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Ryan attacks Obama in Greenville as Dems gather in Charlotte

By Austin Baird - abaird@newsobserver.com

GREENVILLE—Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan arrived in North Carolina Monday to offer an early rebuttal to the full-throated support for Barack Obama that Democrats are expected to offer up this week in Charlotte.
Speaking before a crowd of more than a thousand at East Carolina University, Ryan said that Obama’s performance as president has been worse than fellow Democrat Jimmy Carter’s.

“The president can say a lot of things, and he will, but he can’t tell you that you’re better off,” Ryan said, echoing a line made famous by Ronald Reagan during his 1980 presidential campaign against Carter. “The Jimmy Carter years look like the good old days compared to where we are right now.”

Many talking points delivered during Ryan’s half-hour speech were familiar. Ryan told the crowd that “it’s good to be successful in business,” as his running mate Mitt Romney had been at Bain Capital. Obamacare is a “threat to young people,” he warned the many students in the crowd, and America should use its own energy to make jobs and put a dent in gas prices.

Ryan also pointed to North Carolina’s 9.6 percent unemployment rate, among the highest in the nation, to bolster his claim that an Obama presidency hasn’t worked out as planned.

Within moments of the event ending, the Obama campaign responded with its own statement saying the numbers are not as Ryan made them seem.

Danny Kanner, an Obama campaign spokesman, said the economy has turned a corner after losing 800,000 jobs a month when Obama first entered office and has added 4.5 million jobs over the last 29 months.

“Instead of the president’s forward-looking vision for an economy built from the middle out, Mitt Romney and Congressman Ryan want to take us back to the same top-down policies that caused the collapse,” Kanner said. Ryan came out swinging Monday as Republicans attempt to preserve the bump in some polls that Romney received after the GOP convention in Tampa last week. A new Elon University/News & Observer poll shows Romney leading Obama 47 percent to 43 percent in North Carolina. A High Point University poll shows Romney leading 46-43.

Ryan was introduced by Republican gubernatorial candidate Pat McCrory.

“Can you imagine what (Democrats) are going to say?” said McCrory, a former Charlotte mayor, eluding to the Democratic National Convention that began Monday. He argued that Democrats can’t run on Obamacare or the economy, especially in North Carolina.

McCrory shouted “Elvis is in the house” as he called Ryan on stage and, with AC/DC’s “It’s a Long Way to the Top” blaring, passed the microphone off to the Wisconsin congressman. Ryan, wearing khaki pants, a white
collared shirt with rolled-up sleeves and no tie, then took to the stage, later drew laughs and some boos when he mentioned that “little gathering going on in Charlotte.” Among those there to cheer him were Bill and Lynn Fell, who own a painting and home inspection businesses in Greenville. Both registered for the event as soon as it was announced, and showed up early to make sure they would get in the building. “I have a few trillion reasons I support Ryan,” said Bill Fell, referring to the national debt. “We need someone who understands the problems people are having. Romney does.”

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Republican vice presidential candidate, Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., shakes hands with supporters after a campaign event at East Carolina University, Monday, Sept. 3, 2012, in Greenville, N.C.

Paul Ryan in North Carolina: Jimmy Carter years the ‘good old days’ compared with now

By Felicia Sonmez

GREENVILLE, N.C. — As Democrats prepare to arrive in Charlotte for their national convention, Paul Ryan paid a visit to East Carolina University in this college town four hours away Monday afternoon to argue that the country is worse off now than it was before President Obama took office.

Taking the stage to AC/DC’s “It’s a Long Way to the Top,” Ryan told a cheering crowd of more than 2,000 at ECU’s student recreation center, “Friends, there’s a little gathering going on over in Charlotte. We know that your governor’s over there, your lieutenant governor. We also know that President Obama’s over there.”

Ryan pointed to North Carolina’s 9.6 percent unemployment rate, the fifth-highest in the country, as he argued that Obama “has no record to run on.”
“He can’t tell you that you’re better off,” Ryan said. “Simply put, the Jimmy Carter years look like the good old days compared to where we are now.”

The Labor Day campaign stop marks Ryan’s third solo campaign event in North Carolina since Mitt Romney tapped him as his running mate last month. It comes ahead of the first day of the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, where Republicans are planning to aggressively counter-program the Democratic confab with a message echoing the one Ryan delivered here on Monday.

The Obama campaign responded by accusing Romney and Ryan of supporting “the same failed scheme that devastated the middle class in the first place.”

“It’s no surprise that America’s Go Back Team is spending their time waxing nostalgic about how things were three decades ago,” Obama spokesman Danny Kanner said in a statement. “The truth is that under the president’s leadership, we’ve gone from losing 800,000 jobs a month to adding 4.5 million jobs over the last 29 months of private sector job growth.”

A long line of supporters were gathered outside Ryan’s venue in the midday heat shortly before it got underway. After Ryan addressed the main hall, he spoke to two separate groups — one awaiting him outside, and another inside an auditorium.

Outside the venue, Ryan stood on the back of a campus police truck and delivered a similar message, blaming Obama for the state’s high unemployment rate.

“It’s not a record he’s going to brag about in Charlotte,” he said to laughter from the crowd.

Introducing Ryan onstage in Greenville was GOP gubernatorial nominee Pat McCrory, the former mayor of Charlotte, who, like Ryan, argued that Democrats will be playing defense at this week’s convention.

“Can you imagine what they’re going to say in Charlotte?” he asked the crowd. “Are they going to defend Obamacare? Are they going to defend the failed stimulus? Are they going to defend that North Carolina has the fifth-highest unemployment rate in the country?”

McCrory also vouched for Ryan by noting that his own parents were born in Wisconsin.
“Wisconsin values are very similar to eastern North Carolina values,” McCrory said. “They love their families. They love their faith. They love people who work hard. That’s Paul Ryan right there. He loves this country like you do right here. He is a man of incredible integrity.”

Some of those in the crowd said they’d waited more than two hours to get into the venue. While Obama won North Carolina by about 14,000 votes in 2008, this time many in the crowd said they believe the momentum is on their side because of Obama’s record and the country’s still-struggling economy.

“I didn’t vote for Obama, but a lot of my friends four years ago did,” said Robyn Martin, a 35-year-old respiratory therapist and registered Republican from Greenville. “I’m not one to say ‘I told you so,’ but there they are and here I am.”

She added that she believed the Democratic Party “has gone so far left — it’s not people like my mom and grandparents grew up with.”

Others in the crowd voiced support for the theory, popular in some conservative circles, that Obama won four years ago because of widespread voter fraud.

“This time, he won’t have 30,000 dead people voting for him. That’s why he won North Carolina,” said Jefferson Garvey, a 42-year-old carpenter and Republican voter from Dover, N.C.

A Raleigh-based group, the Voter Integrity Project, last Friday presented the North Carolina Board of Elections with what it said was a list of nearly 30,000 deceased people who are still registered to vote in the state.

Reports of voter fraud in the 2008 election appear to number only in the hundreds: According to the Charlotte Observer, local district attorneys reported only 261 cases to the state board of elections. Most involved convicted felons voting, the Observer reported.
Representative Paul D. Ryan spoke to an overflow crowd at a campaign event on Monday at East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C.

Ryan Adds Some Loaded Examples to Question of ‘Better Off?’

By TRIP GABRIEL and KITTY BENNETT

GREENVILLE, N.C. — Representative Paul D. Ryan compared the struggling economy to Jimmy Carter-era malaise, when a candidate named Ronald Reagan denied a president re-election by asking an unsettling question: “Are you better off than you were four years ago?”

“There’s a little gathering going on over in Charlotte,” Mr. Ryan said here in eastern North Carolina, about a four-hour drive from the site of the Democratic National Convention. “The president can say a lot of things, and he will, but he can’t tell you that you’re better off. Simply put, the Jimmy Carter years look like the good old days compared to where we are right now.”
The Republican National Committee and the Romney-Ryan campaign sounded the charge on Monday morning with a new video, a Web site and a statistics dump attacking President Obama on what they consider his biggest vulnerability, all asking the question: “Are you better off?”

Mr. Ryan picked up the theme speaking to 2,000 people at East Carolina University, while Mitt Romney took a break in New Hampshire from public campaigning.

“In July of 1980, the unemployment rate was 7.8 percent,” Mr. Ryan said. “For the past 42 months, it’s been above 8 percent under President Obama’s failed leadership.” He also cited the even higher unemployment rate of 9.6 percent in North Carolina, a state that Mr. Obama won in 2008 but where the race is deadlocked, according to the latest polls.

While correct, some of Mr. Ryan’s numbers seemed cherry-picked to paint the worst possible picture and to ignore the argument by Democrats that Mr. Obama inherited a disastrous economy that continued to deteriorate during much of his first year, but that since then has turned around and slowly improved.

It is true that unemployment in North Carolina is higher than the national average. It is also true that the rate peaked at 11.4 percent in January and February 2010 and has been dropping since then.

Mr. Ryan also cited bankruptcy numbers to make the point that failing businesses mean fewer jobs. “In 1980 under Jimmy Carter, 330,000 businesses filed for bankruptcy,” he said. “Last year, under President Obama’s failed leadership, 1.4 million businesses filed for bankruptcy.”

But he appeared to conflate business bankruptcies and much more numerous personal bankruptcies. Of the 331,264 bankruptcies in 1980, only 43,694 were for businesses, according to the American Bankruptcy Institute.

Of the 1,410,653 total bankruptcy filings last year, 47,806 were business bankruptcies, according to the institute. And, again, the numbers are falling. In 2009, there were 60,837 business bankruptcies. In July, the latest month with complete statistics, business bankruptcies were 22 percent lower than a year earlier, and personal bankruptcies were down 11 percent.
Ryan: This is a defining moment
By Ginger Livingston
Tuesday, September 4, 2012

This year’s election is not just about selecting a president but defining the path of America for a generation, Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan said in Greenville on Monday.

“This is a defining moment. The president can’t tell you (that) you are better off than you were four years ago,” Ryan told the 2,100 supporters who filled East Carolina University’s Student Recreation Center. Another 700 people watched a live broadcast of his speech in nearby Hendrix Theater.

Ryan’s visit to eastern North Carolina was touted as a contrast to the Democratic National Convention getting under way in Charlotte.

All modern presidents who have sought re-election could tell Americans they were better off in four years except Jimmy Carter and President Barack Obama, Ryan said.

Ryan compared the unemployment rates, business bankruptcy filings and delinquent mortgages faced by both administration and said the country fared better under Carter, who lost re-election in 1980.

“The Jimmy Carter years look like the good old days compared to where we are right now,” Ryan said.

The American middle class is struggling, with average family incomes dropping by $4,000 the last four years, Ryan said.
When Mitt Romney was governor, the average Massachusetts family’s income rose by $5,000, he said.

The American economy can recover under the policies of Mitt Romney, which will focus on increased American energy production, support for community colleges and universities so workers can be retrained and fighting international trade imbalances which will restore the nation’s manufacturing productivity, Ryan said.

Obama will spend a lot of time in Charlotte saying Romney only wants tax cuts for the rich, and that is not the truth, Ryan said.

“We just want you to keep your money in the first place,” Ryan said. The tax rate of all Americans could be cut by 20 percent, without revenue losses, if tax loopholes were eliminated.

“That’s really simple,” Ryan said. “We don’t think jobs and prosperity and growth are created by having Washington pick winners and losers.”

Other countries are learning that high taxes harm business growth, Ryan said. Canada cut its business tax by 15 percent. Obama’s policies will result in a 40 percent tax increase by year’s end, he said.

Ryan was referencing the ongoing dispute in Congress over the Bush tax cuts. Obama wants to raise taxes on those making $250,000 or more while keeping the middle-class tax cuts. A cut in Social Security taxes also is scheduled to expire.

Ryan was greeted with the results of an Elon University poll conducted Aug. 25-30 that found 47 percent of likely North Carolina voters would cast their ballot for Romney compared to 43 percent of likely voters choosing Obama.

The audience at ECU engaged in chants of “purple-gold” and “Romney-Ryan” in the minutes leading up to Ryan’s appearance.

Ryan energized the crowd by noting ECU was playing the South Carolina Gamecocks on Saturday. “Go Pirates,” Ryan cheered.

Republican gubernatorial candidate Pat McCrory spoke, along with several candidates in contested Council of State races.

Local Republican legislative candidates Brian Brown, Susan Martin and Bill Cooke were recognized.

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Lines, storm don't deter supporters

By Ginger Livingston
Tuesday, September 4, 2012

Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan was greeted by an ardent audience of followers who first braved rain then high temperatures and humidity to hear him speak at East Carolina University on Monday.

A line of people about a block long stretched from the Student Recreation Center to McDonald’s on 10th Street and back, one bystander reported.

Greenville Fire-Rescue reported seven people, mainly suffering heat-related symptoms, were treated while they waited. Two people were transported to the hospital, Battalion Chief Susan Barrett said.

Robert Nunnery and Justin Murilo from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke were first in line at 7 a.m. The two left school at 4:30 a.m. to ensure good seats.

“We’re just glad there was some cover so we could hide from the rain,” Nunnery, a junior studying education, said.

Nunnery said Ryan’s speech at last week’s Republican National Convention struck home, especially when he talked about college graduates having to live at home because they could not find a job.

Nunnery worries if he will be able to find a job when he graduates.
Many of those in line on Monday morning came from hours away. One couple, Ivan and Gayle Gay, drove from Charlotte, where Democrats are kicking off their national convention.

“They are having the Democratic convention there, so I decided to come here,” Ivan Gay said.

The Gays said they believe policies supported by GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney and Ryan will be more effective at turning the economy around.

Janet and Tom Nutley of Oak Island brought their nearly 7-year-old old daughter, Elizabeth, to hear Ryan’s speech.

“She is home-schooled, and this is a field trip,” Janet Nutley said. “We’re also here because I also think we need to stand up and that the conservative voice is heard more.”

Ryan and Becky Aycock of Greenville brought their sons, Alex, 9, and Drew, 8, because they believe it is important for children to be knowledgeable about current events and politics.

While Alex is years away from voting, he is already an eager campaigner for Romney and Ryan.

“I want to advertise for Mitt Romney because I want Obama out of office because he’s done some terrible things to the country, like the (high) gas prices,” Alex said.

Most people at the venue talked about wanting change and wanting to see hope restored to the country.

ECU MBA student Matt Peeler strolled around the waiting crowd with a sign that read “1 out of 2 ECU grads live at home because of Obama.”

Peeler said he based his figures on national data and conversations he has had with friends who graduated, along with his own experience.

“I graduated from ECU in 2010, magna cum laude, and there weren’t a lot of offers, so I’m back at ECU getting an MBA,” Peeler said.

He believes Romney’s economic policies will improve the economy and the job market.

Ryan’s visit to Greenville means a lot, said Jerry Singleton, who had shoulder surgery two weeks ago and was encased in a sling.

“If I get my arm bumped, it might hurt a bit, but I support Romney and Ryan,” Singleton said.
Ryan’s visit to eastern North Carolina shows a Romney-Ryan administration will care about everybody, not just a few, supporters said.

“I wanted to show that young people do support (Romney and Ryan). That there are a lot of young people who support them but they are afraid to say so,” said Brittney McKinney, an ECU junior from Goldsboro.

McKinney’s sister, Morgan, a junior at Eastern Wayne High School, said she has had teachers tell her she should be more open-minded when she has expressed her conservative beliefs during class discussions.

ECU Student Government Association President Justin Davis welcomed the audience to the university.

“How awesome is it that Paul Ryan is going to be in this building?” Davis asked. He said it was equally great to see how many were in the audience.

“We need people who are not just enthusiastic but who are educated,” he said. “I’m glad you are taking this opportunity today to be educated.”

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Dems hold ‘pre-buttal’ to Ryan speech
By Michael Abramowitz
Tuesday, September 4, 2012

U.S. Rep G.K. Butterfield and former congressman Bob Etheridge were the Democratic Party’s point men Monday at East Carolina University, delivering what aides called a “pre-buttal” to vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan’s planned speech at the Student Recreation Center.

“We need to make sure we remember what this race is about. President Obama believes every North Carolina student deserves access to quality, affordable education,” Butterfield said at the Ledonia Wright Cultural Center.

Obama has supported government investment in education, from early childhood education programs to Pell Grants to protecting student loans, Butterfield said.

“Unfortunately for our students, Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan just don’t seem to understand the challenges our students are facing,” he said.

Butterfield said Ryan wrote the last two years’ House budget plans, which would have slashed many federal programs, including Headstart for children, Medicare for senior citizens and Pell Grant funding for college students.

“Should we invest in Pell Grants to make college more affordable, or should we give a grant of a $250,000 tax break to every millionaire in the country?” Butterfield asked. “It is clear that President Obama and Mitt Romney have very different answers to these important questions. Romney called Ryan’s
plan ‘marvelous’ before he asked Ryan to join the ticket, and promised to enact it if elected president.”

Butterfield said Ryan’s plan would cut, on average, $840 from the Pell Grant awards of 250,000 North Carolina students. He said 20 percent of the state’s college students rely on Pell Grants. In the 2009-10 school year, spending on ECU student Pell Grants was more than $25 million, an average of $4,113 per student, he said.

“In a Romney-Ryan administration, more than 6,000 students right here at ECU would be left behind without the money to afford a college education,” Butterfield said. “That is crazy. Balancing the budget on the backs of students is not the answer.”

Etheridge told the audience he was at Monday’s news conference because he knows Ryan from having served with him on the House Budget and Ways and Means committees.

“North Carolina is where it is today as a state because of public education,” Etheridge said. “Access to public education is the key to our future, and the Ryan plan would do nothing but harm our state’s world-class public education system and our future. A budget is a statement of our priorities, and the Ryan-Romney budget would also give tax breaks to millionaires and corporations that ship North Carolina business overseas.”

The Ryan plan, with no effort to balance the budget, would devastate the state’s economy at a time when Greenville and Pitt County are focused on developing the area as a center of economic excellence, Etheridge said.

“Mr. Ryan voted against the recovery act (economic stimulus), but then went back and asked for money for his district when it passed,” Etheridge said. “They bet against the American people to make Mr. Obama a one-term president.”

Etheridge admitted that Obama did not achieve his 2008 campaign goal of uniting Congress.

“He tried. But remember that Mr. Ryan got an appointment to the Simpson-Bowles Commission to seek a balanced budget, then went back and voted against their own plan and went back and fought against it, leading to the economic cliff we’re facing again in January,” Etheridge said.

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Patients drilled in oral health
By Kim Grizzard
Sunday, September 2, 2012

AHOSKIE — The dentists’ office offered two solutions for Tom Schwartz’s broken tooth.

For Schwartz of Roanoke Rapids, who was seen last month at the East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine Community Service Learning Center in Ahoskie, the quick fix would be a filling to keep the tooth intact. The ultimate solution, which would take more time and be more expensive, would be a crown.

Schwartz’s case is a metaphor of sorts for the dental school’s Community Service Learning Centers. The centers, the first of which opened in Hertford County in July, are designed to offer both short-term and long-term answers to the state’s oral health care problems.

“We essentially have two missions,” said Dr. Michael L. Scholtz, director of community dental practices for the ECU School of Dental Medicine. “One is educating students ... the other, improving the oral health of those areas of North Carolina that really needed it.”

Ahoskie is one of those areas. The retirement of two dentists in the last five years has left the town with two dentists. Prior to the opening of the Community Service Learning Center, there were four dentists practicing in Hertford County.
Dr. J.B. “Benjie” Brown has been a dentist in Ahoskie for more than 30 years. His father, J.B. Brown, who practiced in Ahoskie for 65 years, was the oldest practicing dentist in the state when he retired three years ago.

“In the past, it’s been hard to get anybody to come east of Rocky Mount,” the younger Brown said. “We draw (patients) from at least a three- or four-county area.”

North Carolina ranks 47th in the nation for the number of dentists per capita, with the majority of the shortages in rural areas. A handful of counties in the northeastern part of the state have no dentists.

One of those is Gates County, just east of Hertford County. In Northampton County, Hertford’s neighbor to the west, the only dental provider is a federally qualified health center in Jackson.

Nicole Beasley is a Jackson native who last month joined the East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine’s second class. Beasley grew up having to travel an hour to see a dentist.

“To most people in that area, it’s not feasible to drive so far to go to the dentist,” she said, “especially if that’s something you don’t feel is as important as finding a way to the grocery store.”

Beasley, a 23-year-old graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, spent last year as a dental assistant in Jackson, where patients often had to wait at least a month to see a dentist. With no money to pay for dental care, some turned to the nearest emergency room for relief.

That scenario is a common one. According to the Pew Center on the States, nearly 70,000 emergency room visits in North Carolina in 2009 were related to oral health.

“What happens in a lot of areas where you have people who can’t afford to go to a private dentist, their dental provider becomes the emergency room,” said Scholtz, a clinical associate professor at ECU’s dental school. “In most emergency departments, anywhere from 5 to 10 percent of the cases they see are dental-related emergencies.”

The Community Service Learning Center will work to help reverse that trend. The $3 million, 8,000-square-foot Ahoskie center is next door to the new Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center, which sees some 16,000 patients from northeastern North Carolina.

“The model is very unusual, the partnership and collaboration between a community health center and a university,” Scholtz said. “A dental school
may have students go out to a federally qualified health center, but we’re going to actually be their dental provider. The relationship is very unusual. In fact, I think it’s one of a kind in the country right now.”

The Community Service Learning Center concept itself is unusual. Rather than simply staffing a traditional campus dental clinic, fourth-year students will be assigned to rotations in Ahoskie and nine other centers to be opened across the state. The Community Service Learning Center in Elizabeth City is scheduled to open in December. Other announced sites include Sylva, Lillington, Spruce Pine and Davidson County.

Like the Ahoskie center, other Community Service Learning Centers will include a 16-chair dental practice staffed by dental school faculty, dental residents and, beginning in 2014, fourth-year ECU dental students.

“The model is kind of like the medical model,” Scholtz said. “Residents will be doing their clinical cases, but at the same time, they’ll be working with the fourth-year students in addition to the faculty dentist who’s here on staff.”

The centers will perform services ranging from sealants, fillings and extractions to root canals, crowns, bridges, dentures and implants. The experience is designed to expose students to the challenges of practicing general dentistry in rural areas, where there are no specialists to take referrals.

Community Service Learning Centers will have a sliding scale for fees, which will vary according to income and family size. They also will accept private insurance and Medicaid. Grant funding and private donations are available to help cover some of the costs for indigent patients.

That is good news for Jean Finnell, who recently brought her sister-in-law to the Ahoskie center to have some of her teeth pulled.

“She didn’t have the insurance,” Finnell said of her sister-in-law, who declined to give her name. “She has really been in pain. She just didn’t have the money and the insurance to do it.”

Though services at the centers are not free, fees are generally about 30 percent lower than in private-practice dental offices.

“There are still people that fall between the gaps; you have people that don’t qualify for dental Medicaid, but they still can’t afford dental care,” said Dr. Ford Grant, clinical associate professor of dental medicine at ECU and
director of the center in Ahoskie. “I don’t know if there will ever be enough resources to throw at the problem, but I think this (center) is a great step.

“You can take care of emergencies and pain, but the second thing is the long term,” he said. “We’re training dentists to work in a rural environment, work on the underserved. That’s more the long-term fix.”

The center is located at 100 Health Center Drive, Ahoskie. Call 332-1904. Contact Kim Grizzard at kgrizzard@reflector.com or 252-329-9578.
Heat issues mark ECU game
By Kristin Zachary
Sunday, September 2, 2012

Emergency and public safety workers were kept busy at East Carolina University’s home football opener Saturday, providing medical assistance to more than 300 people, ECU Police reported.

Campus police said many of the calls during the noon-3:30 p.m. game were heat-related. Temperatures in the low 90s and high humidity levels marked the first day of September.

“The heat really took a lot out of the crowd today, and we had to put a lot of our focus on the EMS needs today,” Lt. Chris Sutton of the ECU Police Department said.

Although heat-related illness was rampant, no serious injuries, major disorderly conduct or other incidents were reported.

ECU police set up two primary first aid areas for those in need of medical attention, according to a news release issued Saturday by ECU. Five ECU Transit buses were used as cooling stations and to transport people to Vidant Medical Center.

Greenville Fire/Rescue provided extra personnel at the game in anticipation of medical calls related to the forecasted heat, the release said.

“When it became obvious that the calls for medical assistance were going to overwhelm the on-duty resources, ECU Police and Greenville Fire and Rescue worked together to quickly call in more fire/rescue resources and ECU resources to provide first aid for the many heat related problems,” Major Frank Knight of the ECU Police Department said.

More than 49,000 people attended the game between the Pirates and Appalachian State University, according to the release.

Sutton said preliminary information indicated just one arrest. The arrest occurred in the tailgate lots prior to the game and was a result of disorderly conduct.

One citation was issued during the game, and 16-20 football goers were ejected, he said.
“It ranged from grossly intoxicated to possession of alcohol,” Sutton said. There were no fights or assaults reported, he said.

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Editorial: Ryan's visit spotlights city
Monday, September 3, 2012

On the heels of the Republican National Convention — and stealing thunder from the Democratic Party’s convention in Charlotte — vice presidential nominee and Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan will appear in Greenville today to fire up the faithful. His “victory rally” at East Carolina University intends to energize supporters for the push to November, and serve as counterprogramming for his opponents’ message being broadcast this week.

North Carolina will be one of the most contested states in this year’s election, so area residents should expect the campaigns to spend considerable time and money courting potential voters. With such attention comes tremendous responsibility to hear the competing ideas so that those who cast ballots can make sure that their decisions at the polls are governed by facts, not emotions.

Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney electrified the Republican base last month when he selected Ryan to be his running mate. The seven-term representative serving southeast Wisconsin is one of his party’s rising stars, thanks in large measure to his time as chairman of the House Budget Committee.

It was in that capacity that Ryan polarized the electorate by proposing a budget plan that called for sharp cuts to domestic spending and radical alterations to the nation’s tax code. His proposals for Medicare and Social Security, in particular, elicited warranted criticism and is now a central contention of the national campaign.

However, as the No. 2 man on the ticket, Ryan is expected to speak today as an advocate for Romney and their plans for the next four years. That is a message of primary interest since the content of last week’s convention needed additional details. The GOP has voiced complaints about President Barack Obama for four years, but voters need to know what alternative leadership would entail.

Ryan, as one of the party’s most visible leaders and part of the Republican ticket, shoulders some of the burden for providing that explanation. Though he was justifiably criticized for factual errors in his convention speech, Ryan can use this opportunity to explain to eastern North Carolina voters why a
Romney presidency represents a superior choice to another four years of the current administration.

This election should be decided on proven facts, not blatant falsehoods or irrational emotions. It is incumbent on candidates like Ryan to provide that information and on eligible voters to take seriously their responsibility to educate themselves about both sides before casting their ballots this fall.
ECU police will open their doors to a select few this week to learn the inner workings of the department and help boost safety among students, faculty and staff.

The first session of the free eight-week program, the ECU Police Citizens Academy, will start Tuesday and run through Oct. 23.

Sgt. Jermaine Cherry, coordinator for the program, said after several attempts at establishing the course, he was able to get his department to fund the program this year while doing a project for a course he was taking at Pitt Community College.

“The chief saw fit to fund this, and he said he really, really wanted this to happen because it’s a great initiative, so our department was willing to fund the event,” Cherry said. “The program is designed to teach participants everything there is to know about the ECU Police Department and all that it entails. It goes from the history of the department on down to defensive tactics, criminal investigation, how to get hired on with the ECU Police Department and just everything pertaining to the department as a whole.”

Cherry said there are some spots available for people in leadership positions at the university to enroll in the program.

“I have some directors, some associate directors, some administrative support people around the university right now; that’s what the class comprises of,” Cherry said. “After our first course, we’re going to open it up to the entire university at large.”

The program will help inform leaders at the university and potentially will trickle down.

“We go to great lengths to advertise a lot of our services that we provide, but there’s always potential for our advertisements to fall through the cracks,” Cherry said. “This program is another mechanism, another tool we’re going to use to get the word out for the campus community at large.”

The course also will highlight safety services the campus offers, handcuffing techniques, weaponry the department uses, including a Taser demonstration.
“If they want to get tased with the Taser, see what it feels like, they will have that opportunity,” Cherry said. “I volunteered to be tased when we first got the Tasers for our department. ... To our benefit, if we ever had to use it and testify in court, we want to say we’ve been tased.

“It’s a force to be reckoned with, but it didn’t kill me.”

Cherry said one of the most common crimes on campus is larceny, something many people can prevent if they are careful.

“Given that larceny is the No. 1 crime committed on campus, I would like to remind students to lock up their belongings,” he said. “But we’re not unique to that, because it’s the No. 1 crime on all campuses in the UNC system. It takes less than three seconds for a person to commit a crime.”

Cherry said another safety concern includes a spike in underage drinking since the start of school.

“We’ve seen some larcenies ... but we’ve had an unusually high amount of citations for underage drinking, either in the downtown area or on campus,” he said.

Cherry has been with the department for 10 years and said he has seen its services, including safety escorts, being utilized more. He said he hopes the Citizens Academy will boost services even more.

“I can say that it’s been making a difference,” he said.

Contact Jane Dail at jdail@reflector.com or 252-329-9585.
The 2011 football season ticket book and a poster printed for a musical presented by ECU’s School of Theatre and Dance netted national recognition for University Printing & Graphics. UP&G also printed the books that were distributed to 2012 football season-ticket holders. Ann Weingartz, far right, is the director of University Printing & Graphics.

**University Printing & Graphics earns awards in national contest**

“We are extremely proud of the recognition our work has received over the years. Meeting the needs of our customers is our first priority. Receiving awards and recognition is just icing on the cake.”

 Ann Weingartz director, UP&G

Monday, September 3, 2012
WorkWeek

University Printing and Graphics at East Carolina University has been named a double winner in the In-Print 2012 competition, a national contest that recognizes print quality.

UP&G received the silver award in the Hybrid Combined Offset/Non-Offset category for the 2011 football season ticket book printed for the ECU Department of Athletics.

“This is a very special award for us this year,” UP&G Director Ann Weingartz said. “Everyone in the department had a hand in the production of the book. From photography and design to collating and binding, everyone stepped up and made it happen.”

UP&G also brought home the bronze award in the Flyers Non-Offset category for a poster printed for a musical presented by East Carolina’s School of Theatre and Dance, “25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.”

The contest is sponsored by the In-Plant Printing and Mailing Association (IPMA) and In-Plant Graphics magazine. It is the only competition strictly
for in-plants, an in-house reproduction department operated within an organization, such as a company, government office or university.

The awards were presented at the IPMA conference in Kansas City, Mo. Seventy-eight printed pieces submitted by 37 organizations were selected as winners from the 452 entries submitted.

“Every year the competition gets tighter, especially in the digital category,” said IPMA Awards Chairman Chris Anderson of Salt Lake City, who has served as a judge for five years. “The quality of equipment is making judging far more difficult. In the past we could pretty easily identify the equipment by simply looking at the piece, but this year we frequently needed to refer back to the entry forms to clarify the machine used.”

The 2012 awards mark the 14th time ECU’s print shop has placed in the competition since 1996.

“We are extremely proud of the recognition our work has received over the years,” Weingartz said. “Meeting the needs of our customers is our first priority. Receiving awards and recognition is just icing on the cake.”

The ticket book utilized both offset and digital printing processes. It was printed on the Heidelberg Speedmaster, and variable data was added to the piece utilizing the Xerox iGen4 Press.

The poster was printed on the Xerox iGen4 Press.

In picking the winners, judges considered the degree of difficulty required to print a job and analyzed the entries for flaws. The most common reason pieces are eliminated is when both halves of a sheet fail to line up perfectly or are cracked along the folds because they were either folded against the grain or folded without first being scored.

The judges also look for color variation from page to page — particularly noticeable in company logos or headers that appear on consecutive pages — and spots and specks.

“A beautifully designed piece can be ruined if the colors aren’t right or the binding isn’t up to standard,” Weingartz said.

UP&G is at 2612 E. 10th St. in the Harris Building. Operated through the Business Services unit of ECU’s division of Administration and Finance, UP&G is self-supporting and receives no state funding. It is the largest in-plant printing operation among the 16 constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina system and features printing capabilities ranging from simple forms to four-color process magazines.
GUC board officers elected

Virginia Hardy, Stan Eakins and John Minges recently were elected officers of the Greenville Utilities Board of Commissioners.

Hardy, vice chancellor for student affairs at East Carolina University, was elected for her first term as chairwoman. She served as vice chairwoman in 2011-12 and has been a board member since 2009.

Eakins was elected vice chairman. He has served on the board since 2011 and is the dean of the College of Business at East Carolina University.

Minges, who has served on the board since 2010, was elected secretary. He is president and Founding Partner of Minges & Associates LLC.

Greenville Utilities is owned and operated by the residents of Greenville and is governed by an eight-member board responsible for approving rates, development plans, the annual budget, and setting policy that is carried out by the general manager/CEO. Board members serve three-year terms, with a maximum of two terms.
Dr. Paul McCarthy and Dr. Veena Nandwani, who are critical care specialists, have joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians.

McCarthy joined the Department of Internal Medicine as an assistant professor. He has a medical degree from Ross University in Dominica, West Indies, and completed residency training in internal medicine at Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine Affiliated Hospitals in Canton, Ohio. He completed a fellowship in critical care medicine at Louisiana State University Health Science Center in Shreveport and served on the medical faculty there.

McCarthy is board-certified in internal medicine, neurocritical care and critical care medicine. His clinical and research interests are extracorporeal life-support therapies, biomarkers, neurocritical care and blood conservation.

Nandwani also joined the Department of Internal Medicine as an assistant professor. She has a medical degree from American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine in St. Maarten and completed residency training in internal medicine at NEOUCOM Affiliated Hospitals. She completed a fellowship in critical care medicine at LSU Health Science Center and served on the medical faculty there.

Nandwani is board-certified in internal medicine. Her clinical and research interests are extracorporeal life-support therapies, acute respiratory distress syndrome, sepsis and nutrition in the ICU. She speaks Dutch, French and Spanish.

They see patients in the cardiac intensive care unit at the East Carolina Heart Institute at Vidant Medical Center and the medical intensive care unit at Vidant Medical Center.
When football fans set up their tailgating gear this season at East Carolina University’s newest athletics parking lot, some of them may know they are standing on the former site of a Greenville apartment complex.

Some might tell a few stories of past Pirate football Saturdays spent there.

But what many of them might not know is the significant amount of work ECU and its contractors did to make the demolition of the 15 apartment buildings as environmentally responsible — or “green” — as possible.

From May through July, contractor ICAN-Cape Fear Site Works of Fayetteville worked with the university to recycle, reuse or sell 77 percent of the waste generated by demolishing the buildings and swimming pool at the former site of the Stratford Arms apartments across from Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium. That means 6,328 tons, of a total 8,200 tons of waste, was kept out of landfills.

On a recent afternoon, as water from a recent shower dripped off trees onto the ground, the site was a shady respite from the busy roads that border it.

“When the grass gets established, it will be something to be proud of,” said Tim Daughtry, the ECU materials management purchasing specialist who oversaw the conversion of the complex to a parking lot.

Here is what happened to the buildings and their contents:
6,253 tons of brick and concrete were crushed to be used as a road base for a project on the ECU health sciences campus.

49 tons of scrap metal were sold to recyclers.

Eight-and-a-half tons of appliances and 17 tons of windows were sold to be reused.

Before demolition began, arborists identified nine trees that should be removed for health or structural reasons. That left 145 trees of 20 different species on the property which were protected during the work, ECU landscape architect John Gill said.

“As you can see when you visit the site, the university is left with a beautiful park-like setting,” Gill said.

ECU bought the property for $3.1 million last year. No state funds were used to purchase the site. No plans exist for the property other than using it for parking, Daughtry said.

Literary Homecoming to feature author Charles Frazier

ECU will honor the region’s literary traditions on Sept. 21-22 during the Ninth Annual Eastern North Carolina Literary Homecoming, presented by Joyner Library and the North Carolina Literary Review. The event will offer interactive workshops in addition to panel presentations.

Seven North Carolina writers and two filmmakers will discuss the translation of the written word into film during the event which has the theme, “Litflix: Adapting North Carolina Literature into Film.”

The works represented by the award-winning authors encompass a variety of genres including poetry, fiction, historical nonfiction, and drama and how they tie into Eastern North Carolina culture.

Each year, the literary homecoming kicks off with the presentation of the Roberts Award for Literary Inspiration. This year the award will be presented on Sept. 21 to eastern North Carolina poet James Applewhite for his significant influence upon the literature of the state.

“The Roberts Award, named in honor of B.W.C. and Snow Roberts of Durham, is a fitting way to honor James Applewhite,” said Maury York, Joyner Library’s assistant director for special collections. York described Applewhite as an outstanding poet with deep roots in eastern North Carolina.
Also on Sept. 21, Timothy B. Tyson will speak about the film adaptation of his book “Blood Done Sign My Name” in a lecture on “Civil Rights Meets Silver Screen.”

On the second day of the event, several North Carolina writers whose literary works have been adapted into film will explore how film can both enhance and distract from the meaning of the written word.

The luncheon on Sept. 22 will feature a reading by Daniel Wallace, author of “Big Fish,” which was adapted into a 2003 feature film directed by Tim Burton and starring Ewan McGregor.

Award-winning author Charles Frazier will deliver the keynote session at 4 p.m. on Sept 22. Frazier’s first novel “Cold Mountain,” winner of the 1997 National Book Award, was adapted in 2003 into a major motion picture that was nominated for seven Academy Awards. Frazier’s second novel, “Thirteen Moons,” was selected as the first literary work to be translated into the Cherokee language. His most recent novel is “Nightwoods.”

All events, except for the Sept. 22 author’s luncheon ($15) are free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.ecu.edu/lithomecoming, call 328-6514 or e-mail lithomecoming@ecu.edu.

Campaign offers chance to honor military service

A campaign under way at ECU presents an opportunity to commemorate military service.

The 2012 Service to Nation Campaign is offering engraved brick pavers priced at $125 each to honor individuals who have provided service in support of national defense. That includes military service as well as participation with organizations designed to support military efforts, such as the Veterans Administration, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Support the Troops, Wounded Warriors and similar programs.

Each 6 inch by 9 inch commemorative paver will be engraved with the honoree’s name and service details, and installed on the Memorial Walk west of Christenbury Memorial Gymnasium. Pavers purchased before Oct. 19 will be installed prior to a Nov. 9 dedication ceremony in honor of Veterans Day.

Proceeds will be used for ROTC Army and Air Force scholarships at ECU.

The campaign is sponsored by the ECU College of Health and Human Performance and the Office of Military Programs. For additional
information, contact Steve Duncan at duncans@ecu.edu or Kim Walters at waltersk@ecu.edu or call 328-9572.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday: Dr. Mae C. Jemison presents “Exploring the Frontiers of Science and Human Potential,” Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series, 7 p.m., Wright Auditorium. Tickets available at 1-800-ECU-ARTS.

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.
The East Carolina football team will try to be ready for anything when it stares down No. 9 South Carolina this Saturday at Williams-Brice Stadium.

But third-year ECU coach Ruffin McNeill isn’t at all in doubt about which quarterback he’ll see when the Gamecock offense takes the field for a noon kickoff, even though that quarterback isn’t completely healthy.

“Connor Shaw will be playing,” McNeill said, assertively, at Monday’s weekly press conference of the junior from Flowery Branch, Ga., who sustained a deep bone bruise on his right arm after being hit squarely by a helmet in SC’s 17-13 win over Vanderbilt last Thursday.

Shaw is sitting out practice at least through Wednesday, according to Gamecocks head coach Steve Spurrier. Although there is a chance sophomore backup Dylan Thompson will get the nod if Shaw’s shoulder doesn’t loosen in time, McNeill is convinced Shaw will start.

“He’s a football player, a coach’s kid, but they don’t change their offense with either quarterback,” McNeill said. “They have designed quarterback run plays and throw the football.”
Back in action

McNeill confirmed wide receivers Danny Webster, Dayon Arrington and Antonio Cannon were back with the team after each served one-game suspensions for the season opener against Appalachian State for violating team rules.

Both Webster and Arrington are on this week’s depth chart in reserve roles.

McNeill said the suspended players were part of a lively, positive and constructive sideline in the win against App State.

“They were enthusiastic, supportive,” he said. “The guys that we knew were not going in the game, that we addressed, did a good job of supporting the guys that were out on the field.”

Heat wave

McNeill lauded ECU fans who braved the intense heat inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium in last Saturday’s win over App State, and expressed sympathy for the more than 300 who required medical attention.

“I feel tough for the fans,” McNeill said. “That was tough to hear after the game. I hope they’re doing OK. It’ll be a hot one this week in Columbia.”

The coach also gave credit to his players for their dedication to conditioning, which seemed to pay off in the 35-13 victory over the Mountaineers. With the heat at its worst in the second half, the Pirates were at their best, turning a 14-13 contest into a blowout in the final two periods.

“I was very proud of our conditioning,” McNeill said. “We had a couple guys have some cramp issues, but not many.”

Injuries

The injured list is surprisingly small this week, with just three members and no one ruled out entirely.

The biggest is the left knee injury sustained by nose tackle Michael Brooks last Saturday. McNeill said the senior’s MRI was to be evaluated later Monday and that he was “hopeful” Brooks could return to make the South Carolina trip.

If not, it will be a long day for top reserve Terrell Stanley, a redshirt freshman whose collegiate debut against App State was solid, and included his first-career tackle and fumble recovery.
“He did a good job of holding his gap, trusting his technique,” McNeill said of Stanley. “Being a young player, he has a tendency to do a little bit too much sometimes, but I think he’ll get better.”

Versatile starting junior end Lee Pegues will likely take a few shifts in the middle if Brooks can’t make it back and Stanley gets the start.

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
SMU’s Brown, ECU’s Lebo share ties
By Tony Castleberry
Monday, September 3, 2012

If Larry Brown had had his way, Jeff Lebo would have played more than four games in the NBA.

Brown, a veteran college and professional basketball coach, was in charge of the San Antonio Spurs in 1989 when Lebo signed with the club as a free agent on Sept. 29. On Nov. 22, San Antonio waived Lebo and he never played another game in the NBA.

In a recent phone interview, Brown, who is entering his first season as the coach at SMU, said he thought Lebo, the head coach at East Carolina, was not only good enough to make that Spurs team but also had the ability to have a long pro career.

“I thought he should have made our team,” said Brown, who was elected into the basketball Hall of Fame in 2002. “We brought Jeff in but (then general manager) Bob (Bass) had drafted a guard in the second round. I told Bob I wanted to keep Jeff and he said, ‘We can’t.’

“Bob asked me what Jeff does and I said, ‘He listens to me.’ That being said, (Lebo) was a pro-caliber player for the way I wanted to play and what I valued. If I had my way, he would’ve been there forever.”

Brown, 71, played collegiately at North Carolina, won a gold medal with the 1964 U.S. Olympic team and played for five different ABA teams before ending his playing career in 1972.
Brown got his first head coaching job at Davidson in ’72 and has since put together one of the most storied careers in the game’s history. He is the only coach with NCAA (Kansas, 1988) and NBA (Detroit Pistons, 2004) championships on his stacked resume, which features ABA, NCAA and NBA Coach of the Year awards.

After taking a couple of years off — Brown coached the Charlotte Bobcats from 2008 to 2010 — he accepted the SMU job in April and is poised to usher the Mustangs into the Big East beginning in the 2013-14 season. Brown admitted aspects of collegiate coaching are very different from when he last led a college program in 1988, but he said he is settling in nicely in Dallas and looking forward to the upcoming season.

“I’m thrilled to be here,” Brown said the day he was officially introduced as SMU’s coach. “I can’t promise (the fans) wins and losses but I get the feeling that if we prepare a lot, if we do the right things, if we coach kids up, we’re going to be able to put a good group on the court that is going to give us a chance to be successful.

“I couldn’t be at a better spot at (this) time in my life than (SMU).”

Brown and Lebo are former Tar Heels who will likely match wits when the C-USA portion of the schedule gets under way in 2013. When asked if he is looking forward to coaching against Lebo, Brown said bluntly, “No,” but he did mention the ECU coach’s name in the same breath as a Tar Heel coaching icon.

“I tried to hire Jeff,” Brown said. “I’ve always had him way up on my list of guys I wanted to be associated with. Coach (Dean) Smith would never tell you he had favorites, but there’s no doubt Jeff is one of his favorites and somebody I admire. I value my friendship with him.”

Contact Tony Castleberry at tcastleberry@reflector.com, 252-329-9591 or follow @tcastleberrygdr on Twitter.
Johnson accounts for 3 TDs in first start as ECU rolls past Appalachian State

By Brian Haines - Correspondent

GREENVILLE–It was exactly five years ago that Appalachian State grabbed national headlines by stunning fifth-ranked Michigan in the Big House in its 2007 season opener. The Mountaineers’ bid to upset another BCS school on the road fell short Saturday, as East Carolina cruised to a 35-13 win.

The Pirates (1-0, Conference USA) fell behind 7-0 early as Appalachian State (0-1, Southern Conference) quarterback Jamal Jackson scored on a 4-yard keeper in the first quarter. However, ECU regained control and pushed aside any thoughts of an upset by responding with 21-6 run that featured touchdowns by the defense, offense and special teams and spanned over the second and third quarters.

“All three sides of the ball contributed to the win,” ECU coach Ruffin McNeill said. “I’m proud to get the win. Wins are hard to come by in this business.”

Several new faces contributed to the Pirates’ victory. Junior college transfer safety Chip Thompson returned a fumble 45 yards for ECU’s first score, and fellow junior college transfer Lance Ray wiggled his way through ASU’s defense for a momentum-changing 90-yard kickoff return that put the Pirates up 21-13 with 2:19 left in the third quarter.

Ray’s return came on the heels of a Drew Scott field goal that cut the Pirates’ lead to 14-13, and after the touchdown the Northwest Mississippi Community College transfer reminded his coach why they recruited him so hard.

“When he came to the sideline he said, ‘Coach, that’s what you brought me here for,’” McNeill said.

ECU junior quarterback Rio Johnson accounted for three touchdowns in his first career start. He connected on 28 of 43 passes for 242 yards and two touchdowns and threw one interception. Johnson was off target on a few deep balls, but also ran for a 6-yard TD midway through the fourth quarter.
Johnson’s first touchdown pass of his Pirates’ career came midway through the second quarter when he hit receiver Andrew Bodenheimer at the 2-yard line and looked on as the senior plowed his way into the end zone to put ECU up 14-7. Johnson’s second touchdown pass came on a 4-yarder to Justin Hardy at the start of the fourth quarter. Hardy finished with six receptions for 38 yards, while Reese Wiggins added six catches for 45 yards.

ECU’s defense stifled the Mountaineers much of the day. Jackson produced the lone touchdown and finished 23 of 41 for 300 yards and one interception. Scott added field goals of 26 and 41 yards to complete its scoring.

Jackson’s favorite target was junior Tony Washington who caught seven passes for a career-high 102 yards.

While the result wasn’t what Mountaineers coach Jerry Moore wanted, the effort his players gave on a hot, airless day inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium was exactly what he wanted to see.

“I thought we played as hard as you can play. I couldn’t do anything but hug every guy in the locker room and every coach in the locker room,” Moore said. “They played as hard as they could play.”

**Game notes**

- Appalachian State announced before the game that starting freshman receiver Sean Price and starting junior safety Jamill Lott were suspended for violating team rules. Freshman wide receiver Malachi Jones started in place of Price and caught five passes for 69 yards, while Patrick Blalock too the place of Lott and tallied eight tackles.

- When East Carolina junior college transfer Chip Thompson scored on a 45-yard fumble recovery in the second quarter, it was the first time the Pirates had done so since former defensive lineman Jay Ross returned one 49 yards for a score against Tulsa on Nov. 15 2009.

- Pirates senior NG Michael Brooks was sidelined with a knee injury in the third quarter and did not return.
NCAA clearing North Carolina leaves some in disbelief

By DAN KANE

The NCAA's position that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has done nothing wrong by offering bogus classes that helped athletes maintain their eligibility has spurred a wave of skepticism from national sportswriters and others who follow college sports.

"The NCAA concludes no violations in UNC academic scandal," tweeted Stewart Mandel, a college football writer for Sports Illustrated's website. "This actually happened."

Several said the announcement last Friday has given universities looking to gain the advantage in the big-money sports of football and basketball a license to bend the rules.

Bruce Feldman, a college football columnist for CBSSports.com, said in a blog post the announcement shows that the "NCAA MAKES IT UP AS IT GOES ALONG. The NCAA finds pretty much whatever it wants to find ... or not find."

Jay Bilas, ESPN analyst and former Duke basketball player, said on Twitter: "And the NCAA wonders why it's a laughingstock? Cue NCAA Prez to lecture on integrity, and who's 'in charge.'?"

Neither UNC-CH officials nor the NCAA offered an explanation for the determination. UNC-CH officials announced the news Friday morning ahead of a holiday weekend. The NCAA did not issue a statement, but provided a brief confirmation of UNC's announcement later in the day.

UNC-CH has become embroiled in an investigation into academic fraud after The (Raleigh) News & Observer obtained a partial transcript of former football defensive standout Marvin Austin, who was kicked off the team in 2010 after he was found to have accepted improper financial benefits from a sports agent. That NCAA investigation found others also received improper financial benefits, and a tutor was found to have provided improper help on college papers.

Austin's transcript, which The N&O published Aug. 21, 2011, showed he had been allowed to take an upper-level African studies class before he took his full slate of classes as a freshman. He received a B-plus in the class,
taught by the African studies department chairman, Julius Nyang'oro, before he had taken remedial writing as a first-semester freshman.

UNC-CH's statement Friday makes no mention of this. The university said it notified the NCAA of "potential academic issues involving student-athletes in African and Afro-American Studies courses" on Aug. 24, 2011 three days later.

The statement said an NCAA enforcement staff member later visited Chapel Hill "several times in the fall" to take part in the investigation.

According to the statement, the NCAA has not visited the university since, but has relied upon the university's information to make the determination that no violations have occurred.

In May, UNC officials announced that an internal investigation found that Nyang'oro and a former department manager, Deborah Crowder, were involved in the creation of dozens of classes that had little or no instruction, including the class taken by Austin, who now plays for the New York Giants. Nyang'oro was directly tied to all but nine of the 54 bogus classes found over a four-year period that began in summer 2007. The investigation also found little accountability for independent studies offered to students in which no class time is required.

Since then, public records requests filed by the N&O showed that athletes accounted for nearly two-thirds of the enrollments in the bogus classes, with football players accounting for more than a third of the enrollments. Some of the classes had nothing but athletes enrolled; two had nothing but a single basketball player.

The scandal attracted significant national attention when a second transcript emerged. It belongs to one of the university's most popular star athletes, Julius Peppers, who played both football and basketball at UNC-CH, and is now an All-Pro defensive end for the Chicago Bears.

Three weeks ago, the N&O found a test transcript on UNC's website that appeared to be that of an athlete who attended the university from 1998 to 2001, but UNC-CH officials refused to check academic records to make sure it was fake. A day after the N&O published the transcript, rival N.C. State University fans examined the Web address and tracked it back to a related weblink that showed Peppers' actual transcript.

The transcript showed that Peppers had done poorly in many classes, but received grades of B or better in several courses that several years later were found to be suspect in the internal investigation. For example, Peppers was
allowed to take an independent studies class the summer after his freshman year, a period in which he received two D-pluses, two Ds, an F, a C and a B. Independent studies are typically offered to students who have shown the study and organizational skills to accomplish a research project, such as a paper, on their own.

Those classes, as his transcript showed, kept Peppers eligible to compete in football and basketball.

The transcript suggests that the bogus classes and poorly supervised independent studies stretch back into the 1990s. Nyang'oro, who was forced into retirement in July, had been chairman of the African studies department since 1992.

Peppers has not given any interviews regarding the transcript, but in a statement released by his agent, Carl Carey Jr., Peppers said the transcript was his, but he committed no academic fraud as it related to his transcript.

UNC-CH and NCAA officials also have not commented on Peppers' transcript as it related to the academic fraud investigation. On Thursday, Chancellor Holden Thorp explained to a UNC Board of Governors panel how the transcript became public, but offered no explanation for the odd configuration of Peppers' academic record.

The panel was assembled to review the university's academic fraud investigation. After Peppers' transcript surfaced, Thorp announced an additional investigation, led by former Gov. Jim Martin, to determine whether additional academic irregularities occurred.

UNC-CH officials first told the public about their internal investigation on Sept. 1, 2011. At the time, the university offered few details other than to say there were "academic irregularities" in the department that involved athletes and non-athletes.

Since then, the university has cited the fact that there were also nonathletes enrolled in the classes to contend that this was not a matter for the NCAA. A former head of the NCAA's infractions committee, Josephine Potuto, told the N&O in an interview two months ago that the NCAA does not get involved in cases in which the academic fraud was not intended to specifically benefit athletes.

But Thorp recently told the UNC BOG panel that the university does not know the motive behind Nyang'oro's and Crowder's actions, while much of the evidence that has surfaced to date shows an intent to assist athletes. In
one summer 2011 class, records obtained by the N&O show that Nyang'oro created the class two days before the semester began and it immediately filled with football players. A faculty report also said evidence suggests academic counselors assigned to the athletes steered them to the classes, and Crowder, the former departmental manager, had close ties to the athletic department and particularly the men's basketball team.

If the intent of the no-show classes and independent studies were to keep athletes eligible, the university could face major sanctions that could potentially bring down championship banners for its men's basketball team. The team won the NCAA tournament in 2005 and 2009.

Basketball is where the NCAA makes the lion share of its revenues. A nonprofit association, its most recently available tax return on Guidestar.org shows nearly all of its $740 million in revenues came from the nationally televised basketball tournament.

Hence, there is concern that what happened Friday was the NCAA protecting a celebrated, lucrative basketball program.

"I don't know how the NCAA can justify this," wrote Michael Rosenberg, another Sports Illustrated columnist. "I don't understand why Penn State has to spend four years in the NCAA's intensive-care-unit for the abhorrent actions of a few former employees, while North Carolina gets a pass for its rampant academic fraud."

Brian Barbour, a blogger on Tar Heel Blog, writes that, according to NCAA rules and available information, no action against UNC is appropriate. He criticizes those in the media for failing to write a piece the ties the rules to the details of this case.

"Show me a well thought out piece with actual rules cited and real information from the NCAA or former NCAA staff members then I will be glad to listen," he writes. "Otherwise I can do without the faux rage, excessive whining and incessant insinuations that prove nothing."

Staff writer J.N. Miller contributed to this report.
UNC officials: No NCAA rules were broken related to African studies fraud

By Jane Stancill and Andrew Carter - jstancill@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL—The NCAA found no evidence that its rules were violated during the academic misconduct in UNC-Chapel Hill’s African and Afro-American Studies department, university officials said Friday.

On the eve of the football home opener against Elon University, the university released a statement that seemed to suggest its NCAA troubles are over.

The African studies department has been the focus of an academic fraud investigation by the university, the State Bureau of Investigation and now, an independent review led by former N.C. Gov. Jim Martin. An internal campus review disclosed in May that 54 suspect courses in the department, many heavily attended by athletes, were no-show classes with little or no faculty supervision during a four-year period.

The results of that internal review were provided to the NCAA. On Aug. 23, the university’s attorney and a senior associate dean updated NCAA enforcement staff, who reaffirmed that no NCAA rules appeared to have been broken, the university said.

UNC first notified the NCAA about the academic problems in August 2011, and NCAA enforcement staffers came to Chapel Hill several times last fall to join in the investigation, according to the statement. NCAA officials talked to faculty and staff members in African studies, as well as some student-athletes who had taken classes in the department.

“Based on the joint review, UNC and the NCAA staff concluded there were no violations of current NCAA rules or student-athlete eligibility issues related to courses in African and Afro-American Studies,” the statement said.

These issues were not included in the proceedings when UNC appeared before the NCAA’s Committee on Infractions last fall, and it appears the university will avoid additional NCAA sanctions related to the findings about African studies.
In March, the NCAA levied penalties on UNC’s football program for several major violations, including impermissible benefits for players and a failure to monitor the program. The program lost scholarships over a three-year period and was banned from postseason play this year.

But the NCAA has been oddly quiet on the other, arguably more serious, scandal that emerged — the bogus African studies classes attended by some football and basketball players.

The NCAA did not return phone calls from The News & Observer on Friday.

**Breaks for athletes?**

A former head of the NCAA’s Committee on Infractions, Josephine Potuto, said a July interview that the NCAA typically looks for evidence that student-athletes get special breaks.

In the UNC case, both student-athletes and regular students enrolled in the aberrant classes. That may have made the difference for NCAA investigators. Even if student-athletes are clustered in a class with a professor who gives out easy A’s, Potuto said, “that’s not an NCAA violation because that course is open to everybody else.”

In order to find a violation, the NCAA would have to decide that student-athletes are afforded special treatment.

“You can’t do it simply by saying, ‘Hey, there are a lot of student-athletes in this class, and everybody got an A.’” she said. “That’s not going to get you there.”

Still, the NCAA has been inconsistent in handing out penalties for academic fraud.

The NCAA did not get involved in 2008 when a University of Michigan professor was reported to have taught nearly 300 independent studies during a three-year period, with athletes comprising 85 percent. Yet Florida State University lost scholarships five years ago when athletes got improper help from tutors, including receiving answers to an online quiz. In that case, students who were not athletes also benefitted by getting the quiz answers.

**Campus reforms**

UNC officials this week reported various new procedures designed to prevent future academic fraud. They promised more faculty involvement in athletics, a revamped African studies department, new oversight for
academic administrators, new rules for independent study courses and changes to the tutoring program for athletes.

The reforms were discussed Thursday at a meeting of a UNC Board of Governors panel reviewing the campus’ handling of the problems. Martin, meanwhile, is working with a national consulting firm to determine whether other academic irregularities occurred in addition to the ones already uncovered.

“University officials will continue to keep the NCAA informed as developments warrant,” the university’s statement said Friday.

Stancill: 919-829-4559
Drescher: It’s time to check passion for college sports

By John Drescher

Warren St. John grew up in Alabama and went to college in New York. He remembers listening to the Auburn-Alabama football game on the radio and being depressed after ’Bama lost.

“I’d gone off to Columbia to study humanism and the great books – to become a rational being,” he wrote years later in his book about hyper-devoted Crimson Tide fans. “Crying one’s self to sleep over the failure of a group of people you’ve never met to defeat another group of people against whom you have no legitimate quarrel – in a game you don’t play, no less – is not rational.”

There’s much to be said in favor of big-time college sports. There’s also much to be said against them. The abuses at UNC-Chapel Hill show the dirty underbelly of high-dollar college sports, including the role of agents and the efforts of the athletic-industrial complex to keep players academically eligible.

Our recent report showed that former UNC football star Julius Peppers never had at least a 2.0 grade point average at Chapel Hill. But under UNC’s rules at the time, Peppers was eligible to play.

‘Extreme brand loyalty’

Big-time college sports (football and men’s basketball) are entertainment enterprises. They wouldn’t exist in their current form without loyal fans who spend lots of money on tickets and lots of time watching television.

Based on email I’ve received, many of these fans have their personal identities tied up with the success of their school’s teams. “I didn’t believe it could be done, but you’ve reached a new low with the Julius Peppers ‘story’ you son of a b---h,” wrote a Carolina fan who graduated from UNC in the late 1970s. “I absolutely loathe you. Hopefully, Julius will sue the crap out of your sorry rag.”

I cannot say for sure (he declined my invitation to talk on the phone) but I’m betting my Carolina pen pal feels better about himself when UNC wins and worse about himself when UNC loses.
That’s not unusual. A survey of University of Kentucky basketball fans found 33 percent of respondents said this statement best described their level of interest in Kentucky basketball: “I live and die with the Wildcats. I’m happy if they win and sad if they lose.”

Duke University economist Charles Clotfelter wrote about these hard-core fans in his 2011 book about college sports. “These consumers exhibit extreme brand loyalty,” he wrote. “Psychologists describe them as being heavily identified with a particular team or university and have shown that the self-esteem of these ardent fans can be affected by their team’s success in competition.”

**Good tradition, within reason**

This is good for the athletic departments because it gives them loyal customers to pay the bills, including those rising coaches’ salaries. But it’s bad for these hard-core fans. If their emotional well-being depends on a “student-athlete” from their school hitting a free throw at the end of a game, they ought to look for a new passion.

If you like college sports, this is the best place in the country to live. I go to about 30 games a year at Duke, Carolina, N.C. State and occasionally at smaller schools. I almost always take a family member, as my dad took me. My father, a former college baseball player, had the right attitude: Respect the other school, respect the other players and coaches, respect the game.

The beauty of sports is watching well-prepared teams compete with everything they have. If that’s not enough for some – if only a Duke or a Carolina or a State win makes them feel fulfilled – then I feel sorry for them.

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