

SPORTS 'N SPOKES

The Magazine for Wheelchair Sports and Recreation



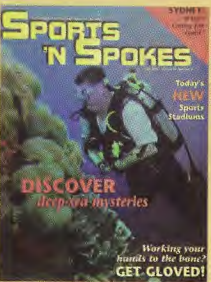
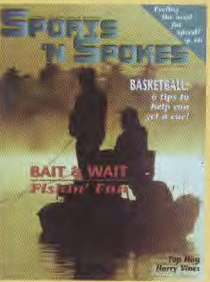
June 1999



celebrating
25
years of



guts
glory
grace





54 THE ULTIMATE TEST

by Andy Cohn

A new champ bloomed in the desert, as rugby's best headed west in search of the pot at the end of the rainbow.



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TSC* Final Rankings for 1998–1999 Season

NWBA Top 10

(Division I)

- 1 Dallas Mavericks
- 2 Arkansas Rollin' Razorbacks
- 3 University of Illinois Fightin' Illini
- 4 University of Wisconsin–Whitewater Warhawks
- 5 Music City Lightning
- 6 Golden State Road Warriors
- 7 Casa Colina Condors
- 8 Alberta Northern Lights
- 9 University of Texas–Arlington Movin' Mavs
- 10 Chicago Bulls

NWBA Top 25

(Division II)

- 1 Virginia Beach Sunwheelers
- 2 Charlotte Hornets
- 3 Lakeshore Pioneers
- 4 Spokane St. Luke's Cyclones
- 5 Phoenix Suns
- 6 Orlando Magic
- 7 Austin Wreckers
- 8 Houston Rockets
- 9 Los Angeles Stars
- 10 NEVA Celtics
- 11 Rockford Chariots
- 12 Minnesota Timberwolves
- 13 Rehab Institute of Chicago Hornets
- 14 Pacific Spartans
- 15 London Flyers
- 16 Mobile Patriots
- 17 Utah Jazz
- 18 Dallas Texans
- 19 San Antonio Spurs
- 20 Long Beach Flying Wheels
- 21 Athletes Unlimited
- 22 National Rehab Hospital Ambassadors
- 23 Queen City Slammers
- 24 EPVA Chargers
- 25 St. Louis Rollin' Rams

*Tournament Selection Committee of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association

on most of the college teams. Whitewater's Joe Johnson is a monster forward who can play as tall as anyone. His 22 points and guard Jeff Dennis kept the Warhawks from being blown out against the much bigger, much deeper Arkansas Razorbacks. Dennis, who shot 7 of 12 for 16 points, is an excellent ball handler who pushes the ball up the court in a hurry.

Perhaps the fastest guard combination is at the University of Texas–Arlington in Paul Schulte and Enoch Ablorh. Schulte was the leading scorer for the United States team in Australia—a total surprise to everyone except the coaches. Ablorh is so fast that the guards who defend him get whiplash.

What's Up?

So, what gives? Why the resurgence at such a high level?

Easy. Because these young whipper-snappers work at it like none have before. The Illini athletes train on the court at least five days a week and another three workout sessions a week in the weight room. All successful college programs have similar training schedules.

"They stay together, work together all the time," says Arkansas coach Harry Vines. "We're lucky to get in a good two-hour practice each week."

Dan Byrnes, the United States coach at the world championships, takes it a step further. "They have great training resources—great facilities at the col-

leges," says Byrnes. "The college teams have great coaches and leadership. Illinois, UTA, and Whitewater have excellent coaches in Frogley, Jim Hayes, and Tracy Chynoweth. If Illinois doesn't have Mike [Frogley] and Brad [Hedrick], they don't get here (to the final four). Because of the programs, players develop at lightning speed. They understand the game better, understand team strategies. Coaches help manage the games."

In the past, it was difficult for a collegiate player to break the starting lineup with the adult teams because they weren't as strong or talented. Now that community teams are a little older and the collegiate players are fundamentally sound and incredibly fast, there's



Some observers have touted Illinois' Pat Anderson (#40) as the best player in the country. In the regional final, he scored 33 of the Illini's 60 points, just 7 fewer than the entire Casa Colina team.