

'Saturation basketball' exposes B/C campers

Daggett the man behind the scenes, 3D

By ROBERT WILSON
Jackson Daily News Sports Writer

CARNESVILLE, Ga. — Bill Bolton showed he was a top-notch recruiter when he signed Johnny Neumann to a basketball scholarship at Ole Miss.

Neumann was considered the best player to come out of Memphis and colleges across the nation sought his services.

Bolton beat all the veteran coaches from California to North Carolina. And he did it as a graduate assistant.

For the past 11 years, Bolton has shown his expertise in a related field.

Bolton, a former Ole Miss basketball player, and national recruiting expert Bill Cronauer have run the B/C basketball camps for the past 11 summers. Since the first camp in 1977, B/C has had a who's who of campers, counselors and speakers.

To name a few: Ralph Sampson, Dominique Wilkins, Kenny Walker, Magic Johnson, Kevin McHale, Isaiah Thomas, Larry Bird, Charles Barkley, Jeff Malone and Steve Alford.

The camp has grown from one boys camp at Milledgeville, Ga., to 15 camps consisting of boys, girls, junior, big man and team camps this year in Carnesville, Ga., Reensselaer, Ind. and Gettysburg, Penn. There are four boys, three girls, two girls team, two boys team, two big man and two junior camps.

B/C promoters like to call their sessions "Saturation Basketball." The name is appropriate. Wake-up is at 7 a.m. Bed check is at 11 p.m. In between, there's basketball, basketball and more basketball.

"Where else can you go and get fundamental teachings from the top high school coaches in the nation and get a chance to play numerous games against top caliber players day and night?" said Cronauer. "This is the place to be if you are a top-notch basketball player. Not only do you get to play against top competition, but the college scouts are all over the place."

They are indeed, from the Big East to the Pac-10 and nearly ever conference in between. But the teaching and the exposure are not without a price.

Campers pay \$275 a pop. This year's first session drew 194 campers. At the same time in Indiana, there were 235 girls at camp. This week, B/C-Indiana had 454 in attendance.

"We have a big payroll, but we also have a lot of campers every summer," said Bolton. "We gross between \$55,000 and \$123,000 a week."

In short, it's a million dollar operation. "We have a lot of expenses," said Bolton. "We spend over \$20,000 with the mailouts — the brochures for the camps — and over \$25,000 for the equipment and the inventory for the camp store."

The B/C idea came about when Bolton got together with Cronauer and talked about getting it started.

"I travelled around looking for a place to have the camp," said Bolton. "I wanted a place out in the country. But we needed gyms to play in."

There were camps in California and in the East, but Bolton and Cronauer felt the South needed one to bolster its basketball talent. Bolton was an assistant at Florida State and Cronauer a sports writer at the *St. Petersburg Times* when the two put their heads together to form B/C.

"We needed something down here to showcase the abilities of these high school kids," said Cronauer, a New York native and Syracuse University graduate. "We were the first major league camp in the Deep South. In our first year, we had Buck Williams and Derek Horne among other stars. We had Dwight Anderson, who was the best guard we ever had in camp, that first year."

"In our second year, we had (Ralph) Sampson and Dominique (Wilkins). If the first camp didn't put us on the map, that second one did. This wasn't a regional thing. We had kids from all over the country. We were instantly a national camp."

"We use the top high school basketball coaches from around the South and the nation," Cronauer continued. "More than 80 of our high school camp coaches have gone on to be college coaches."

The Sunday Special is a weekly series of features about individuals, teams and events that have had major impact on sports in Mississippi.

Bolton had been a recruiter for years and wanted to put his idea of how to work a camp into operation. He made the camp a recruiter's dream.

"I could visualize having an easy way to watch players for the college coaches," said Bolton. "I had spent too many days trying to figure out who was who. I'm the first and maybe the only one who has a numbering system with rosters in a booklet where the college coaches can know where and when a certain player will play."

Bolton compiles and edits a B/C All-Stars Camp Guide, a 40-page pamphlet which gives information on the camps, the daily schedule, past players, counselors and speakers, and most important, a player roster. The roster shows the player, his number, height, weight, class, school and hometown. It is a time-saving book for any college recruiter.

Obviously, the coaches like it. More than 200 college coaches from all over the country were here at B/C-Georgia I.

Coach Orsmond Jordan of Murrah High School in Jackson has been an instructor at B/C camp for the past eight years.

"It's a good experience for me and the kids," said Jordan. "I've brought kids from schools around Mississippi for years. I'm probably one of a few coaches who will bring players. But I want to help the kids get better, no matter if it's my kids or someone else's."

Former Callaway and Woodland Hills coach Bobby Ray has been a B/C instructor in the past. Motley's James Granderson and Moss Point's Arthur Haynes joined the staff this year.

of him," said Cronauer. "He hustles as hard as any kid we've got in here. He hit the floor on one end and sprinted the whole floor to break up a pass on the other end. Green is a great athlete with a lot of ability."

"Robinson and Green are as good as any guards we've got here."

Cronauer said this year's Mississippi group was the best ever at B/C camp.

"Last year's Mississippi group was great with Galloway, Nichols, Bates, Weatherspoon and (Bentonia's) Edward William," said Cronauer. "(But) you take Robinson, Green, Harvey, Weatherspoon and Brown and you've got a major league lineup."

The Mississippians proved their value by accumulating several awards. Weatherspoon won the slam-dunk contest and Robinson finished second. Robinson and Green were the two starting guards in the camper/counselor game.

Six players — Weatherspoon, Robinson, Green, Harvey, Rogers and Jones — were selected to the Top 20 team. Green was named the Most Valuable Player in the camp. McCall was selected to the third Top 20 team.

Bolton moved the camp from its original site at Milledgeville a year ago. The move from South Central Georgia to Northeast Georgia was made because Bolton could become part-owner of a complex, which would be a much better facility than Milledgeville.

"We had an opportunity to invest in an all-sports complex here at Carnesville," said Bolton. "When you get an opportunity to invest into something that's going to be your own, why keep paying the other people? Why rent when you can buy a house?"

"At first, we didn't want to leave Milledgeville because we had too many friends and tradition there. But after looking at the possibilities here, it was too good an offer to pass up."

The Southeastern Sports and Education Complex can be seen from I-85 at Carnesville and covers approximately 100 acres. It provides accommodations for 500 campers with air conditioned, carpeted wooden cottages. The gym facility is 36,000 square feet with four full-size basketball courts and 10 glass backboards.

There also is a camp store, an amusement center and a horse stable. Only minutes away is Lake Hartwell, located on the Georgia-South Carolina border, with more than 56,000 acres of water and 962 miles of shore line.

The camps aren't for just basketball. The Southeastern Complex is also host to softball, football, baton, drill flag and rifle and officials camps this year.

Tervester Anderson, a Canton native, has been involved in the B/C camps as a coach and a recruiter. Anderson was a camp coordinator in the first camp while he was the high school coach at Atlanta West Fulton. For the past six years, Anderson has watched from the stands as a college recruiter, five years at Auburn and one at Georgia.

"The camp gives the talented basketball players in the South recognition," said Anderson. "It has become the No. 1 basketball camp in the country from almost its inception. People found out there are more than just good players from the East Coast."

"Another thing that made this camp so successful was getting the name high school coaches from around the country to head the camp."

Now, Anderson can almost see the best basketball players around the South in his backyard.

"I'm not far away at all," said Anderson. "Athens is only 35 miles from here. It's a bonanza of a recruiting tool for us. I'm going to try to capitalize on these camps being so close to the campus."

Bolton knows how intense recruiting can be and wants the players to be fully aware of the NCAA's regulations and rules.

"We were the first camp to invite the NCAA in," said Bolton. "We aren't worried about the NCAA. We want them to help us and the kids. We want the kids to learn what these college coaches can and can't do. We want to work with the kids and develop them."

Also, Bolton wants to emphasize academics. He is in the process of setting up academic sessions in the July camps.

"Academics is a very big part of athletics and we must show the kids that in our camps," said Bolton. "The NCAA requirements are very important and they need to be knowledgeable of the new age. You can't be All-World in basketball and be taken care of. You must have the grades, too."

Bolton brought in Bob Barrett, the Director of SEC Enforcement and 32-year veteran of the FBI, to speak to the campers at B/C Georgia I.

Bolton finished Ole Miss in '63 and played with Donnie Kessinger and the Edwin twins.

After one year as a graduate assistant at Ole Miss, Bolton coached at an Arkansas high school, then at Middle Georgia College for three years. In '69, he returned to Ole Miss for one year. He was an assistant coach for Stetson University for 1½ years and helped take it to a Final Four Division II appearance.

He was with Florida State for five years, where his recruiting helped the Seminoles earn a NCAA runner-up finish in 1973. Florida State lost to UCLA and Bill Walton 81-76 in the national title game.

Bolton worked with Converse for one year. Then he began the B/C era.

The nickname "Bull" has followed him all along. He earned it at Ole Miss.

Bolton went to Ole Miss in 1959 from Lenoir City, Tenn., and quickly gained a reputation and a nickname. Bolton is known by "Bull" more than Bill.

"The freshman basketball team was playing the varsity and Louis Griffin, who was about 6-8 and 240 pounds, caught me with an elbow and it split my eyebrow and blood flowed," said Bolton. "Coach (B.L. "Country") Graham asked me if I was OK and I said yes. I would grab a towel when I could and wipe the blood away."

"I was pretty hot and I wanted a shot at Griffin. I finally got my chance. I grabbed a

rebound and looked around and there he was, right behind me. I hit him with a good elbow and he got up fighting. Coach Graham hollered out, 'Bolton, you're just like an ole bull. You don't know when to quit.' All the freshman were calling me Bull when I got back to the cafeteria and it's been that ever since."

True to his name, Bolton is bullish on the future of the Southeastern Complex.

"We want this complex to build a great tradition," said Bolton. "It's something that I've dreamed about and I want it to be something past players and coaches can come back and be proud of."

"I want to develop a Hall of Fame for the coaches. I want to put up banners across the top of the gym of the top players in past camps. I want them to be able to bring in their grandsons and tell them, 'There's my picture up there. I was a B/C All-Star.'"

B/C camp is known for helping players get exposure. Cronauer is quick to give a good example.

"Last year at B/C-Indiana, we had a player come in named Bryan Garner of Milwaukee (Wis.)," said Cronauer. "He wasn't even the best player on his high school team. He came along with some more of kids from high school team. He was an adequate player. But he had a splendid camp. Out of 404 players, he was the best guard. It paid off for him. He signed a scholarship with Iowa and was known as one of the top point guards in the country."

Another superstar has been found this year at B/C-Georgia. Darrian Hancock, a 6-foot-6, 185-pound sophomore-to-be from Atlanta Griffin, joined camp at mid-week, but opened eyes instantly.

"This kid didn't have a ride to get to the camp, so we went and got him and brought him here," said Cronauer. "He came in Wednesday and picked right up and made a name for himself. The first two times he had the ball, he took it to the hoop with (Lakers' James) Worthy and slammed it over people. He won the Most Valuable Player award in our Top 20 all-star game. He's a Superman, a thoroughbred, a stallion. He's the best freshman in the nation."

"He could start at half of the Division I schools right now. He could walk on the campus of Mississippi State or Ole Miss next year and start. He's a franchise."

