50 YEARS IN ATHLETICS

'Mr. Soccer At Howard'

"If the hills are high before,
And the paths are hard to climb,
Keep a-pluggin away.
And remember that successes
Keep a-pluggin away.
Come to him who bides his time —
From the greatest to the least,
None are from the rule released
Be thou toiler, poet, priest,
Keep a-pluggin away . . ."

— the treasured saying of a 73-year-old man who has dedicated 50 years of his life to soccer.

By DEBBIE GOLDSTEIN

Ted Chambers plopped down on a couch in the Howard University teacher's lounge, looking very much like a distinguished coach of the past, in a neat gray suit, his lapel plugged with an NSCAA button, proof of 25 years of outstanding service to collegiate soccer.

On his lap, beneath the folded hands that once welded his foreign performers, lay the newspaper tributes, representing the 18 coaching years when his teams captured 104 games, lost 27, and tied 11 for six undefeated seasons. He is very much the able busy body from the farmlands of Union, West Virginia, who has handled every varsity athletic chore the campus has ever offered.

He's charmed the area basketball stars into an occasional game of cricket, rooted for the school's first gridiron heroes in 1944, fitted gloves to some of the school's top boxing prospects, told swimmers to toe the mark, and held a stop watch for the track and field prima donnas.

Yet, more importantly, he ended a 28-year championship lull in the city of Washington, D.C. for the first time since the Redskins had the flags waving at old Griffith Stadium. The NAIA soccer reward found a place in Howard's trophy case in 1961 via the Chambers method, which has set a precedent for the lean and lanky forces, now on the field; a battle plan for penetrating a defense that has enabled the Bisons to become the epitome of passing through a defense, dribbling around it, and playing the ball in the air.

By 1970, he had a 13-1-1 unit of back outsiders, that bowed 4-3 to UCLA in the NCAA Semi-finals, and in all those years since he first kicked a ball along the sidewalks of the District's M Street School in 1916, Chambers has shed but a few gray hairs without losing one ounce of love for the game. His enthusiasm never dies.

"I have a special treat for you," he said, trying to escape the trivia before disappearing to return with a paper sack. "Lunch will be ready in a minute," he added generously, scooping out helpings of his noted homemade shrimp salad onto wedges of tomato, a practice he admits he only performs for his closest soccer comrades.

Ted Chambers IS a gift to Howard athletics. Simultaneously, up in the ethereal skies, still gloating over his black sports gold mine, highlighted by a multimillion dollar gymnasium, that has now taken his name, is John Burr, the man who started Howard soccer in 1924.

Looking down at Chambers, Burr should feel content to have such a spry predecessor, who has the keen insight to keep the checkered ball hitting the nets on the campus in Northwest Washington. Chambers has remained a familiar figure in the stadium since he celebrated the reactivation of soccer in 1947 with a 13-12 upset over Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, a sentimental win over the team that had defeated Howard in Chambers' final game as a player by the identical score.

"Sometimes I'll wander through the stands just to see if our students understand soccer," Chambers explained. "I'll say, young lady, what's the score? She'll usually shake her head, then I'll give her a simple explanation: Watch to see which team gets the ball downfield; when it goes into the net, that's a goal. Next I'll ask them to compare it to basketball and the idea that each team is trying to get the ball into scoring territory."

Students identify with the most sagacious of Howard soccer promoters and they work their hearts out for him. Since 1957, 24 of his players made the All-South selections, while eight of his charges became All-Americans. Yet it isn't the athletic complex that has enabled Chambers' water ballet beauties (his newest coaching endeavor, the girl's swim team) to ripple the waters at Howard or the glamourous silver soccer awards that catch the eye when one meanders through the big doorway.

This shrine wears a perpetual grin and wrinkles his little moustache as he roams through the stadium laden with wearers of blue and white, inquiring if any of these supporters would care for a

24 of Ted's players made All-South selections; 8 became All-Americans

sip of coffee from his familiar red thermos jug. It was a monument that revealed his emotions as Chambers shared the glories of the Bisons as they doubled their initial feat with 15 straight victories and 73 goals for an NCAA triumph in 1971, their first season under Lincoln Phillips, defeating St. Louis, 3-2 in Miami following a ten year interim. No other school in the United States has managed to capture both NAIA and NCAA trophies in any sport nor has any black aggregation matched their endeavors with a championship in any sport at the University level.

Since his official retirement "seven years ago, the little man with the balding silver head continues to give sanguine advice. He rarely misses a day in the athletic confines to show off the gold watch presented to him at his farewell dinner. Chambers motivates, he inspires, he just can't quit after raking up a colorful career of half a century of Howard athletics.

"I feel I'm needed, admitted the founder and six-time president of the D.C. Collegiate Soccer Association, a group that first introduced soccer at the high school level in 1958. "I like to think I'm teaching my boys about the good life, to be fair and honest, to live cleanly."

He rattled on about the role of the black man, which has been elevated due to Howard's position in the upper crust of sports, a curriculum that has climbed from the school's first two physical education offerings to a department schedule today of 146. Chambers joined the Howard faculty in 1944 as a football coach and men's instructor, following a pair of dissertations on the aspects of physical education and the black man.

"We've come a long way," Chambers gloated before letting out a snicker to exert his pleasures over an already 11-0 season. "I remember when I was a player on the Howard football squad and I stood in line as they handed out equipment, only to find that I'd have to improvise with canvas leggings instead of stockings. Today, I can look back upon it all. This year I pray that we will win it all. You know, all goes well for those who love the Lord," he said, visualizing the

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SKIMMING OFF THE TOP

TV, The Boob Tube

Every Tom, Dick and Mary is playin' the guitar these days, an' whether they can sing or not, they're bendin' our ears with those "here today and gone tomorrow" songs.

I'm really shook when the folks who can really sing are drowned out by the loud playin' orchestra.

One thing I do like on the boob tube, all them commercials that used to be lily white now got a lot of my folks on the gravy train. Just imagine gettin' a couple hundred bucks for saying "Look, I just got one cavity."

In fact, when you consider it, the commercials are gettin' funnier and funnier, better'n some of them programs that are supposed to be funny but ain't.

I can't understand, we been at war, hot and cold, for a long time now, but I bet fifty per cent of the movies on TV are about war. Ain't we had enough . . . or is that the way them TV big shots have of makin' us appreciate livin' over here.

Tell you the truth, there's so much misery in the world these days, I'd just rather not hear so much about it. When I come home from work, tired, I just like to sit down and relax, forget about all them bad things goin' on.

Maybe, that's how television got its nickname. It's just like a booby trap, turn it on and you can't escape.

LENORA DOBBS

Spotlight

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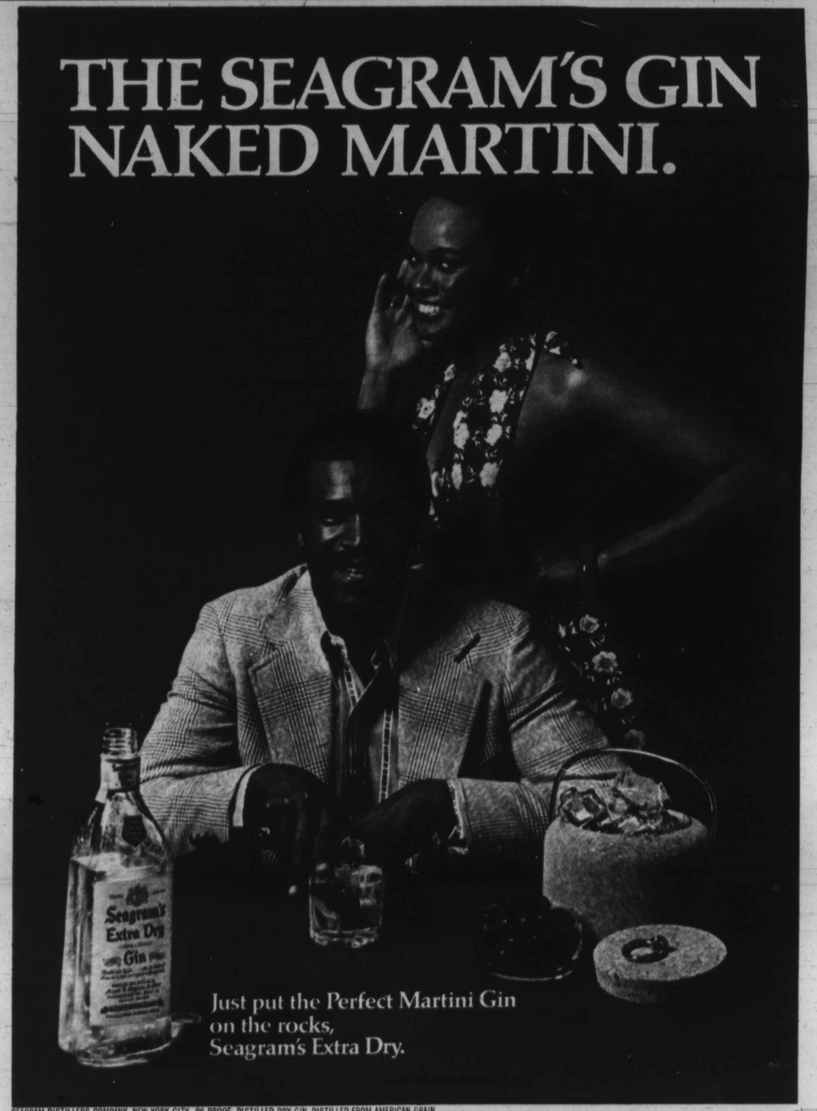
Not content with her newly acquired skill, Jessie has formed a production company with her husband, Leroy Patton, who is also a cinematographer and a member of No. 644.

Their firm, L. J. Productions, of which Jessie is vice president, is set up for work here, but also has a branch in Nigeria, L. J. Tolinse, with two Nigerian partners, so productions made here can also be distributed in Nigeria. This was set up when Leroy was in Africa shooting an Ossie Davis film.

Jessie can be very proud of herself because she as a black woman is a pioneer, breaking new ground in a man-dominated area. Jessie says this is propably because it was considered too difficult physically for women. As part of the union's entrance exam, Jessie was tested on seven different cameras and some of them extremely heavy.

A new challenge presents itself as Jessie goes off to work with Richard Heimann of Daybreak Productions, who was director-photographer on the movie GODSPELL, to man — person — a R 35 Mitchell, one of the big ones.



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