

Loyal Husker basketball fans travel to Charlotte for team

By Sandy Heng
Staff Reporter

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — "We love our Huskers."

For many fans, like UNL alumnus Ike Maggert of Atlanta, Ga., that love was the driving force to see Nebraska compete in its first-ever NCAA tournament game in Charlotte, N.C.

"We follow everywhere they go," said former Omahans Ken and Jan Johnson, now of Charlotte. "But, this time it's been easier getting here." The John-

sons and other alumni are trying to form an alumni club in North Carolina. Other fans traveled far to see the 67-59 loss to Western Kentucky.

For Buford and Jeanneatte Day, the eight hour drive from Washington, D.C., was well worth seeing their son, Bernard, play for the first time this season. Day led Nebraska's scoring with 18 points.

"They've all done wonderfully this season," said Jeanneatte Day. "Of course, we were sorry to hear about Dave (Hoppen), but it's great for the team to be here."

About 100 Husker basketball fans were a minority in the old, domed, 11,666 seat Charlotte Coliseum.

Many fans, driving through heavy rain and drizzle, said they support all Nebraska sports.

"It takes money and time when you drive, but you'd be surprised how many do it," said Maggert, a member of the Georgians for Nebraska alumni group.

"It's nice to know there are so many Nebraska alumni on the east coast that still follow the team," Roger Harned said. Harned, formerly of Omaha, lives in Virginia.

Alumni and fans from the east coast said it's more difficult to hear about Big Eight basketball action because of the Atlantic Coast Conference.

"Having four teams out of the Big Eight in the tournament says some-

thing about Big Eight basketball," said Chris Carr. Carr and his mother, Marilyn, made the 10-hour drive from Muncie, Ind., to see his brother, Brian.

"When we heard the news about the tournament, we went crazy," said Marilyn Carr. "We had a houseful of people over. It was tremendous."

For Harvey Marshall's high school coach, Barry Tignor, and his wife Sherry, it was the first opportunity to see Marshall play college basketball.

The Tignor's made the 10-hour drive from Jackson, Tenn., to see Marshall score 11 points.

"We felt like Nebraska fans. It was a great opportunity," he said.

Fifteen pep band members and director Bill Ballinger agreed. Ballinger said it was a privilege to bring the band and play at the tournament.

A late plane and vehicle problems almost stopped band members from making it to the game in time.

"I changed clothes in the parking lot and ran in just in time to play Hail Varsity. . . That's how close it was," said band member Jon Olson.

Of the 45-piece pep band, 15 were chosen on seniority basis in their band sections.

"It's really too bad that more people couldn't be here," said Darren Johnson.

"There are lots of fans from Georgia and other places who have come a long way to see the game," said Dorothy Matzke, who flew in with her husband Stan. "We're glad to see them all cheering for the Huskers."

And the cheering didn't stop after the Huskers' first-round loss.

Maggert, holding a crumpled "We love our Huskers" sign, summarized the game.

"We'll be back," he said. "We still love them."

Meet the other James Brown...

By Bob Asmussen
Sports Editor

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Who is this James Brown who did the color commentary for CBS at the Southeast Region that included Nebraska?

Is he the great Jim Brown, Hall of Fame running back for the Cleveland Browns? Nope.

Is he soul singer James Brown, the hardest working man in show business? Nope again.

This James Brown is a 1973 Harvard graduate who majored in something other than NBA 101.

Brown got his degree in political science and economics.

Not that Brown is foreign to the sport of college basketball. He played for three seasons for the Crimson and then spent part of a season with the Atlanta Hawks before being released.

After his release by the Hawks in 1973, Brown went to Washington, D.C., and worked with the Eastman Kodak Company. After switching over to Xerox, Brown got his first broadcasting break.

"I was on a local television station," Brown said. "The host of the program thought I would do a good job as analyst for the Washington Bullets, which had just opened up. I auditioned for it and I got it."

Slowly, Brown added responsibilities to his job as Bullet's commentator. He began doing cable games and then games for TBS, a syndicated network.

Along with his job at Xerox and the games he covered, Brown began working as a sportscaster in Washington. He was weekend sports anchor at WJLA, an ABC affiliate in the capital city.

To help him advance his career, Brown said he would talk with producers of the games he did to find out in what areas he needed improvement. He said the two things he had to work on were not stating the obvious and explaining why things happened on the court rather than what was happening.

When CBS gained rights to do the NCAA basketball tournament, Brown was used as an extra during the tournament. He said his breakthrough at CBS came in 1983, when he did a St. John's-Pittsburgh game for NBC.

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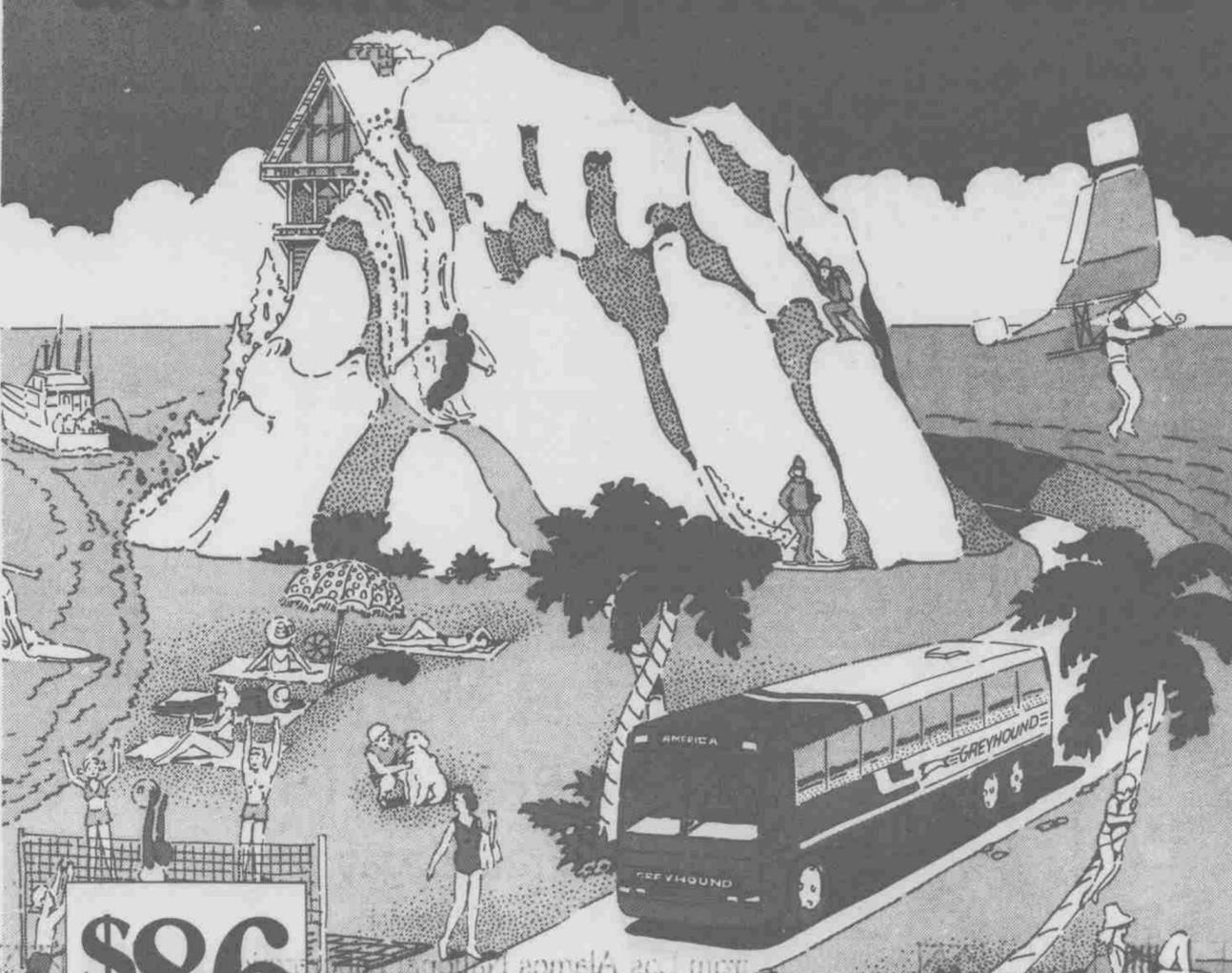
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