to share crown

By Tom Ham
Executive Sports Editor

Hunt High varsity baseball players barely celebrated Thursday afternoon.

And they had earned every right. But head coach Stevie Hinnant and his Warriors sensed they had survived a flat performance in seizing a share of the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference championship with archrival Fike by turning back Southern Nash, 7-2, on the Hunt diamond.

Hunt, 13-5, 10-4 in the Big Eight, emerged the co-champion after coming off a disappointing 1997 season. A year ago, the Warriors were projected Big Eight contenders — but finished 4-10 in the league.

"To be the conference co-champion is overwhelmingly good," Hinnant said. "We were very much overlooked at the beginning of the year. To lose seven seniors off a team that went 4-10 in the conference, you've got to be happy with the conference championship."

"I'm thankful we got it done, but I am badly disappointed in the way we got it done. We had no enthusiasm at all."

But Hunt took command with six unearned runs in the second inning against a Firebirds' squad, that in the opinion of head coach Tommy Warrick, was not especially motivated to deprive the Warriors the crown.

"This is the way it has been all year," Warrick said, "it has been a long year."

Southern Nash, a playoffs contender until the final week, exited 10-9, 7-7 in the conference.

Senior shortstop Bert Boswell, who triggered Hunt's big second with a bases-loaded double, echoed his head coach's sentiments.

"I thought we were in a good frame of mind and ready to play before the game," Boswell said. "I don't know what happened. It was like we knew what we had to do to get it (win the championship) done, but we didn't know that we were getting it done."

"We didn't have any enthusiasm and didn't play like we are supposed to play. Once we got up six runs, I thought we would have a little more enthusiasm. It never showed. It had better change."

The Warriors struck for the six runs after starting Southern Nash junior right-hander Jeremy Hardy (2-2) retired the first two batters in the bottom of the second. Left fielder Blake Weller

See Hunt, page 3B

Pike enjoys third game with Bruins

By Jay Mumford
Daily Times Staff Writer

For Fike's varsity baseball team, the third meeting against county and Class 3-A Big Eight Conference rival Beddingfield was extremely charming.

The Golden Demons manufactured a five-run fifth inning rally and went on to secure a 10-7 victory, to claim a share of the conference championship with its other archrival, Hunt.

Fike blasted 15 hits in the win to improve to 13-6, 10-4 Big Eight, while Beddingfield, the 1997 champion and N.C. High School Athletic Association 3-A runner-up, completed its season with marks of 9-10, 7-7 Big Eight.

The (bolden Demons and Hunt, who defeated Southern Nash, 7-2, Thursday afternoon. The Warriors and Golden Demons will collide in a special playoff game on the Fike diamond at 7 p.m. Saturday to determine the Big Eight's Nos. 1 and 2 berths in the N. C. High School Athletic Association 3-A playoffs, scheduled to begin next week.

Fike won the coin flip this morning to determine Saturday's playoff site.

Several "thirds" led to Fike's victory:

- The go-ahead rally in the fifth was the third inning in which the (bolden Demons scored;
- Junior third baseman Chris Harrell provided the go-ahead hit, a two-run double to right. The hit was his third in his third at-bat. The RBIs were Harrell's second and third;
- Senior left fielder Justin Toms followed Harrell's double with a two-run homer to left — on the third fastball he received from, losing pitcher Kris Boswell.

But as charming as it was, Fike's fifth-inning rally almost failed to materialize.

Tied 3-3 entering the bottom of the fifth inning, Fike opened its rally with an infield hit by junior center fielder Brent Bissette. Senior right fielder Brandon Godwin popped to second, but junior second baseman Eric Pierce allowed the ball to drop to the ground.

He picked up the ball, and threw to second to retire Bissette. Godwin, who seemed to be in a daze, stood watching the developments a few feet before reaching first, but quickly recovered and beat the relay throw to the bag.

Junior catcher Jonathan Stancil singled for the

See Fike, page 3B

Lady Golden Falcons wrap up first Big Eight title in first year of fast-pitch

Charles B. Aycock wrapped up sole possession of the top spot, and Hunt settled for a share of second place in the conference and Beddingfield slipped past Fike in high school varsity fast-pitch softball competition Thursday.

CBA tops Big Eight

PINETOPS — In its first year of fast-pitch and in its first year

Softball

as a member of the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference, Charles B. Aycock captured the league championship, blanking host Southwest Edgecombe, 3-0.

The Lady Golden Falcons of coach Al Yelverton enter the N.C.

High School Athletic Association playoffs with an 18-3 record, finishing 12-2 in the Big Eight. Southwest's season ends at 8-12, 6-8 in the league.

"We are very pleased," Yelverton said of the Lady Falcons topping the Big Eight after shifting from the 2-A East Central Conference. "I think we're shocked. You certainly can't do anything but

praise the girls for adapting to the hitting, pitching style and basic rule changes in fast-pitch."

Emily West, a senior right-hander, stopped the Lady Cougars on four hits. West struck out three and walked one.

CBA managed eight hits off losing pitcher Audrey Eason and got a run in each of the first, second and sixth innings.

Kathy McClenny doubled and scored on senior third baseman Stephanie Cannon's single in the first. Senior Jeri Lynn Coker singled arm scored on senior Amanda Bardin's hit in the second. Bardin tripled in Coker in the sixth.

Cannon batted 3-for-3, while Bardin was 2-for-3.

The Lady Falcons will play at

home in their playoff opener.

Hunt edges Firebirds

STANHOPE — Visiting Hunt claimed the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference's No. 2 spot in the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A playoffs by outlasting Southern Nash, 10-8 in

See Hunt, page 2B

Local weekend racing

SNS features Late Model Sportsman 100-lapper

KENLY — An 100-laps Late Model Sportsman race headlines the Spring Classic 275 auto racing program scheduled at Southern National Speedway Saturday night.

Features in all divisions are planned for the first time in four weeks.

The lineup includes features of 75 laps in Late Model Stock, 40 laps in Pro Trucks, 35 laps in Super Stock and 25 laps in Four Cylinder Stock.

The green flag drops for the first feature at 7:30.

SOUTHERN NATIONAL SPEEDWAY
Points standings
(Through races of May 2)

2. Tom Usry	Broadway	GO	182
3. Ronald Brown	Kinston	24	172
4. Stan Perriette	Raleigh	15	170
5. Linwood Mazingo	Pikeville	22	166
6. Trouble Gray	Fremont	3	162
7. David Warren	Goldsboro	81	150
8. Wayne Skinner	Wilson	31	148
9. Danny Vuricannan	Holly Spgs	44	146
10. Danny McDonald	Lillington	17	138

Late Model Stock

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Hank Jarman	Kinston	4	172
2. Deane McCaskill	Raleigh	08	164
3. Jamey Caudill	Four Oaks	50	162
4. Jay Crawford	Durham	69	142
5. Marty Ellis	Wilson	11	140
6. David Humphrey	Raleigh	10	130
7. Cam Strader	Wilson	16	128
8. Billy Ray Lucas	Wilson	0	122
9. Tony Grady	Raleigh	1	116
10. Jake Yelverton	Selma	6	110

Late Model Sportsman

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Randy Renfrow	Raleigh	87	99
2. Eddie Massengill	Goldsboro	1	97
3. Jim Kelley	Newport	K7	98
4. Shelton McNair	Plymouth	M3	97
5. Barry McCaskill	Wendell	2	96
6. John Jones	Goldsboro	5	95
7. Tony Jackson	Chocowinity	3	94
8. Ricky McKeel	Black Creek	42	93
9. Chris Dunn	Raleigh	14	92
10. Tony Pendley	Chocowinity	4	91

Pro Trucks

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Pat Patterson	Fuq-Varina	33	192

Regular program planned at County Line

ELM CITY — Timed trials to determine starting positions are on the agenda in Saturday night's auto racing program at County Line Raceway.

Heat races are set in the Limited Sportsman, Super Street, Economy Street, Modified Four Cylinder and Stock Four Cylinder divisions.

The lengths of the "Mothers' Day" observance main events will be 40 laps in Late Model Sportsman, 25 laps in Limited Sportsman, 20 in Super Street and Modified Four Cylinder and 15 in Economy Street and Modified Four Cylinder.

Racing begins at 8 p.m.

COUNTY LINE RACEWAY

Points standings
(Through races of May 2)

10. Junior Pearce	Pine Level	8	76
10. J. R. Bryant	Macesfield	B3	76

Late Model Sportsman

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. John Edwards	Hope Mills	48	142
2. Cy Nelms	Rocky Mt.	37	132
3. Roger Lucas	Benson	79	122
4. Randy Lucas	Apex	15	120
4. Tater Liles	Bailey	L1	120
6. Ervin Riggsbee	Knightdale	RS	114
7. James Batten	Rocky Mt.	21	108
8. Charlie Stephenson	Raleigh	85	104
9. Neal Sykes	Apex	11	88
10. Jimmy Holcombe	Elm City	3	80

Limited Sportsman

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. John Fulghum	Kenly	50	150
2. Bobby Whitley	Rocky Mt.	6	138
3. Bobby Bottoms	Elm City	47	136
4. Al Boykin	Kenly	11	130
5. Spencer Ligon	Lilicoma	9	128
6. Tom Knightinger	Rocky Mt.	5	125
7. Dykes Maynard	Raleigh	65	112
8. John Whitley	Walstonburg	1	106
9. Buddy Garten	New Bern	57	64
9. David Upchurch	Saratoga	05	64

Super Street

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Jimmy Hadricks	Blieboro	17	150
2. Steve Messer	Wendell	15	144
3. Scooter King	Rocky Mt.	10	136
4. Mike King	Rocky Mt.	7	118
5. James Cascell	Rocky Mt.	56	110
6. Pat Ferrell	Rocky Mt.	43	108
7. Jay Pender	Rocky Mt.	11	102
7. Wade Ferrell	Rocky Mt.	42	102
9. Kenneth Corbitt	Rocky Mt.	07	86

Modified Four Cylinder

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Greg Williams	Bailey	03	152
2. Ronnie Johnson	Pine Level	5	144
3. Matthew Barnes	Lucama	87	128
4. Ken Pearce	Bunn	15r	122
4. Lee Brinson	Bailey	15w	122
6. Jimmy Hughes	Creedmoor	13	120
7. Jim Massengill	Wilson	88	114
8. Victor May	Middlesex	1	106
9. Tom Ridgeway	Spring Hope	49	94
10. Terry Thompson	Smithfield	12	78

Stock Four Cylinder

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Johnny Wood	Nashville	27	180
2. Tom Balance	Bunn	51	176
3. Ricky Webb	Elm City	99-B	154
4. Jim O'Neal	Louisburg	4-Y	150
5. Michael Webb	Elm City	98	144
5. Greg Worley	Wendell	21	144
7. Chet Christman	Rocky Mt.	37	138
7. Kyle Banks	Louisburg	28	138
9. Chris Ellington	Creedmoor	4	136
10. Lee Bailey	Wendell	12	124

Race to benefit Duke Children's Hospital

The Duke Children's Hospital and Health Center or the Duke Children's Miracle Network will benefit from the inaugural Race for the Champions, scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 30, at Southern National Speedway near Kenly.

The plans were announced this week by NASCAR Late Model Stock driver Cam Strader of Wilson and his father, R.B. Strader. The endeavor involves Team Wilson, the sponsor of Cam Strader's Thunderbird.

The Late Model Stock drivers in the race will collect donations from fans by passing helmets through the grandstands. In addition, proceeds from designated box-seat tickets will be donated to the Duke Children's Hospital for pediatric health care, basic and applied research, health care education and children's health advocacy.

Bardin's courage saluted by NCHSAA

CHAPEL HILL — May, 1997, is a month Rosalie Bardin will never forget.

Walking away from a softball game her Southern Nash Ladybirds were playing at SouthWest Edgecombe, Bardin was struck by a bolt of lightning.

Just a few feet from the bus, Bardin was jolted backwards and knocked unconscious.

Amazingly, a few days later, she was back at school, getting the team ready for the playoffs.

Bardin's comeback from such a tremendous shock was saluted Thursday afternoon at the Dean Smith Center in front of a crowd of nearly 300 coaches, athletics directors and administrators with an N.C. High School Athletic Association Courage Award.

"I got a letter last week saying I was going to be honored, but I didn't know what it was," said Bardin, who admits to staying indoors more when storms begin to swell. "It's great. I've been really blessed."

Blessed not only with life, but

with a position as assistant principal at Nash Central Junior High, a job Bardin believes helps her affect more lives than ever.

"I used to think I made a difference in a lot of young athletes' lives," she said. "Now, I think I make a difference in a lot more lives at the middle school level."

But that is not to say her decision to leave Southern Nash Senior and the coaching ranks was easy — Bardin led her 1995 team to the state 3-A slow-pitch softball championship and the 1996 squad finished second in the state fast-pitch softball playoffs.

"It was a tough decision and a good decision," Bardin said. "It was tough to leave the players and kids (at Southern Nash)."

Bardin was one of three recipients of a Courage Award — football and softball coach Walt Davis of Yatesville Northside and soccer coach George Kennedy of Western Guilford were the others.

Davis' award was given after his successful return from a mow-



Former Southern Nash coach Rosalie Bardin, left, stands with award presenter James "Bonecrusher" Smith Thursday.

Photo by Phil Goble Jr.

ing accident that left him impaled on a stake. Kennedy suffered a heart attack and endured to return to coaching.

The awards were presented to

the trio by former world heavyweight boxing champion James "Bonecrusher" Smith.

— Phil Goble Jr.

Peppers honored as best male athlete in state

(Continued from page one)

In football, the running back gained 3,501 yards and scored 38 touchdowns.

A national Junior Olympics long jump finalist in 1996, Peppers competes in the long jump, triple jump, shot put and the 400-meter relay for the Firebirds.

"I'm going to miss it all," said Peppers of his high school days. "Playing in our gym when it was packed — it was a great atmosphere."

Next season, Peppers will bring his talents the to another great

atmosphere — the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Julius signed a letter-of-intent to play football for the Tar Heels and expects to see some playing time in the Smith Center on the basketball team as well.

"I think it (college) is going to be a lot of fun," he said.

But for now, the son of George Peppers and Bessie Faye Brinkley was just proud to be honored. Proud not because of the personal glory, but proud because of the reflection the honor brings to Southern Nash and his teammates.

Lenoir, Southeastern advance

Charles B. Aycock High products B.J. Smith and Noah Edens sparked Lenoir Community College to a 9-7 conquest of the University of South Carolina at Salkehatchie in the opening round of the National Junior College Athletic Association Region X baseball tournament in Fleming Stadium Thursday.

Smith, a freshman third baseman, rapped three hits in four trips and drove in two runs. Edens, a freshman right-hander, was the winning pitcher in relief of starter Jon Smith. In seven innings, Edens scattered six hits, allowed one run, walked two and struck out six.

Shortstop Mike Elswick, a product of Southern Nash, added two hits.

Southeastern Community College outlasted Louisburg, 10-9 in 10 innings, in the other opening-round game.

Action was scheduled to resume in Fleming Stadium at 10 this morning, with Southeastern opposing Spartanburg (S.C.). Lenoir was scheduled to test Brevard at 1.

Losers' bracket games are scheduled for 4 and 7 this evening. The winners' bracket final is set for 1 p.m. Saturday. The championship series begins at 1 p.m. Sunday.

"It's a reflection on our school," said Peppers, who was given his award by NCHSAA Deputy Executive Director Dick Knox, Assistant Executive Director Que Tucker and former NCHSAA board member Ronald Chavis. "There's a lot of people who helped me out — my coaches in football, basketball and track and the players who

pushed me to get better."

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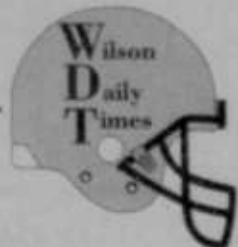
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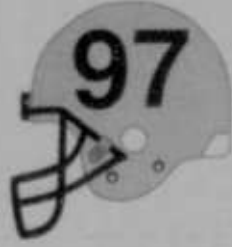
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All-Area Football Team



Ironman

Player, Team	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Class
Mark Strickland, Hunt	Back	6-3	225	Senior
Julius Peppers, So. Nash	Back	6-7	247	Senior
Antwane Yelverton, Greene Ctr.	Back	6-0	190	Senior
Virgil Parker, Hunt	Back	5-9	215	Senior
Rayvonne Newkirk, Fike	Back	6-0	185	Junior
Kelsie Langston, Beddingfield	Back	6-0	190	Senior
Johnny Aytch, Greene Ctrl.	Line	5-7	170	Senior
Kyle Creech, No. Johnston	Line	6-3	330	Senior
Dominique Lindsay, Beddingfield	Line	6-2	190	Senior
J.T. Windham, Fike	Line	5-10	180	Senior
Adam Pittman, C.B. Aycock	Line	5-10	157	Senior
Terrell Bright, Greene Ctrl.	Line	6-2	225	Senior

Ironman of the Year: Mark Strickland

Offense

Player, Team	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Class
Jermaine Moore, Greene Ctr.	Back	6-0	157	Senior
Tavarus Redmond, SW Edge.	Back	6-0	200	Junior
Alfae Brown, Greene Ctrl.	Back	5-11	173	Senior
Anc McClennahan, ENCSD	Rec.	6-0	150	Senior
Reginald Reid, Greene Ctrl.	Rec.	6-3	182	Senior
Shaun Breen, Hunt	Line	6-5	300	Senior
Adam Mills, Southern Nash	Line	5-6	200	Senior
Preston Anders, Beddingfield	Line	6-3	255	Senior
Mark Barnes, Hunt	Line	6-3	215	Soph.
Brad Walston, SW Edge.	Line	6-0	210	Junior
Mitch Gay, Greene Ctrl.	Line	6-0	195	Junior
John Hyde, Hunt	Kick.	5-10	165	Junior

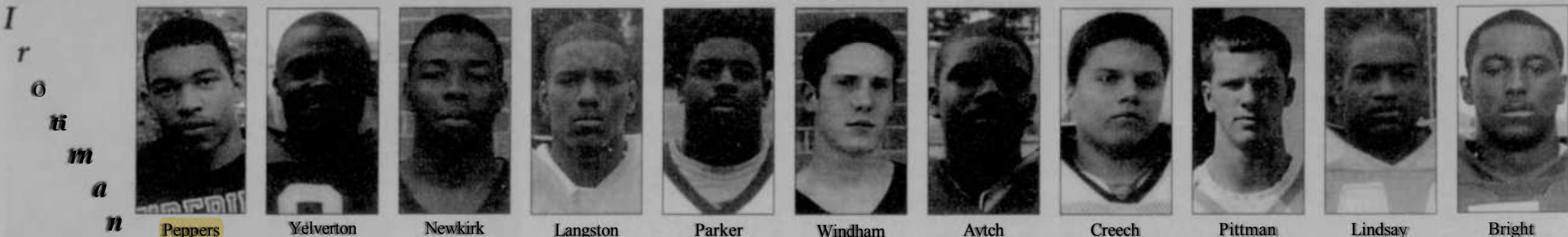
Offensive Player of the Year: Mark Strickland

Defense

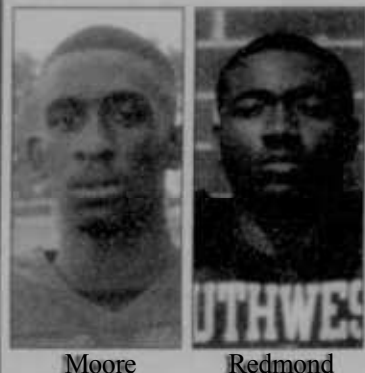
Player, Team	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Class
A.W. Abbott, Greene Ctrl.	Back	6-1	170	Senior
Ron Harris, Southern Nash	Back	5-9	149	Senior
Antonio Jones, Greene Ctrl.	Back	5-10	160	Junior
William Barnes, Fike	Back	5-9	170	Senior
Chico Deberry, Hunt	LB	5-11	210	Soph.
Mike Marcello, Hunt	LB	5-10	185	Senior
B.J. Deans, Hunt	LB	6-1	200	Junior
Trevlan DeV Vaughn, Bedd.	LB	5-10	215	Senior
Shaun Rose, Hunt	Line	6-6	310	Senior
Chris Wilder, Southern Nash	Line	6-1	280	Junior
Georgie Bullock, SW Edge.	Line	6-1	280	Soph.
Demetrius Blount, Hunt	Line	6-1	220	Senior

Defensive Player of the Year: Shaun Rose

Player of the Year: Mark Strickland, Hunt



Offense



Moore Redmond



Brown McClennahan



Reid Hyde



Breen Mills



Gay M. Barnes



Anders Walston

Warriors, Rams dominate

Hunt's Strickland and Rose collect more individual accolades

By Daily Times Sports Staff

Hunt, after a losing wake-up call at Hertford County, proceeded to simply dominate the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference varsity football ranks.

The Warriors claimed revenge against Hertford County and were again the last Big Eight team left standing in the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A playoffs.

A classification lower, Greene Central was the scourge of the Eastern Plains Conference. The Rams' exit in the opening round of the 2-A playoffs was a shocker.

But the dominance of Hunt and Greene Central of the 1997 Wilson Daily Times All-Area lineup comes as no shock.

The Warriors set the pace with 10 representatives among the 36 players selected to the Ironman, Offensive and Defensive units. Greene Central landed nine.

Senior tailback Mark Strickland and mammoth defensive tackle Shaun Rose of the Warriors garnered the Big Eight's top individual accolades. Ditto among the All-Area elite.

Strickland emerges as the landslide choice of the Daily Times sports staff as the Player of the Year. The 6-foot-3, 225-pound, multi-purpose performer reigns as the Ironman of the Year and the Offensive Player of the Year in the process.

Rose, at 6-6, 310 pounds and a Shrine Bowl selection, stands huge as the Defensive Player of the Year. Rose has verbally committed to continue his career at East Carolina University.

Strickland, who also excelled defensively and as a punter, is joined by senior teammate Virgil Parker, a fullback-linebacker on the Ironman unit.

Greene Central is the Ironman front-runner with the senior trio of Antwane Yelverton, also headed for ECU, Johnny Aytch and Terrell Bright.

The exclusive unit also features 6-7, 245-pound senior Southern Nash running back-defensive end Julius Peppers. Peppers, who verbally committed to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will also be showcased in Saturday's Shrine Bowl in Charlotte.

Other Ironmen are senior J.T. Windham and junior Rayvonne Newkirk of Pike, seniors Kelsie Langston and Dominique Lindsay of Beddingfield, senior Kyle Creech of North Johnston, and senior Adam Pittman of Charles B. Aycock.

Single-season 1,000-yard rushers Tavarus Redmond of Southwest Edgecombe and Alfae Brown of Greene Central trigger an offensive unit, directed by senior Greene Central quarterback Jermaine Moore.



Mark Strickland
... Player of the Year



Shaun Rose
... top defensive player

Honorable Mention

BEDDINGFIELD — Brandy Barnes, James Williams, Kelvin Beamon, Tuck Thomas.

FIKE — Justin Mason, Antonio Rogers, Johnny Coley, Rod Harris, James Roundtree, Philip Bissette, Frank Sasser.

HUNT — Montae Ruffin, Derrick Gray, Donnelle Knight, Anthony Barnes, Robert Best, Cedric Williams, William Hesmer, Mike Linsey, Bobby Hinnant, Kedran Bynum, Eddie Barnes.

SOUTHWEST EGECOMBE — Bash Knight, Clifton Wooten, Brandon Hussey, Quarry Williams, John Pittman, Frank Barnes, Brad Cobb, William Autry, Deshawn Richardson, Jerard Wiggins.

SOUTHERN NASH — Travis Battle, Derrick High, Cornelius Gary, Terrell Taybron, Jason Earp, Derrick Lucas, Jon Keen, Demario Daniels, Derrick Jones.

CHARLES B. AYCOCK — C.C. Dunn, Edwin Finch, Nelson Cunningham, Jerry Johnson, Adam Butler, Les Stewart, Ardar Hicks, Matt Rast, Stevie Parrish, Bryant Hoots.

GREENE CENTRAL — Jody Ginn, Matt Noble, Irvin Perkins, Tamarka Davis, Michael Croom, Dennis Hines, Austin Suggs, Ben Harper.

NORTH JOHNSTON — Dennis Brockington, Devon Hinton, Lee Melvin, Antonio Stanch, Jay Creech, Dusty Johnson, Scott Miles, Greg Sawyer.

ENCSD — Patrick Squire, Jamaime Black, Bruce Fritz, Patrick McMillan, Edrick Webb, Richard McClennahan.

Eastern N.C. School for the Deaf senior Aric McClennahan and Rams' senior Reginald Reid are the receivers, while Hunt junior John Hyde is the kicking specialist.

The linemen are 6-5, 300-pound senior Shaun Breen of Hunt, senior Adam Mills of Southern Nash, junior Brad Walston of Southwest, senior Preston Anders of Beddingfield, sophomore Mark Barnes of Hunt and junior Mitch Gay of Greene Central.

Rose anchors the defensive front that includes junior Chris Wilder of Southern Nash, senior Demetrius Blount of Hunt, and sophomore Georgie Bullock of Southwest.

The linebacking quartet is the Hunt trio of senior Mike Marcello, junior B.J. Deans and sophomore Chico Deberry and senior

could block, but his senior campaign saw him step out with above-average speed and mobility.

"We didn't really know how well he would do," Raper said. "A tailback must have a certain vision and feel for the game. Mark had it."

Raper proudly describes Rose as "a man among boys." His all-star foundation is not based on statistics — but impact. Rose didn't just occupy a sizable amount of space.

"He creates his own space," Raper said. "Teams ran away from him a lot this year, or they were trying to double-team, chop or cut him. He runs the 40 (-yard dash) in 4.9 (seconds) and has great feet. He was dominating player. He was just about our whole defense."

That's a powerful statement, considering the presence of Parker, Strickland, Marcello, Deans, Deberry and Mark Barnes. But Raper explains teammates enjoyed all-star seasons because of Rose's presence.

Deberry and Deans became a lethal pair well into the season. Parker was there on defense, and provided running room for Strickland. Hyde seldom missed on extra-point and short field-goal kicks. Mark Barnes excelled as a blocker and became a capable receiver. Strickland couldn't be blamed for following Parker and Breen.

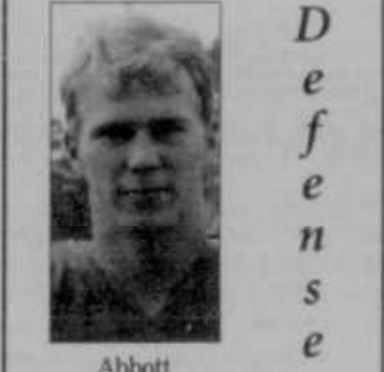
McClennahan ranked as the area's top receiver, while Moore was the most accurate passer — benefiting from targets such as Reid, Jones and Bright. Yelverton filled multiple Greene Central roles despite a nagging injury and Brown stepped up to join Strickland, Redmond and Peppers as backs piling up more than 1,000 yards rushing.

Peppers cracked the 1,000-yard plateau for the third consecutive season, but his greatest value may have been defensively. Peppers, Harris, the leading tackler, Wilder and Mills guided the Firebirds into the playoffs for the second straight year.

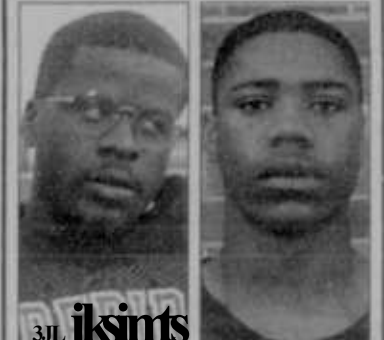
Deserving much credit for the Fike turnaround is the trio of Newkirk, William Barnes and Windham.

Defense was rugged for Greene Central because of a secondary, where Abbott was solid, and Jones was spectacular. Aytch's quickness plagued Rams' opponents both sides of the football.

Mainstays Langston, Lindsay, Anders and DeV Vaughn were bright spots during a bleak Beddingfield season.



Abbott



Harris W. Barnes



Devaughn Marcello



Deans Deberry



Wilder Jones



Bullock Blount

Peppers, Lewis repeat atop All-Area lineups

By Sports Staff

For the second consecutive season, junior 6-foot-6 center Julius Peppers of Southern Nash and senior 5-10 guard Tynesha Lewis of Southwest Edgecombe have been named The Wilson Daily Times male and female Player of the Year, respectively, but the remainder of the 1996-97 All-Area 15-player rosters include many new faces.

Peppers is joined by by Beddingfield senior forward Grady Farmer and Hunt senior forward Reggie Farmer as boys repeaters. Each, a second-team choice last season, joins Peppers, Hunt senior center Corey Cooper and Beddingfield senior guard Garrison Harris on the first team.

Lewis, an N.C. State signee, enjoyed another phenomenal season for the Lady Cougars, who were 109-12 during her four years. She is joined on the first team by Fike senior guard Roc Canady, junior Charles B. Aycock guard Jeri Lyn Coker, North Johnston senior forward Heather Casey and senior Southern Nash forward Rikki Cockrell.

The girls team lists seven repeaters. Lewis and Canady have been first-team selections the past three seasons (each was also named her freshman season). Coker and Casey were second-team picks a year ago while Cockrell is a newcomer.

Second-team picks for the boys are Greene Central's Antoine Davis, Hunt's Jeff Strunk, CBA's Ray Potts, South West Edgecombe's Willie McGhee and Fike's Derrick McDowell.

The third team: Eastern N.C. School for the Deaf's Jamaine Black, Fike's Johnnie Lucas, Greenfield's Jason Gunnin, North Johnston's D.J. Brockington and Southern Nash's Demario Daniels.

The girls second team is North Johnston's Sora Standley, Greene Central's Jameka Dixon, Fike's Shemkia Reid, Hunt's Chavonne Pippiens and Southern Nash's Kari Ezzell.

The third team: Emily West and Susan Herndon of CBA, North Johnston's Kelly Holland, Hunt's Natasha Locus and Southwest Edgecombe's Susie Beamon.





















Players of Year

The unselfish, low-key Peppers, a flamboyant dunker with the capability to dominate games, turned in an outstanding all-around performance.

Southern (14-13) finished second in both the Big Eight regular season and tournament, and head coach Rick Ruffin says Peppers deserves much of the credit.

"I think in some people's eyes, he didn't have as good a year," Ruffin said, "but percentage wise, he shot better and his assists were way up."

The high-flying Peppers shot a torrid 60.1 percent from the field (179-298), averaging 16.9 points, 9.7 rebounds, three assists, 2.1 steals and 1.7 blocks — usually with two or three defenders surrounding him. He averaged nearly 18 points and 10.4 rebounds in Big Eight games.

Second teams		Third teams	
			
Strunk	Standley	Black	West
			
Davis	Dixon	Lucas	Holland
			
Potts	Pippiens	Gunnin	Herndon
			
McDowell	Reid	Brockington	Locus
			
McGhee	Ezzell	Daniels	Beamon

Ruffin emphasizes that Peppers "still has a lot of ability. He hasn't really shown all of his capabilities. I feel like he'll reach that — maybe next year."

Like Peppers, Lewis spent much of her season helping teammates develop confidence, but, when the game was on the line, she took control. With superior ballhandling, slashing moves to the basket and a long-range jumper,

the two-time Big Eight Player of the Year dominated.

Lewis averaged an area-high 22.4 points, eight rebounds, 5.5 assists and four steals. She is also ranked 12th in her class academically and is the student government president.

"She is a complete player," Langley said. "She can score, plays outstanding defense and is an excellent leader. I have no

All-Area First Teams

Boys

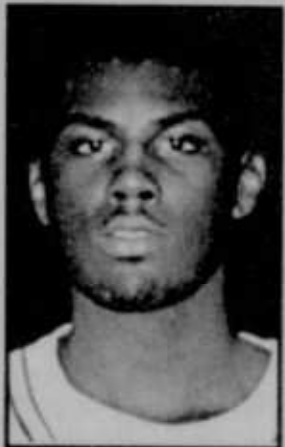
Player of the Year

Julius Peppers

Southern Nash

Junior 245 pounds 6-foot-6

Peppers led the Firebirds to second-place finishes in the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference regular-season race and league tournament. He averaged 16.9 points and 9.7 rebounds, 3.0 assists, 2.1 steals and 1.7 blocks per game.



Corey Cooper
... Hunt senior



Reggie Farmer
... Hunt senior



Grady Farmer
... Bruins senior



Garrison Harris
... Bruins senior

Girls

Player of the Year

Tynesha Lewis

SouthWest Edgecombe

Senior Guard 5-foot-11

Lewis led the Lady Cougars to their third consecutive undefeated Class 3-A Big Eight Conference record, their third straight league tournament championship and into the state playoffs. Lewis, whose defending 3-A state champs lost in the sectionals, signed a letter-of-intent to attend N.C. State.



Roc Canady
... Fike senior



Jeri Lyn Coker
... C.B. Aycock junior



Heather Casey
... N.J. senior



Rikki Cockrell
... So. Nash senior

doubt she could have averaged 30-35 points a night, but she wanted to get her teammates involved.

"Looking at all the girls I've coached, I think Tynesha may have the best chance to make it big at the collegiate level because of her versatility."

Supporting casts

Cooper, the Big Eight Player of

the Year, was runner-up for All-Area Boys Player of the Year — averaging 15.4 points and nine rebounds. Reggie Farmer averaged 10.5 points and helped trigger Hunt's defense en route to Big Eight regular-season and tourney and Eastern Carolina Classic championships. Grady Farmer was the steady player for the Bruins, knocking down 16.4 points per game. Harris (14.7 ppg), the

All-Area Offensive Player of the Year in football, was Beddingfield's primary outside threat.

On the second team, Greene Central's Davis scored at a 14.6 clip and Strunk ignited many rallies during a precedent-setting Hunt season. Potts pumped in 16.4 points per game for CBA; McGhee worked hard inside for his 14.7 points for SWE and McDowell netted 13.7 ppg for Fike.

ENCSD's Black emerged the top area scorer at 21 points per game. Lucas jump-started struggling Fike when he joined them in late December; Gunnin powered Greenfield's attack at 17.3 ppg; Brockington averaged 11.5 points for the Panthers; and Daniels was Peppers' capable sidekick.

On the girls first team, Canady sacrificed personal goals for team goals and it netted the Lady Demons sectional and regional championships and a state runner-up trophy. She averaged 11.6 points and five assists. Coker was CBA's catalyst, averaging 16.9 points. Casey averaged 12.1 points and Cockrell led Southern to its best record, 17-11.

The second team includes three centers. Standley was North Johnston's top scorer at 13.3 per game; Reid averaged 12 points; and Ezzell (13.3 ppg) joined Cockrell to provide Southern with a solid one-two punch. Forward Pippiens (17.7 ppg) powered Hunt and Dixon (16.9 ppg) was Greene Central's leading scorer in all but one game.

West (15.5 ppg) and Herndon (10.0) were tough inside for CBA. Locus, a four-year starter, and Holland, ran the show for Hunt and North Johnston, respectively, while SWE's Beamon used her 6-1 frame to average 10 points an outing.

All-Area boys roster

First team

PLAYER	SCHOOL	POS	HGT	YR
Julius Peppers	S. Nash	C	6-6	JR
Corey Cooper	Hunt	C	6-6	SR
Grady Farmer	Beddingfield	F	6-4	SR
Reggie Farmer	Hunt	F	6-3	SR
Garrison Harris	Beddingfield	G	6-3	SR

Second team

Antoine Davis	G. Central	F	6-0	SR
Jeff Strunk	Hunt	F	6-3	SR
Ray Potts	C.B. Aycock	C	6-4	SR
Willie McGhee	SW Edgecombe	C	6-3	SR
Derrick McDowell	Fike	F	6-2	JR

Third team

Jamaine Black	ENCSD	F	6-2	JR
Johnnie Lucas	Fike	G	5-8	SO
Jason Gunnin	Greenfield	F	6-4	SR
D.J. Brockington	N. Johnston	F	6-0	JR
Demario Daniels	S. Nash	F	6-5	JR

Honorable mention

BOYS

BEDDINGFIELD — Kelly Winstead, Travia Taylor
CHARLES B. AYCOCK — Bobby Byers, Kamaal Goyens, Parker King.
ENCSD — Ane McClennahan, Patrick Squire.
FIKE — Idris Talib, Rashaun Sauls.
GREENE CENTRAL — Antwane Yelverton, Jermaine Moore, Devone Duncan.
GREENFIELD — Paul Gay.
HUNT — Keji Dickerson, Greg Ward, Kevin Wiggins, Tony Clay, Tim Carmichael.
NORTH JOHNSTON — Jason Morgan, Travis Barnes, Tim Cuddington.
SOUTHERN NASH — Derrick High, Darius Newkirk.
SOUTHWEST EDGECOMBE — Leon Dupree, Jay McKinney, Jovie Sumner.
WILSON CHRISTIAN — Bert Harris, Andrew Perry, Robbie Bennett, Denison Dew.

GIRLS

BEDDINGFIELD — Katherine Bagley, Ashley Green.
CHARLES B. AYCOCK — Stephanie Cannon, Stephanie Lawrence.
ENCSD — Melissa Chatman, Melissa Hargrove.
FIKE — Carolyn Gillikin, Elizabeth Spencer, Beth Foster, Kalita Marsh.
GREENE CENTRAL — Keya Darden.
HUNT — Vakesha Thomas, Jennifer Laughridge.
NORTH JOHNSTON — Melody Toole, Dana Evans, Amy Hicks.
SOUTHERN NASH — Julie Pitts, Anna Tharrington, Melissa Pendley.
SOUTHWEST EDGECOMBE — Loni Ayers, Chessins Thigpen.
WILSON CHRISTIAN — Julie Jones, Stephanie Bogue.

All-Area girls roster

First team

PLAYER	SCHOOL	POS	HGT	YR
Tynesha Lewis	SW Edgecombe	G	5-11	SR
Roc Canady	Fike	G	5-8	SR
Jeri Lyn Coker	C.B. Aycock	G	5-4	JR
Heather Casey	N. Johnston	F	5-10	SR
Rikki Cockrell	S. Nash	F	5-10	SR

Second team

Sora Standley	N. Johnston	C	5-10	JR
Jameka Dixon	G. Central	G	5-7	JR
Shemkia Reid	Fike	C	5-11	JR
Chavonne Pippiens	Hunt	F	5-7	SO
Kari Ezzell	S. Nash	C	5-11	JR

Third team

Emily West	C.B. Aycock	C	5-11	JR
Kelly Holland	N. Johnston	G	5-8	JR
Susan Herndon	C.B. Aycock	F	5-10	JR
Natasha Locus	Hunt	G	5-4	SR
Susie Beamon	SW Edgecombe	C	6-1	SR

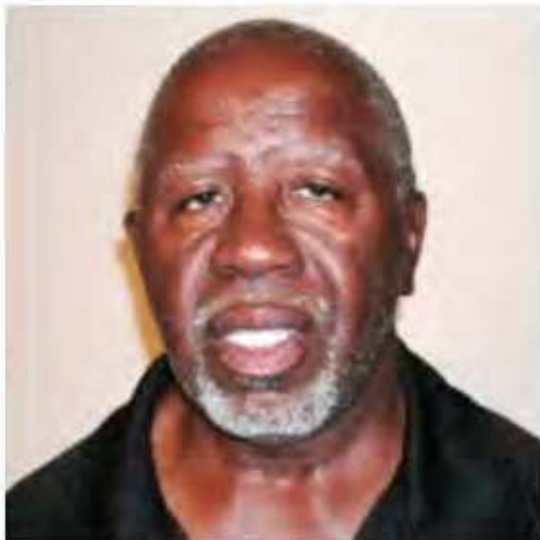
2017 NBNO Mike Byrnes Coach of the Year: Alton Tyre

Jun 30, 2017 by Steve Underwood



Quietly Building a Legacy

Some folks might think a national track and field coach of the year award is reserved only for those whose athletes win national titles, rack up All-American honors, or at least accumulate a couple handfuls of state championships.



But sometimes it's the individual who has the ability to be among those who quietly advance the sport, positively affect lives in different ways, and become forces for good in their communities who merits such an honor. Sometimes it's

that person whose influence gradually begins to outgrow the coach's community and region, to the point where folks start to feel this person deserves recognition at a higher level.

Alton Tyre has become that person. And if ever there was a coach who did not seek out such recognition and thereby was stunned to learn he'd receive such an award, it's this **Southeast Guilford, N.C.** boys and girls T&F mentor – who will be honored as the **2017 Mike Byrnes Coach of the Year** at this year's NBNO.

"I'm shocked," he said, "and I'm grateful and deeply honored." It's not just Coach Tyre's humility, but the fact that his primary focus was basketball and football for the first third of his 39-year coaching career. He'll tell you when he tried track and field a few years in high school, he was awful, and while he was better at football and basketball, he began to quickly gravitate toward coaching during his college days.

Tyre's first gig out of college was as a social studies teacher and coach at **Bunn High School** in N.C. in 1978. His dream was to become a "big-time head basketball coach." By 1989 he was at **Southern Nash HS** in Bailey, N.C., coaching four sports with some success, but ultimately not completely satisfying.

It took then-Southern Nash AD **Ray Davis** to change and reset Coach Tyre's focus. "He said, 'Your strength is coaching track.' I needed to embrace that." Tyre knew how to identify talent, and he was getting better and better at developing it. That first became clear in '79 at Bunn when he helped a barely known rising star named **William Baker** get a scholarship at St. Augustine College with legendary Coach George Williams – where he would unexpectedly become an NAIA All-American. "That kind of put me on the map," he said. "I do know talent when I see it."

Coach Tyre didn't know everything there was to know about the sport, but he knew if you wanted to get better, you learned from the best. He connected with track and field coaching legends like **George Williams** at St. Augustine College, and **Dr. Russell Blunt**. Like Tyre, Blunt juggled basketball and track.

It's not surprising that Tyre's greatest success during his Southern Nash years came while **Julius Peppers** was on his team in in the late 1990s. Peppers' story is legend from those parts – not just that he would later become a UNC All-American and 3-time first team All-Pro NFL star, but that he didn't even try football until his sophomore year in high school. But Peppers had long loved hoops, and T&F was up there, too. Even better, Coach Tyre loved the type of kid Peppers was. "He would make plays or have performances where you say, 'I didn't believe what I just saw.' You didn't trust your own eyes ... But Julius was never full of himself. He was just one of the guys." And, despite being 6-7 and 255 pounds, according to Tyre, he was 2nd in the state meet triple jump and ran on the winning 4x400. Then Southern Nash defended its title in 1999, after Peppers had graduated.

Coach Tyre was at Southern Nash for 17 years, through the 2006 season, but the 164-mile round trip daily commute had been wearing on him and it was time to work a little closer to home. He loved the school, but that summer he took teaching and coaching positions at Southeast Guilford – and went about building a great program again.

During the 2012 indoor season, Tyre's boys' squad tied for the state title with Knightdale. Then in 2016, the coach was surprised and delighted when his school's big early-season meet was renamed the **Alton Tyre Invitational Relays**.

"A lot of my former athletes were there," he said. "It was an incredible day."

Hopefully, June 18, 2017 will be just as incredible a day for Alton Tyre.

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LOGO: Southern Nash News

Julius Peppers calls it a career



Mark Cone •

Southern Nash graduate and Carolina Panthers defensive end Julius Peppers is hanging up his helmet. Peppers, who currently is fourth on the NFL's all-time sack list, announced his retirement after 17 NFL seasons on Friday.

Hailing from Bailey, NC Peppers, 39, is heavily favored as a first-ballot NFL Hall of Fame selection in five years when he becomes eligible to receive the honor.

In his NFL career which included stints with The Chicago Bears and Green Bay Packers before returning home to where he started his career in Charlotte Peppers' total 159.5 career sacks putting him firmly in the fourth place position over Terrell Suggs of the Baltimore Raven who has 132.5. Peppers trails Kevin Greene by only .5 at 160. Bruce Smith (198) and Reggie White (200) round out the elite top five.

Across 17 seasons Peppers missed only six games, amassing a game playing total of 266 making him the sixth highest in games played by defensive player during their career in NFL history. Peppers is ending his career by playing 176 consecutive games, the second-longest active streak among active players behind NC State alum and Chargers quarterback Phillip Rivers.

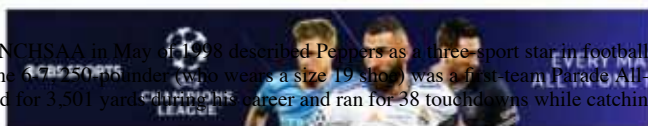
Peppers said his goodbye to fans worldwide in a video release that said:

"Thank you. For the victories and the good times," Peppers said in a video announcing his retirement. "For the lessons and the times we desired more. For the sacrifices, the belief, the confidence and the unwavering support - I'm thankful. Because without you, this wasn't possible. Thank you for the spirit, the resolve and the attitude to Keep Pounding. It's not something we just say around here, it's how we live. I'm thankful for the things you showed me about life that were bigger than football and for a second chance - a new beginning. See the players, we come and we go, but the constant is you. And as the saying goes, 'Once a Panther, always a Panther.' Thank you for the memories, the friendships, the laughs and the culture we created. For the understanding and for being family. Thanks for all the years, and cheers. And for being home now and forever. I wouldn't change a thing about this journey. It was the best teacher I've ever had and was everything I could've hoped for. The tough times never lasted and the tough people inspired me to be better and give more. I hope I did the same. Only time can reveal what's next, but my time here is up. No regrets, no looking back and nothing left to give. It's not goodbye, it's kinda like, 'I'll see you later' But until then I'm grateful, I'm satisfied and at peace with all that comes next."

"Julius is one of the greatest to ever play the game of football," head coach Ron Rivera said in a statement. "To put up the numbers he did for as long as he did speaks to his incredible talent and commitment. He is a leader in the locker room and in the community. Getting to know him over the last two seasons has been tremendous because of the type of person he is. What he did for the people affected by Hurricane Florence, getting involved and bringing them hope, says a lot about who he is. I'm proud that I get to say that I was one of his coaches, and I think it's fitting that he gets to end his career as a Carolina Panther."

Peppers started his football journey in a small metal building that served as the field house for Southern Nash High School in the fall of 1994. In 1995 as a sophomore he emerged as one of the premier high school running backs in the state gaining 1044 yards and scoring 15 touchdowns in his first year of varsity play. He finished his career with 3501 total rushing yards, which put him in the number two position behind Lamont Avent, he now sits in the number six position on that list.

By the time he graduated in 1998, Peppers had been named the NCHSAA male athlete of the year for his performance in football, basketball, and track. He is one of only two Firebirds to receive statewide Athlete of the Year honors in school history. He was also the first Firebird to be named as an All-American.



An article published by the NCHSAA in May of 1998 described Peppers as a three-sport star in football, basketball and track, headed to the University of North Carolina on a football scholarship. The 6'7", 250-pounder (who wears a size 19 shoe) was a first-team Parade All-American in '97 and was his team's Most Valuable Player for three consecutive years. He rushed for 3,501 yards during his career and ran for 38 touchdowns while catching passes for six more scores.

In basketball, he was the Big Eight Conference Player of the Year in 1996 and finished his career with the Firebirds with over 1,600 career points, 1,000 career rebounds and over 500 assists. He earned all-conference honors and all-area honors all four years he played. In track, he competes in four events, including the triple jump, shot put, 400 meters and the four by 100 relay, and was third in the state meet in the triple jump in 1996.

Former Southern Nash Football Coach and athletic director Ray Davis of Southern Nash says that Julius "is the most unselfish individual I have ever coached. He is truly a phenom."

Longtime Southern Nash Head Coach Brian Foster was an assistant coach at the school until the year Peppers graduated. "Julius...to me he is not Julius Peppers the NFL star, he is just Julius...is one of the most genuine people you will ever know," said Foster. "The things with the Hurricane victims recently, that is genuine Julius...that's not a photo op, he truly cares and he has always been very caring and giving. He has done things for people and schools and communities that nobody will ever know about, he doesn't want credit - that's just the person he is. When Kim and Zack were in the wreck Julius showed up at the hospital - he didn't have to do that, but he did and nobody ever knew it."

As a senior at Southern Nash, Peppers selected "The greatness of work is inside man" as his senior quote. He played his college career at UNC where he was awarded the Chuck Bednarik Award, the Bill Willis Trophy, and the Lombardi Award. He is ranked second in All-Time UNC history for 30.5 sacks.

Peppers also is in a rare class of athlete that has played in both an NCAA Final Four and the Super Bowl. A search of sports history could find only one other athlete, Donovan McNabb that was part of a team that was in both, but McNabb did not see Final Four playing time as a walk-on reserve at Syracuse, making Peppers the only athlete to have actually played in both.

Peppers was nominated by the Carolina Panthers for this year's Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award for his humanitarian efforts in eastern North Carolina after two devastating hurricanes left the area in ruins in the fall of 2018. The winner of that award will be announced this Saturday at NFL Honors in Atlanta.

"He did things the right way, which is what we try to get all of our athletes at Southern Nash to do," said Foster. "He associated with the right people, he worked hard, and he had a great career. I am really proud of Julius for all his accomplishments as an athlete and a family man, I am thankful that he stayed healthy so that now he can enjoy what he has earned."

Reader Comments

Jill

FEB 01, 2019 • Can I come and work for y'all? Your writing is grammatically incorrect three times in the first paragraph! **Publisher's note: The first 'paragraph' is two sentences long. I did review those two sentences and did not find any grammatical errors in them. In response to your request; at this time I would have to respectfully decline as the use of the word "ya'll" is never considered grammatically correct in the English language.**

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FOOTBALL

WRAL Storytellers: Julius Peppers in his unbelievably dominant days in high school

Tags: [Julius Peppers](#), [football](#), [High School Football](#)



Julius Peppers as a high school running back!?!? Former WRAL sports director Bob Holliday shares tales on how much bigger, stronger and faster Peppers was in the mid-1990s at Southern Nash compared to his opponents.

Reporter: Jared Fialko




8:06 p.m., Jun 21, 2020

Hide Transcript

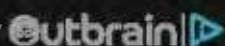
Transcript:

RUSSELL WILSON MAKES \$35 MILLION, AND BIG BEN \$34 MILLION. >>> THE FORMER PANTHERS SACHAR, JULIUS PEPPERS, ONE OF THOSE IN THE RUNNING FOR THE HALL OF FAME, BUT HIS CAREER HAD QUITE A DIFFERENT START, AS WE EXPLAIN IN THIS EDITION OF WRAL STORYTELLERS. >> ONE OF THE BIGGEST ASSETS, THE MOUNT KILIMANJARO LEVEL OF PLASTIC WE HAVE THAT IS THE ARCHIVES, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF ANYBODY HAS SHOWN ME A CLIP THAT HAS MADE MY JAW DROP TO THE FLOOR AS MUCH AS THE TIME SOMEONE SHOWED ME A PIECE OF VIDEO FROM SOUTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL WHERE JULIUS PEPPERS WAS PLAYING RUNNING BACK.>> QUITE SIMPLY, JULIUS PEPPERS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST ATHLETES THE STATE HAS EVER TURNED OUT, WE SAW THAT HIS FRESHMAN YEAR, THE COACH WAS DETERMINED TO PERSUADE HIM TO GIVE FOOTBALL A TRY, AND I DON'T KNOW THIS FOR SURE, I HAVE AN IDEA THAT HE OFFERED JULIUS THE CHANCE TO PLAY WHEREVER HE WANTED AS AN ENTICEMENT. JULIUS CHOSE RUNNING BACK, HE TOLD ME I WANT TO TOUCH THE BALL AND HAVE SOME FUN.>> Reporter: SUCH A LARGE RUNNING BACK AT SOUTHERN NASH, NORTH CAROLINA RECRUITED HIM FOR DEFENSIVE END. >> WHEN YOU ARE ON THE SIDELINES FOR FOOTBALL FRIDAY, HOW DO NOT GET CAUGHT UP IN THE SPECTACLE. >> SPELLBINDING, HE COULD GET 7 YARDS, 12 YARDS.>> Reporter: A 21 YARD TOUCHDOWN PASS TO JULIUS PEPPERS. JULIUS PEPPERS WILL GO 47 YARDS. >> THEY HAD A TRADITION OF BIG RUNNING BACKS, THEY HAD A GUY NAMED ABE JONES, AND JULIUS WAS 6 FOOT SEVEN, 250 AS A SOPHOMORE, THE COACH TOLD ME. >> HE RAN A FOUR POINTS SIX 40, HE COULD GET TO THE CORNER BEFORE OTHER BIG GUYS. 4.6, AND I SAID IS IT OKAY TO DRAG THEM, AND HE SAID YES, THEY GET AROUND MY ANKLES, I LIKE TO DRAG THEM AS FAR AS THEY CAN, HE WOULD DRAG DEFENDERS FOR 3500 YARDS AND 38 TOUCHDOWNS. >> IT'S WILD, HE'S LIKE TWICE THE SIZE OF MOST OF THE PLAYERS. >> THAT WAS OUTRAGEOUS.

MORE ON THIS

-  [Mack Brown, Julius Peppers among NC Sports Hall of Fame 2020 class](#)
-  [Julius Peppers among NFF College Football Hall of Fame nominees](#)
-  [Julius Peppers: 'It's see ya later' in retirement from Carolina Panthers](#)

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2018 NFL Man of the Year – Fact Sheet

Link to the Application

Link to application here: <http://www.nflfoundation.org/applications/programs/campaign/MOY>

How has your nominee shown dedication and commitment to community efforts this year?

Always someone who has aimed to avoid the spotlight, Panthers defensive end Julius Peppers has never enjoyed the talking-to-the-media part of being an NFL player.

He prefers to talk when he has something to say.

After seeing the photos and videos of the hurricane damage along the coast, Peppers, who grew up in eastern North Carolina and played football (and basketball) at UNC, had something to say and wanted to help.

He partnered with the Foundation for the Carolinas and started the Julius Peppers Hurricane Florence relief fund by donating \$100,000 and encouraging his teammates and other NFL players to do their part, as well.

"I think it would be a great statement if we had 100 percent participation," Peppers said of fellow Panthers supporting the cause. "To be honest, I think that would say a lot to these fans and the community. We rely on their support every week to come to the games and buy our jerseys. It's only right for us to give the same support back to the them and help them in their time of need."

Funds will be directed to nonprofit recipients of grants from Foundation For The Carolinas' Hurricane Florence Response Fund, which is providing relief to victims of the storm.

"When these disasters happen you don't have the basic necessities. Sometimes we take those things for granted," Peppers said. "That's what's on my mind. I'm just trying to do something to help."

However, his donation was only the beginning of his commitment. Since his donation, he's spent two of his off-days visiting hurricane-ravaged areas - Robeson County in North Carolina and Marlboro County in South Carolina, both impoverished areas that reminded him of his hometown where people were too busy picking up the pieces of their lives to gawk at an NFL star.

Peppers understood. And he wasn't too busy to listen, to help, to take the time in the midst of the football season to travel five hours roundtrip to see how he could assist in some small way those struggling in the wake of a natural disaster.

"Home is a couple of hours away, and it reminds me of Bailey a lot," Peppers said, referencing his North Carolina hometown that was spared when Hurricane Florence tore through his home state three-plus weeks ago. "It hits home. It's tough to see people in these situations. They're just regular people who don't have very much to fall back on, don't have many resources.

"It's one thing to write a check. That's great, but it's another thing to come out, be on the ground and actually see the devastation, see the effects with your own eyes."

How has your nominee shown dedication and commitment to community efforts in years past?

Historically someone who prefers to contribute "behind the scenes," Peppers has donated more than \$300,000 to the University of North Carolina's Light on the Hill Society Scholarship fund that supports African-American students. Peppers gave \$100,000 to the fund in 2009 and \$250,000 to the fund in 2012. The scholarship program is a tribute to Carolina's earliest African-American graduates and a vehicle for alumni and friends of the university to support African-American freshman who exhibit academic excellence and the potential to contribute while at UNC and after graduation. The Light on the Hill Society Julius Peppers Scholar receives an annual 1,000 award, renewable for up to three years.

Peppers has made donations to various churches in Charlotte, Nash County (NC), Houston and Dallas for projects, including youth development, transportation, radio devotionals and building repair. From 2005-08, he funded the Julius Pepper Project, youth development programs in Charlotte, Nash County and Chapel Hill that secured motivational speakers to discuss social and educational issues with area youth.

In Chicago from 2010-12, he made financial contributions and organized youth development through Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Chicago.

How does your nominee demonstrate consistency in positive character and how does he model a lifestyle of giving back?

Selected to the All-Decade team for the 2000's, Peppers is universally regarded by teammates and players throughout the League as one of the game's great ambassadors and someone who plays the game "the right way." Reflective of his positive leadership and the respect he garners from his teammates, Peppers has been selected a team captain six times, including four seasons in Carolina and twice in Chicago. During his three-year stint in Green Bay, the Packers did not select captains for the season but was selected as one of the team's postseason captains in each of his three seasons with the team.

While he is a star player in the NFL, Peppers has always been reserved in his demeanor. However, he recognized the need to help others in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence and has devoted his resources and, more importantly, his time to helping the low-income rural areas that are often left behind in relief efforts.

How has your nominee demonstrated excellence on the field during his career?

Selected by the Panthers second overall in the 2002 draft, Julius Peppers is the only player in NFL history with 150 sacks and 10 or more interceptions. He (156.5) leads all active players in sacks, including an all-time franchise record of 94 with the Panthers. The 17-year veteran needs four to surpass Kevin Greene (160.0) for third in NFL history since sacks became an official statistic in 1982. He needs two forced fumbles to surpass Robert Mathis (52) for the most forced fumbles since 2000 and his 33 career forced fumbles for Carolina rank first in team history. With one more game played, he will increase his total to 256, an amount that ranks sixth in NFL history among defensive players. Peppers has also played in 166 consecutive games, the second-longest streak among active players.

Is there anything else we should know about your nominee?

JULIUS PEPPERS – DEFENSIVE END (2002-2009, 2017-2018)

Honors

- NFL All-Decade Team – 2000s, 2010s
 - Pro Bowl – **2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009**, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015
 - AP All-Pro First Team – **2004, 2006**, 2010
 - AP All-Pro Second Team – **2008, 2009**, 2012
 - College & Pro Football Weekly All-Pro – **2004**
 - Football Digest All-Pro – **2004**
 - Pro Football Weekly All-NFL – **2004, 2006**, 2010
 - Pro Football Weekly All-NFC – **2004, 2006**, 2010, 2012
 - Sporting News All-Pro – **2004, 2006, 2008**, 2010
 - NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year – **2002**
 - USA Today Sports Weekly All-Pro – **2006**
- (Bold =With Panthers)

NFL Superlatives

- 266 games played are the sixth most by a defensive player in NFL history.
- Ranks fourth in NFL history with 159.5 sacks.
- Finished in top 10 in NFL in sacks six times – 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012.
- Produced 10 seasons with double-digit sacks, the fourth most in NFL history.
- Only player in NFL history with 150 or more sacks and 10 or more interceptions.
- 11 career interceptions are the second most by a defensive end in NFL history.
- Ranks second in NFL history with 51 forced fumbles (since 2000 when the statistic became available).
- Credited with 82 career pass deflections, the second most in NFL history by a defensive end (since 2000 when the statistic became available).

Panthers Accomplishments

- Led/tied for team lead in sacks seven times – 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2017.
- Recorded a career-high 14.5 sacks in 2008, equaling the third most in team history.
- Totaled 143 interception return yards in 2004, the second most in team history and an NFL record for a defensive lineman at the time.
- Key member of Panthers defense that finished in top 10 six times – 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2017.
- Helped Panthers defense rank among the NFL's top 10 in sacks per pass attempt five times – 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2017.
- Named Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year nominee in 2018.

Panthers Team History Ranks

- 5 Pro Bowls – 2nd (Tied)
- 97 Sacks – 1st
- 23 Multi-Sack Games – 1st
- 583 Tackles – Most by a defensive lineman
- 34 Forced Fumbles – 1st
- 10 Opponent Fumble Recoveries – 3rd
- 9 Blocked Field Goals – 1st

Career Statistics – Season-By-Season

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tot	T	A	Sack	Yds	Int	PD	FF	FR	TD
2002	Carolina	12	12	54	37	17	12.0	78.0	1	4	5	0	0
2003	Carolina	16	16	65	48	17	7.0	39.0	0	6	3	0	0
2004	Carolina	16	16	85	63	22	11.0	71.0	2	6	4	1	1
2005	Carolina	16	16	70	46	24	10.5	61.5	0	4	2	1	0
2006	Carolina	16	16	75	61	14	13.0	89.0	0	6	3	2	0
2007	Carolina	14	14	55	37	18	2.5	22.5	1	3	3	2	0
2008	Carolina	16	16	63	41	22	14.5	82.5	0	7	5	0	0
2009	Carolina	16	14	56	35	21	10.5	52.5	2	4	5	1	1
2010	Chicago	16	16	64	47	17	8.0	54.0	2	7	3	0	0
2011	Chicago	16	16	43	31	12	11.0	60.0	0	1	3	2	0
2012	Chicago	16	16	43	33	10	11.5	73.5	0	0	1	4	0
2013	Chicago	16	16	47	35	12	7.0	44.0	1	4	2	1	0
2014	Green Bay	16	16	45	33	12	7.0	41.5	2	11	4	3	2
2015	Green Bay	16	16	42	31	11	10.5	57.0	0	0	2	0	0
2016	Green Bay	16	11	30	22	8	7.5	47.5	0	3	2	1	0
2017	Carolina	16	5	33	27	6	11.0	61.0	0	0	2	2	0
2018	Carolina	16	8	27	19	8	5.0	47.5	0	7	2	1	0
Career Totals		266	240	897	646	251	159.5	982.0	11	73	51	21	4
Carolina Totals		154	133	583	414	169	97.0	604.5	6	47	34	10	2



SHOP

Julius Peppers caps year of community service with celebration at charity sneaker ball

Feb 15, 2019 at 09:27 AM



Max Henson



CHARLOTTE – For [Julius Peppers](#), Thursday night at the Harvey B. Gantt Center was the culmination of nearly a year's worth of community service.

Peppers, who was Carolina's 2018 NFL Man of the Year nominee, hosted a formal sneaker ball in support of three charities that he handpicked.

RELATED LINKS

- [Julius Peppers pens "thank-you" note to coaches, teammates, fans](#)
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"I'm excited. All this stuff started out with the hurricane relief fund," Peppers said just before the party began. "We decided to do a charity ball for All-Star Weekend with the spotlight on the city of Charlotte and we wanted to celebrate as well.

"It's great to go out and have a good time and also have it benefit a good cause. That means a lot."

Peppers, usually known for backing away from the spotlight, was basking in the glow throughout the night. Since announcing his retirement, he's been overwhelmed by the collective love and support, and he was happy to mingle with guests and pose for a photo with anyone who asked.

This was a charity event, but it was also a chance to celebrate the close of a legendary career.

Several coveted pieces of sports memorabilia were up for grabs at the event. Among the items on display? A Steph Curry signed jersey, a signed Saquon Barkley helmet, a Drew Brees autographed ball and a signed Patrick Mahomes jersey.

And of course, several current and former Panthers were on hand to share in the celebration.



Julius Peppers Charity Sneaker Ball

View photos from Julius Peppers' charity sneaker ball in Charlotte at the Harvey B. Gantt Center.



1 / 89



Brandon Todd

"A lot of support from my teammates, well, former teammates," Peppers said with a chuckle. "Everyone has been congratulating me on a great career and it feels good to be appreciated."

The community is certainly appreciative of Peppers for all the work he's done during and after his final NFL season.

Here's what he had to say about the three charitable organizations his gala supported:

"The Young Black Leadership Alliance – they give exposure to youth locally and around the world. I thought they were great when I went out and visited them. I fell in love with it."

"The Girl Talk Foundation is run by someone that I know from my first stint with the Panthers. They are empowering young girls to be strong women. It's great."

"The Center for Community Transitions – they offer stability and assistance to families dealing with someone who has been incarcerated. A lot of people deal with that at one point or another, and that hit home for me."



Best NC Athlete ever? How about Julius Peppers

<https://www.wralsportsfan.com/best-nc-athlete-ever-how-about-julius-peppers/19204859/>

Posted July 25, 2020 4:54 p.m. EDT

Updated July 27, 2020 6:44 a.m. EDT

By Bob Holliday, WRALSportsFan columnist

RALEIGH, N.C. — Recently I stumbled onto a social media thread asking opinions about the best high school athletes who competed in North Carolina. I immediately thought of Julius Peppers.

It's not just the fact that Peppers ran for more than 3500 yards and 38 touchdowns in three years as a running back at Southern Nash High School, though I must say the images of the big teenager running over and even running past would be defenders are indelible. But Peppers was about more than just running the ball, and he was about more than just football. In fact, until his sophomore year, there was no football.

Peppers, as a freshman, made his mark at the school in Stanhope on the basketball court and on the track. He would ultimately score 1661 points and haul in almost 960 rebounds playing hoops. The sport of track and field afforded Peppers even more ways to showcase his extraordinary gifts. He helped the Firebirds win the NCHSAA 3A Championship in two entirely different ways: He ran one leg of Southern Nash's first place 4x400 meter relay team; then as an individual he competed in the triple jump and finished second in the state. Ironically, it was the triple jump that brought Peppers and Southern Nash football coach Ray Davis together.

Davis one day watched Peppers practicing the triple jump-he fashioned a distance of 37 feet even as a freshman. Davis told Peppers he needed to come out for football the next fall. Legend has it Davis promised Peppers he could be a Hall of Famer if he worked hard.

Julius joined the Firebird football squad in the fall of 1995. Perhaps as part of the enticement to get him on the gridiron, Davis allowed Peppers to play any position he wanted. The sophomore chose running back.

Now Southern Nash has some tradition playing big running backs. In the early Nineties the Firebirds unleashed the 6'4 240 pound Abe Jones on opposing defenses. But as Davis later told me, "Julius makes Abe look like a little baby." Indeed. Peppers stood 6'7 and weighed 250 pounds. But his prowess was about more than size. He ran a 4.6 40 yard dash, which gave him the speed to get around those players big enough to tackle him-and there weren't many. He also had the strength to drag smaller tacklers for extra yards, often many extra yards. Think of Gulliver in the land of the Lilliputians in Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels."

Ray Davis understood that ultimately Peppers would be playing against men more his own size in college and beyond, and that that might warrant a position change. Yet he believed that for Southern Nash, using Peppers primarily as a ball carrier, helped the team more than putting him somewhere else.

As for Julius, I asked him why he chose running back. "I want to touch the ball, have fun," he told me.

Southern Nash, like many high schools, makes use of two way players. Davis experimented with playing Peppers at defensive end. As his stamina improved, the big guy played more and more defense. By his senior year, Peppers played every down on defense. Although he was still the team's running back it just made sense to give the burgeoning number of recruiters a thorough look at a potential college superstar defensive end.

On to Chapel Hill

Peppers understood his future lay in the trenches but the amount of time he spent playing running back meant that he arrived at UNC having taken fewer reps at defensive end than if he had specialized. As things turned out, Peppers red-shirted during the 1998 season in Chapel Hill, which gave him time to focus full-time on defensive end-for the first time.

Peppers started for Coach Carl Torbush from the very first game in 1999, even though his techniques for defeating college level blocks needed some refinement. His size and quickness more than compensated for what he might have lacked in knowhow. He caught on quickly-also got busy in the weight room. The 250 pound high school running back became a 290 pound college defensive end.

#49 led the Tar Heels in sacks and tackles for loss that first campaign (he didn't become #90 until the NFL), then put together a monster season in 2000. Peppers led the entire

country in sacks with 15 and ranked third in tackles for loss with 24. Though just a sophomore, he made All-ACC and All-America.

John Bunting, a top NFL defensive coach, took over as head coach at UNC in 2001, leading the Tar Heels to an eight win season that included a bowl victory over Auburn. Peppers again flourished despite facing frequent double teams. He won the Bednarik and Lombardi Awards as the nation's top defensive player, and made unanimous All-America. He finished tenth in balloting for the Heisman Trophy. Having scaled college football's highest heights, Peppers entered the NFL draft for 2002.

Bunting wanted NFL scouts to get a good look at this big athletic defensive end. He organized a pro timing day for Peppers, Ryan Sims, and UNC's other NFL prospects. Scouts spent time evaluating Peppers' skill at trench warfare; there was a lot of hand fighting that day I remember. Peppers impressed the Carolina Panthers enough that they used the #2 pick in the entire draft on him.

Julius Peppers' three year legacy at UNC compares favorably with any in school history, even those who played four varsity seasons. He ranks second in career sacks with 30 and second in career tackles for loss with 53. But that's just the beginning. He was credited with 42 quarterback hurries. He defended 13 passes, an extraordinary number for a defensive end, deflecting the ball while rushing the passer on most of the 13, but he was also known to drop back into coverage. Peppers forced five fumbles and recovered two more. He intercepted five passes. And when he got his hands on the football, Julius knew what to do with it-he was first a running back after all. Peppers scored three defensive touchdowns at UNC. Small wonder he was recently nominated for the College Football Hall of Fame.

Basketball, too

On top of his football accolades, Peppers in 2001 was voted the top two sport athlete in America by the Sporting News. A former all state basketball player at Southern Nash, Peppers joined Bill Guthridge's team as a walk on following the 1999 football season. It took some time for Peppers to adapt his now 290 pound body to the hardwood, as well as to learn the nuances of UNC's offensive and defensive principles. But as January lapsed into February and March, Peppers saw more and more playing time.

The football star certainly won over his basketball teammates. That was evident in a television story we did in 2000. Point guard and team leader Ed Cota was Peppers' biggest booster. "I played a lot of pickup with Julius this summer," Cota said, "and I knew what he was capable of doing out there." Peppers confided that "Ed was telling me all the time you can play on our team." Did he ever!

Peppers came off the bench and got rebounds at both ends of the court. As you might imagine, he excelled at defense, making steals and blocking shots. He could also put the ball in the basket, hitting all four shots in a game at Duke and knocking down 6-7 in a 14 point outing against Georgia Tech. As teammate Joe Forte put it, "Julius is the best athlete I've seen in my life. The sad part is he's just playing the game for fun."

Peppers probably had the most fun in his brief college basketball career one March Saturday against #1 seed Stanford. The Cardinal boasted a huge front line, three players 6'10 or bigger, all of whom were quite muscular. Carolina countered with 7'0 Brendan Haywood and Kris Lang, who although 6'10 was more of a finesse player. Peppers, who played with both Haywood and Lang in their AAU days, became the great equalizer against Stanford. Peppers, by now known as the "super sub," came off the bench late in the first half against the Cardinal and converted a critical three point play to give UNC a 28-27 lead at intermission-and belief in the possibility of an upset. Peppers played most of the second half, 24 minutes in all, recording six points, three rebounds, two steals, and three blocked shots.

North Carolina, a 20-13 team some said didn't even belong in the NCAA Tournament, took down 27-4 Stanford 60-53. UNC's interior defense, led by Peppers, held the Cardinal's formidable front court to 7-29 from the floor. As Bill Guthridge was later to say, "Julius Peppers has been a godsend to our team. We wouldn't be here without Julius."

That UNC team went all the way to the Final Four in Guthridge's final season. Peppers played an even greater role as a sophomore, averaging 7 points and 4 rebounds. Impressively, he led the team in field goal percentage, hitting 64% of his shots from the floor. Peppers so impressed new coach Matt Doherty that he suggested if Julius gave up football and concentrated solely on basketball he could be an NBA player. Peppers, of course, went in precisely the opposite direction.

No one who watched his Hall of Fame worthy NFL career could ever second guess his decision to concentrate on football, yet the notion that he could possibly have had a pro career in a different sport adds another layer to the legacy of one of America's great all around athletes.

Favorite memory

My favorite memory covering Mr. Peppers comes from Super Bowl Media Day in 2004. Members of the media know Julius never sought the spotlight. He wanted to let his play speak for itself and let his teammates do the talking. When Julius gave interviews he answered questions thoughtfully, but quietly. As he became an NFL veteran, Peppers did fewer and fewer interviews. But on Tuesday in Houston, five days before the

Panthers' showdown with the New England Patriots, Peppers made himself available. There were just a few of us at Peppers' booth. Most crowded around Jake Delhomme and Steve Smith. I practically had a one on one with the Panthers' young star.

"Julius," I said, "as you look all the way back to your days as a running back for Coach Ray Davis at Southern Nash, can you put into words what getting the chance to play in the Super Bowl means to you?" The smile on his face said it all. I never shall forget that smile.

CHICAGO'S LEAP OF FAITH

[HTTPS://VAULT.SI.COM/VAULT/2010/09/06/CHICAGOS-LEAP-OF-FAITH](https://vault.si.com/vault/2010/09/06/chicagos-leap-of-faith)

- **DAMON HACK**

GETTING TO THE QUARTERBACK IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER, WHICH IS WHY THE BEARS TOOK A \$91.5 MILLION CHANCE ON DEFENSIVE END JULIUS PEPPERS—HIS CRITICS BE DAMNED

When the wind blew, the tobacco stalks would shake and the trailer in which Julius Peppers lived would rock. In his bed, which was too short for his long legs, he would sometimes lie still and listen to that double-wide groan. But other times the growing boy would rise, duck his head beneath the low roof and take off with the gusts blowing through Bailey, N.C. "Running to get in shape," he says, "or just running for no reason."

He was impossible to miss: 6'3" by the time he was in middle school, already broad and thick and muscular. Just about everyone in Bailey (pop. 670), famous for its Country Doctor Museum, knew of Julius's sporting prowess and quiet nature. One youth coach would pick him up at home for a game, and a different coach might drop him off afterward. On certain days the townsfolk would talk about what Julius could do on the basketball court. Other times it was Julius and that football. And sometimes it was Julius running around that oval. All the while Julius's mother, Bessie Brinkley, worked long hours in a ceramics shop.

"I've known Julius since the fifth grade," says Alton Tyre, who coached him in track and field at Southern Nash High. "I was in Wilmington when Michael Jordan was there. I coached against Clyde Simmons. Julius is the greatest athlete I have ever seen. A guy that big and that strong is not supposed to be that fast."

Julius was one of the few not trumpeting his gifts. Although he was already bigger than almost everyone he met, he was happy to share the spotlight, even when many of the people in the bleachers just wanted to see him dunk. "He was very introspective and reserved," Tyre says. "I taught him African-American history and U.S. history, and he used to answer essay questions with a level of depth you don't see from a lot of kids. At the eastern regional track meet when he was a sophomore, this kid took the lead on him in the triple jump and starts pointing at Julius's chest, as if to say, You're not man enough to do what I did. Julius gets on the track with these beautiful phases and jumps 46' 11½" to beat the kid. Julius got out of that sand and didn't say a word. He didn't even look at the kid. He just walked around the track with his teammates, high-fiving."

Asked about his muted response to his own athletic feats, Peppers says, "I think I was just born like that, a personality trait. I'm an observer."

Peppers's power and perspective helped make him an All-America defensive end at North Carolina (where he also walked on to the basketball team), an All-Pro with the Panthers and, last March, the key free-agent pickup of the off-season. When he signed a six-year, \$91.5 million deal with the Bears it underscored the importance of the pass rusher in the era of the quarterback. Chicago already had the face of its franchise in middle linebacker Brian Urlacher, but Peppers gave the team a big-play threat—a player with strength, speed and quickness honed on the track and the basketball court as well as the football field. "I'm sure every sport he [competed in] played a part in what he's able to do," says Brian Foster, who was Peppers's defensive coordinator at Southern Nash, "but he always had that first step and that freakish ability. I think his burst is from God."

Just as significant, signing with the Bears ended Peppers's 30 years in North Carolina, during which he had been called everything from a boyhood legend to the greatest pass rusher since Lawrence Taylor to an underachiever who didn't bring it on every play. The charge that Peppers's fire didn't always match his physical gifts first surfaced shortly before the Panthers drafted him second overall out of UNC—despite the fact that he used to run sprints with the defensive backs because his fellow linemen were too slow. The talk was heard as recently as last season, when with the Panthers off to an 0--3 start, linebacker Jon Beason told a radio station that he wanted to see more "intensity" from Peppers. The following week Beason said he had been wrong to go public with a team matter, and both players and coaches came to Peppers's defense. "I never saw the kid take a practice off," says Browns quarterback Jake Delhomme, a teammate of Peppers's in Carolina for seven seasons. "I never saw him miss a practice in training camp. I never saw him miss practice during the season. I never saw him gloat. He came to play, he came to work. Julius is a quiet guy, and people might misunderstand him because he keeps to himself."

Delhomme remembers that the negative chatter about Peppers was loudest in 2007, when Peppers had just 2½ sacks. "We were 7--9, and he was just crucified," Delhomme says. "People seem to forget, we weren't winning games, so teams were running the ball late in the game and you're not going to get sacks. And then the next year he has a good year [a career-high 14½ sacks], but we were 12--4 and teams had to throw it. You have to look at the big picture."

Peppers says the criticism used to bother him, but he understands that it's inevitable, given his nature. "You can be an emotional, high-strung guy, and that might work for you," he says. "I think I can be reserved and quiet and play as well as the next guy."

Sal Sunseri, the linebackers coach at Alabama, was a Panthers' defensive coach from 2002 to '08. "There was never a guy I coached who was better prepared," Sunseri says. "Sometimes a young man gets frustrated when they're sliding protection over and doing everything they can to block his ass. When you're the top dog, they're doing everything they can to keep you from the

quarterback. If you're an offensive coordinator, you better know how you're going to block Julius Peppers."

Even though he had allies among the Panthers, Peppers admits he had been thinking about leaving Carolina for two years. After he turned down a four-year, \$54 million offer from the team before the 2009 season, the Panthers placed a franchise tag on him, which meant he made more than \$18 million last year. This season, citing financial reasons, the organization decided against using its franchise tag on him (it would have cost more than \$20 million), leaving Peppers free to test the market.

Departing meant leaving behind a remarkable legacy of triumph—and controversy. Peppers was named Defensive Rookie of the Year for 2002 after a season in which he had 12 sacks in 12 games, but he missed Carolina's last four games for violating league policy on banned substances. (Peppers, who has said the positive test was the result of a diet supplement containing ephedra that he obtained from a friend, called it "crazy" for people to think he needed steroids to boost his performance.) The following season he helped lead Carolina to the Super Bowl, which the Panthers lost to New England on a late Adam Vinatieri field goal. Carolina hasn't made it that far since.

"It was time for a change, not only from that franchise but from the state," says the 30-year-old Peppers. "I'm from a small town, and I've lived in Charlotte, which is really a small city and a small town too, but I've never lived in a big city or had to perform under the spotlight in one. That's a challenge in itself. I like those things. I wasn't going to shy away."

Peppers has quickly warmed to Chicago, where he plans to start a foundation to help at-risk young men. He also embraced the city's fast pace: Following his introductory press conference in March, Peppers ventured out to the club Crescendo and bought 25 bottles of Perrier Jouet Fleur de Champagne (about \$350 per bottle) for the patrons. Captured on YouTube, it's a big-city moment light years from Bailey: As bottles lit by sparklers are passed around the room, the DJ can be heard shouting his appreciation over the thumping sound system. "Make some noise for the new Chicago Bear, J. Peppers in the building!" the DJ says. "Super Bowl, next year, 2010, Chicago Bears. Thank you, Julius."

The Bears see Peppers as a complete defensive end who can help stop the run and cause general discomfort to opposing offenses, but it's his ability to pressure the quarterback that makes him most valuable. "Our scheme is predicated on the pass rush," says Chicago general manager Jerry Angelo. "We think third down on first down, so a player of Julius's skill set really accentuates what we want to do on defense."

His teammates are already getting a taste of the discomfort Peppers can cause. At a recent practice he lined up at right end. At the snap he engaged the left tackle, freed himself, rushed the

quarterback, leaped into the air as the quarterback threw a screen pass into the flat, spun around and chased down the running back, who saw the ball sail over his head. Peppers did it all so quickly that he made it look easy.

"You go up to block him, and you don't expect to get pushed back, because it doesn't look like he's coming off real hard," says Bears tight end Desmond Clark. "Then you lock onto him, and you find yourself backpedaling. As soon as you meet that force and he's pushing you back, it doesn't matter what it looks like. It didn't look hard for Michael Jordan, but he always got it done."

Urlacher shakes his head. "Three hundred damn pounds," he says. "I don't know how a man his size moves as good as he does. This dude busts his ass every day. I don't understand [the criticism]. The expectations for him are so high, people wanting him to get a sack every single play—you can't do it."

Coach Lovie Smith and defensive coordinator Rod Marinelli plan to take advantage of what Smith says are "a couple of outstanding [pass-rushing] moves and a great countermove off them." The more attention an opposing offensive line pays to Peppers, the more it opens up chances for other pass rushers. "Everybody you talked to about Julius said the same thing," says Smith. "A guy like Ron Meeks, his defensive coordinator [with Carolina last season], said, 'This is one of the best guys you will ever be around.' And Julius did his homework on us too. I talked to him about the teachers we had on our staff. Stern teachers. We're not going 'm-f' and cursing guys out on the football field, but each day we're going to coach them hard and try to teach them exactly what we want them to do."

Marinelli, a former defensive line coach to Warren Sapp and Simeon Rice, says of Peppers, "It's his work habits, attention to detail, his presence at meetings, how he takes notes. He's a pro, and he's setting a standard on how to be a pro, and he doesn't even have to say anything."

And so Peppers doesn't. The giant man maintains a low profile as usual. But one thing about him has changed. Never a stat hound in his career, Peppers has made it known that he has his eye on Michael Strahan's single-season sack record of 22½. "Realistically, who knows if I ever get there, but if you don't shoot for it, you never will," he says.

He'll have to run like the wind to do it.

• *CLOCKWORK FOOTBALL*

PEPPERS BENEFITED FROM HIS THREE-SPORT BACKGROUND, BUT, SAYS HIS HIGH SCHOOL COACH, "I THINK HIS BURST IS FROM GOD."

Recruiting History: Julius Peppers, The Freak

Julius Peppers was a once-in-a-generation talent at Southern Nash High School — and North Carolina.

<https://247sports.com/college/north-carolina/article/julius-peppers-unc-recruiting-history-north-carolina-tar-heels-football-basketball-149482487/>



SHERRELL MCMILLAN Jul 24th, 2020, 9:32 AM50



The stories appear to be more myth than truth.

Hear them and it's hard to tell if years distorted memories or minor exploits created unbelievable legends.

"I saw him block a punt and return it for a touchdown while outrunning a cornerback... at 240 pounds."

“We decided to put him at running back because he was as quick as other players on the team. It was just that he did it at 6-5, 230 pounds.”

“I remember him hitting a quarterback as he threw, tipping the ball in the air and diving for an interception in a flash.”

“In our final game of the season, he intercepted a pass and ran it back all the way for a touchdown. You’re not supposed to do that at his size.”

“I really believe this, but he could’ve played any position on the football field and been an All-American. He was that talented.”

“He’s probably the best player to ever come through North Carolina.”

Sound unbelievable? Sound made up?

They aren’t.

All those things were said by people who coached, covered or followed Julius Peppers.

Basketball, not football, was Julius Peppers’s first love. As a kid, it’s what he most enjoyed. He dreamed of hitting game-winning shots and playing in college, before making it to the NBA.

His first year at Southern Nash High School, Peppers didn’t even go out for football. He was intent to play basketball as his primary sport and, hopefully, earn a scholarship offer to his favorite school—North Carolina.

Ray Davis, the football coach at Southern Nash, couldn’t let that stand.

“The first time I ever noticed him was when he was in middle school,” Davis says. “He was really a big kid for a seventh grader. He was gangly and a little awkward I remember. I’d say he was like 6-foot-1 then.”

What surprised Davis the most about watching Peppers was the position he was playing.

“It was strange because he was the tallest guy on the team and he’s out there playing running back,” explains Davis. “He was just super dominant because he was so much bigger than everybody else. He had his eye on basketball, but this was a kid who we knew could be great.”

Davis set up a meeting with Peppers one winter afternoon after basketball practice to discuss his sophomore season and the football team.

“I tried to tell him that he was going to be a dime a dozen size-wise on the basketball court,” says Davis. “But on the football field, his size, his speed and his athleticism could be special.”

In the end Peppers, who loved competing and loved sports, said he’d play football. His one major concern, though, was possibly being forced to play on the offensive line.

“I said, ‘Son if you play football for me I’ll make you a running back,’” Davis recalls. “Maybe that sold him, I don’t know. But he showed up that summer ready for conditioning.”

During the 1995 season, Peppers’s sophomore year, he rushed for 1,000-plus yards and intimidated opponents, media members, fans and even players on his own team.

Running backs weren’t supposed to be 6-foot-5.

They weren't supposed to weigh 230 pounds and have basically no body fat. And if they did do all those things, they were supposed to be slow and plodding, not fast and effortless.

Davis even caught flak for not taking better advantage of Peppers's size.

"As a coach, I always favored big running backs and we always had them at Southern Nash," he says. "I didn't think I was playing him out of position."

If there's one thing 6-foot-5 running backs get, it's attention.

Just a few weeks before playing his first high school football game, Peppers received his first attention from colleges.

"Donnie Thompson, who was an assistant coach at North Carolina, was the first person I talked to about Julius," Davis says. "He had seen him at track meets the prior spring just like I did and couldn't believe his combination of strength, athleticism, speed and everything else."

Thompson was a Carolina assistant coach under Mack Brown and Carl Torbush. He coached some of UNC's best defensive players, NFL first-round picks like Greg Ellis, Ebenezer Ekuban and Marcus Jones.

Thompson recruited southeast Florida and eastern North Carolina for the Tar Heels. When he saw Peppers—in person and on film—his talent jumped out of the VCR.

"Even then, he was a man amongst boys," Thompson says. "Every chance we got we started monitoring him and dropping him letters about Carolina. He was already a Carolina fan, but he was more in his early years because he was an AAU basketball phenom."

Peppers's love of basketball played right into UNC's recruiting pitch. Thompson regularly talked about his friendship with Rocky Mount, N.C. native and Tar Heel assistant coach Phil Ford.

"The first time I saw him play football, he was playing against a school out of Wilson and we were recruiting Octavius Barnes and he was the best player on the field," says Thompson. "He's running and jumping and we're like, 'Wow, this young kid is good.'"

Carolina sent coaches to Southern Nash whenever they could go, sent letters as often as possible under NCAA rules, and invited him to football camp during the summer.

"By the time he became a national recruit, everyone knew they had to beat Carolina," says Thompson. "We were really locked into his mind. We felt good during his junior year and at that point our focus was to keep it a local battle and keep him from making those national visits."

Davis admits he was a little overwhelmed by the spring of Peppers's junior season. The phone calls never stopped. The interview requests kept coming in. Coaches constantly dropped by.

"I'd get through teaching classes and there'd be a couple or three coaches sitting outside my office waiting to talk to me. From the west coast, to Florida, to Michigan, to everywhere. Stanford, even Big 10 schools."

Peppers's recruitment became national, just as Thompson had feared. He had offers from Florida State, Florida, Miami, Nebraska, Penn State, USC and a host of other national powers.

“Basically anyone you can think of was after him,” Torbush says. “I don’t feel like he would’ve gone more than four or five hours from home, so he basically was going to stay in the southeast. He was that type of kid.”

Thompson, Torbush and Mack Brown worked on Peppers throughout the summer and just after leaving UNC’s summer camp, he gave the Tar Heels a verbal commitment. Though he liked the coaching staff, especially Thompson, it was another UNC assistant that sealed the deal.

“That camp was the first time we met Coach Brown in person,” says Davis. “But what locked him in on Carolina was when Phil (Ford) came by the office and told him that if he wanted to play basketball then he was welcome to do both. Coach Brown nodded his head in agreement and (Julius) said ‘I’m coming.’”

Adds Thompson: “I have to give credit to Dean Smith and Phil Ford. They really extended themselves in the recruiting process by committing to him at least being on the junior varsity team when he got to Carolina.”

His commitment was a seminal moment for UNC’s recruiting efforts. Before most other schools had a chance, the Tar Heel staff had discovered, evaluated, offered, pursued and eventually gotten a commitment from the state’s best.

Thompson says it was the model for how Brown approached recruiting.

“We shut down the borders, that’s what Mack wanted to do,” he says. “We believed in our heart that you can go with the Tidewater (Virginia) and North Carolina and you could beat anybody in the country anytime, but you’ve got to get them all. ... We went to every coach in the state. If you can control those regions, that’s the formula for UNC to be successful.”

He continues: “That was the strategy. We’d recruit the top 25 players in the state, but we had to have 12 or more of them. Getting Julius gave us No. 1 and we worked our way down from there.”

Peppers’s senior season wrapped up one of the most accomplished high school careers in state history. He finished his career with 3,501 rushing yards and 46 touchdowns. He was a Parade All-American, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Male Athlete of the Year, and earned all-state honors as a junior and senior.

“When we got his high school film, on the defensive end he kind of relaxed a little bit because people were scared to run his way,” says Thompson. “Every now and then they’d test him and then he’d run some guy down from 50 yards out. Most of the time, though, he got no defensive action. We were intrigued by his offensive skills and how we [maybe] could mold him a little.”

Peppers also helped Southern Nash win the state championship in track, as part of the 4 x 200 relay team and as a triple jumper.

“I just can’t tell you how amazing he was athletically,” says Davis. “A kid that size, with feet that big, he could do standing back somersaults all the way down the football field in full gear. He could throw the football 60 yards. He just had God-given things the rest of us didn’t.”

Two months after Peppers committed to UNC, John Mackovic was preparing his Texas team to host No. 11 UCLA more than 1,300 miles away.

Mackovic had won a share of the Southwest conference title in 1994, won it outright in 1995 and captured the inaugural Big 12 championship in 1996.

The UCLA game was the beginning of the end, however. The Bruins handed the Longhorns a 66-3 loss, the worst home defeat in school history. Mackovic and his team limped through the season finishing 4-7.

After a season-ending loss to rival Texas A&M on Nov. 26, 1997, Mackovic was fired. Eight days later, Dec. 4, 1997, Brown was introduced at a press conference as the Longhorns' new coach.

Torbush was named UNC's interim head coach.

Twenty-four hours after Brown's press conference, Peppers informed Thompson he was thinking of decommitting from UNC.

All of Thompson and Torbush's work from the previous three years was in jeopardy.

"We had to hold onto him after Mack left," Thompson recalls. "When that happened his phone started ringing, but he was really only listening to Florida State, Clemson and us."

Florida State was—arguably—the country's top program at that point. The Seminoles were coming off an 11-1 season that ended with a Sugar Bowl blowout win over Ohio State.

Peppers thought about visiting, but again UNC's basketball and football coaches—Torbush, Ford and Thompson—assured him he could play both sports at UNC.

"That was meaningful for his appetite," says Thompson. "They (Florida State) came up to Southern Nash and he was about to visit them, but our combination of football and basketball at the time, no one could touch it."

Still, the thought of not playing for Torbush and Thompson, who had recruited and coordinated some of the best defenses in UNC history, bothered Peppers.

After UNC's dismantling of Virginia Tech in that year's Gator Bowl, Torbush permanently kept the head coaching job.

And the Tar Heels kept Peppers. He signed a letter of intent in February of 1998.

"The biggest thing that kept him was Carolina hiring Torbush and him keeping quality people on staff," says Thompson. "I was able to continue his recruitment with no breakup. Coach Torbush was able to step right in and Julius came on in."



(Photo: Craig Jones / Staff, Getty)

The other part of Brown and Torbush's philosophy was to recruit athletes and figure out what position to put them at after they arrived on campus.

Ideally, Thompson says, the Tar Heels would recruit multiple players to fit a certain profile and—through weightlifting, nutrition and practice—convert them to specific positions as needed.

“We started him as a fullback and tight end,” Torbush said. “Honestly, I’m not sure if any of us knew where he’d line up long term, but we thought that was a good place to start.”

Thompson had no doubt about where Peppers needed to be.

“I recruited Ebenezer (Ekuban) and he was a tight end and then (Alge) Crumpler,” says Thompson. “Julius came in and he beat out Ebenezer and so they moved Ebenezer to defensive end. We had just lost Greg Ellis to the (Dallas) Cowboys. So we decided to redshirt Julius, let him get his weight up a little bit and have him play for me at defensive end, because Alge was very good.”

The results were immediate and startling. During UNC’s pro day in the spring of 1999, Ekuban gave a confession to scouts in attendance.

“They kept asking him how good he could be and he jokingly said ‘I’m not even the best defensive end on our football team,’” Thompson remembers. “There’s a guy named Julius Peppers who’s going to be twice as good as I am.”

Ekuban obviously knew what he was talking about.

In Peppers’s first season, he led the Tar Heels in sacks and tackles for loss and was named a Freshman All-American.

The itch to play ACC basketball, however, remained. Not just junior varsity basketball, but for the Tar Heels who were fresh off a Final Four appearance.

Peppers came to Thompson before his redshirt sophomore season and asked his position coach for a favor.

“He said, ‘Coach, if you let me go play basketball in summer league, I will come back and I’ll outrun everybody on the team in our conditioning test,’” Thompson says.

The test was a series of “suicides,” where each team member lined up on the goal line then ran to the 10-yard-line and back. Then to the 20. Then to the 30. Then to the 40. And so on and so forth until they reached the other goal line.

“He said ‘I guarantee you I’ll have the best time on the team if you let me play basketball this summer,’” Thompson says. “So, we let him out of summer conditioning to play basketball.”

On the first day of fall camp, Torbush told the team it was time for the conditioning test.

“He outran everyone,” Thompson says with a laugh. “The defensive backs, the running backs, the quarterbacks, everyone. That’s just the kind of athlete he was.”

He played so well in the summer league that Ford asked Thompson and Torbush if he could join the basketball team in December.

They obliged and he played an integral role, helping the 1999-2000 basketball team make its third Final Four in four years.

Peppers played two more football seasons at UNC, becoming arguably the most decorated player in school history.

Torbush only coached him for three of his four years in Chapel Hill, however. He was fired following the 2000 season and replaced by John Bunting.

“One of the best plays he ever had, it ended up being my last game at Carolina,” Torbush says. “We were playing Duke and he dropped into coverage. The quarterback thought he could get it by him, but Julius got the interception and took it back for a touchdown. Those kinds of things just make you shake your head. He was unreal.”

He was named a first-team All-American by The Sporting News, the Associated Press, the AFCA and took home the Chuck Bednarik Award in 2001, given annually to the nation’s best overall defensive player.

He finished his Carolina career second on the school’s all-time list for tackles for loss (53) and sacks (30.5) in just three full seasons.

Peppers opted to forego his senior year and enter the NFL Draft. He was the No. 2 overall pick—the highest ever for a UNC player—of the Carolina Panthers in 2002.

His NFL career ultimately spanned 17 seasons. He was named to nine Pro Bowls, ranks fourth all-time in sacks, and is the only player in NFL history with at least 150 sacks and 10 interceptions.

“When he went hard, if he decided he wasn’t, he wasn’t going to get blocked by anyone,” says Thompson. “I’ve seen him dominate an entire offensive line by himself. He was the best I’ve ever coached—by far.”