

SPORTS

Thursday, July 8, 2010

Hoppers end skid

Kyle Skipworth breaks a scoreless tie with a solo home run in the seventh to lead Greensboro past Lakewood, ending the Hoppers' four-game losing streak. **Story, B3**



MORE INSIDE

- **BASEBALL:** UNCG pitcher opts to go pro with the Oakland Athletics. **B3**
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- **BUSINESS:** Auto dealers, community banks skirt new financial legislation. **B6**

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A&T track heats up in the summertime

GREENSBORO — Welcome to Track Town.

The lazy days of summer are anything but out at A&T, where they're getting ready for this week's USA Track and Field Region 3 Championships. Some 3,500 athletes are coming here to compete, and many of them are coming with Mom and Dad and coaches and trainers and volunteers and, well, let's just say you can forget getting a hotel room here this week.

DePaul Mittman was going down his list of last-minute

things to do Wednesday as time ticked off and the reality of the meet loomed. The meet manager was in a good mood despite soaring temperatures and uncertainty about a few undone details.

"There's a lot of moving parts to this thing," said Mittman. "And I'm out here putting some of the moving parts together. We have to secure some issues."

Greensboro is known as Tournament Town in certain circles, a reference to the many basketball, golf and



ED HARDIN

baseball championships held here annually. Folks over at the Sports Commission want it known that the city is taking

on a few more tournaments in the coming years, and the Region 3 Championships is an example of Greensboro's desire to become a national and even international destination for track and field.

Kim Strable, the head of the commission, said there's an estimated \$2.8 million economic impact from this meet alone, and he promised more events that will bring in even more money in the future.

All of that sounds nice to Mittman, but he was more concerned with a shipment of

shirts that was supposed to be here already.

"They better be here," he said, laughing.

That was in addition to all the other things he needed to take care of before today. By morning, he'd made sure he'd seen the 50 cases of water needed in the coming days.

"And I'll pick up another 25 or 30 cases," Mittman said. "Then we'll have the round coolers at each hydration station and another 25 or 30 cases of Gatorade."

He has more than the 3,500

athletes to worry about.

"Hydration stations are being set up," he said. "We're constantly dealing with that during the meet. People don't think about this, but the athletes are taken care of. They're constantly being told by coaches and trainers to 'Drink more water; drink more water.' But the fans are the ones we have to remind."

The meet will begin today out at the A&T track, where Aggies track coaching legend of

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PHIL LONG/The Associated Press

NBA free-agent LeBron James takes a shot during a workout at the LeBron James Skills Academy for high school and college players. P.J. Hairston and other high school players watch on the sideline at Rhodes Arena on the University of Akron campus in Akron, Ohio. "I would think (he would go to) the Knicks," Hairston said.

HAIRSTON: 'IT'S CRAZY'

■ Greensboro's P.J. Hairston, taking part in the LeBron James Skills Academy, offers his observations on the media circus around James.

By GERALD WITT
Staff Writer

The spotlight remains on Akron, Ohio, and LeBron James. Chris Bosh's decision to join the Miami Heat and Dwyane Wade made news Wednesday, but the NBA world sits idle for word on the star they call King James. And it hangs out near the gym at his basketball camp, according to Greensboro's P.J. Hairston.

"We'll be walking in the gym and the media will be piled up, just waiting for LeBron to come out," Hairston said Wednesday from the LeBron James Skills Academy in Akron.

James will make an announcement on ESPN at 9 p.m. today in a special broadcast. Cleveland-Plain Dealer columnist Terry Pluto called it the biggest moment in Cavaliers history, and a poll at cleveland.com showed Wednesday 53 percent of voters believe that James will stay put.

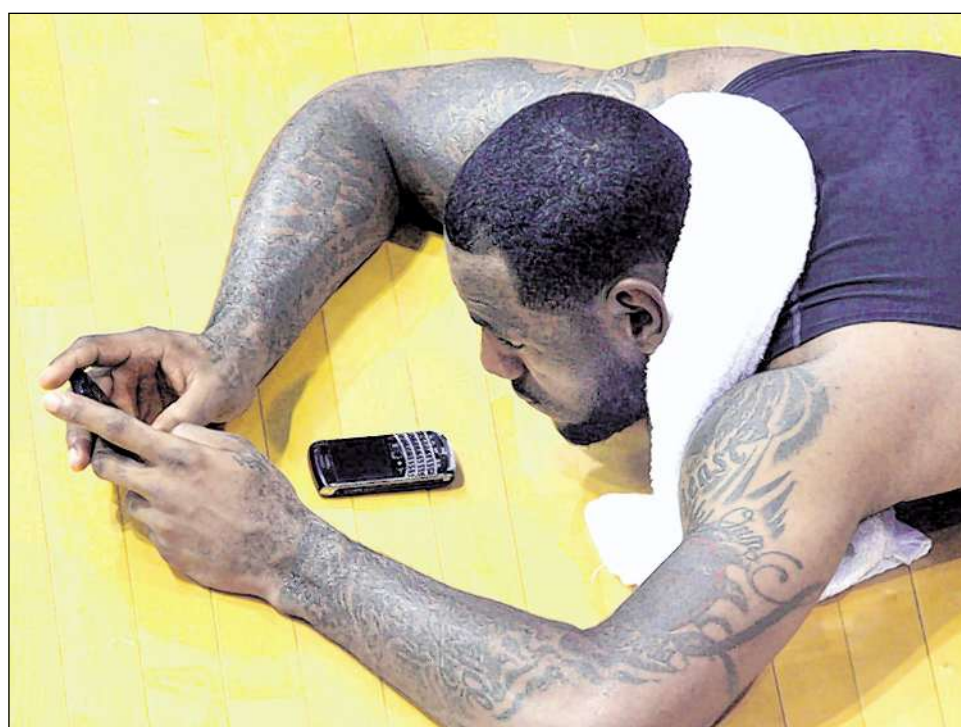
Most players at the camp believe that James will go to the Heat, Hairston said.

"I would think the Knicks, because it would just be him and Amare (Stoudemire)," Hairston said. "Then the role players could do their jobs and (James) could make the team a whole lot better."

Speculation remains the order of the week, while Hairston and plenty of others scratch their head over the circus that is pro sports.

"I don't really have an explanation for it," he said. "It's just crazy, what's going on over a human being."

Contact Gerald Witt at 373-7008 or gerald.witt@news-record.com



CHUCK CROW/The Plain Dealer (Cleveland)

LeBron James works on one of his BlackBerrys after the evening workout with high school players. James will announce his team of choice on ESPN at 9 p.m. today.

"I don't really have an explanation for it. It's just crazy, what's going on over a human being."

P.J. Hairston, Former Dudley player

INSIDE: Reports say former Duke star Carlos Boozer is headed to the Chicago Bulls. **B3**

Swimming coach spans generations

■ After 26 years, Chip Johnson sometimes coaches the children of his former Greensboro Country Club swimmers.

By DAVID REYNOLDS
Staff Writer

When Chip Johnson, the swim coach at Greensboro Country Club, was asked about how many children he's taught in his 26 years with the team, he couldn't help but sound a little exasperated.

"Oh my goodness gracious," Johnson, 53, blurted out.

For the next few moments, he tried to add up the number of swimmers he had coached. He finally settled on "I don't know" and a chuckle.

In a job that traditionally has a short shelf life, Johnson has been a fixture.

When he started in 1985, his team had 35 members. It now has about 180, and they'll be part of the Greensboro Community Swim Association's City Championship beginning today at Lindley Park Pool.

He's been with the GCC for so many years that

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Johnson

CITY MEET

What: Greensboro Community Swim Association's City Championship

When: Today-Saturday. Today's events are 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. then 3:30-7:30 p.m.

Where: Lindley Park Pool, 2914 Springwood Dr., Greensboro

Information: greensborocsa.org

The World Cup's real winner is South Africa

Greensboro resident Philip Deutsch is in South Africa as part of a study-abroad program. He is attending World Cup events and filing reports periodically for the News & Record.

When FIFA selected South Africa for the 2010 World Cup, talk of Afro-pessimism such as lack of skilled workers, high crime rates, disease, prostitution and sex slaving began.

To many, these worries were legitimate as more than 400,000 tourists of more than 32 countries were coming to see probably the biggest sporting spectacle in the world in a mysteriously developing country at the Southern tip of Africa.

The question was whether it would be safe for fans of all nationalities to harmoniously spectate and the event to become a complete success for the world. Or, would the monthlong event turn

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PHILIP DEUTSCH
AT THE WORLD CUP

WORLD CUP FINAL

What: Netherlands vs. Spain

When: 2:30 p.m. Sunday **TV:** WXLV-45

INSIDE: Precision passing helps Spain beat Germany. **B4**

