

Black in a sea of white faces

Jowell Bell remembers being in a cab in Boston earlier this year and wondering why there were so many black faces in the cars that went whizzing by.

Then she realized where she was — and where she had just flown in from.

Bell is the director of the University's Council for Minority Education, and thus comes in daily contact with the nearly 200 black students — and athletes — on campus. And being black herself, she says she can understand the often frustrating life of a black athlete in Eugene.

Not only is there a lack of a black community and its support services in Eugene, but people often stereotype black athletes because of their skin color and athletic prowess.

"On a campus without a large percentage of non-white students, you see that attitude a lot," says Bell, who began her job as director in April. "People think that the athletes are interested in sports, not academics. Although that may be a prevalent view, it's not necessarily true.

"I think most black athletes see college sports as an opportunity to get an education, especially those for whom it's not financially possible," she says. "It's the same for students who excel in music, or debate, or many other traditional academic pursuits."

But why would a black athlete from say, Los Angeles or Seattle, come to Eugene when USC or Washington are knocking at their door?

Why not, asks Debbie Adams, who starred on the women's basketball team for four years — and was often the only black on the team — and now is an assistant basketball coach.

"In my case, I didn't have a lot of time to go out and see if there was a black community here," Adams says. "It never entered my mind not to come here because of the lack of a black community."

Adams says her high school background in Seattle — she went to a nearly all-white school — and her family's belief that an education was the most important thing about college colored her thinking more than the shade of her skin when she signed a letter of intent.

"For a kid who went to an all-black high school, the adjustment would probably be

harder," she says. "But a lot just depends on how you were raised. An education is really important to me, so I see athletics as a way to attain that goal."

Gary Campbell, the running back coach for the Oregon football team, agrees with Adams that he is rarely conscious of the lack of fellow blacks in Eugene.

"There could be 7,000 black fans in the stands at one of our home games and I wouldn't know it," he says. "Football is the same wherever you go. The people, the coaches are the same, and I deal with coaches most of my waking hours."

Although Campbell has lived in cities with large black populations — Washington D.C., Baton Rouge, La., Los Angeles and Stockton, Calif. — during various coaching assignments, he says he is not really aware of the difference in the numbers of blacks between those cities and Eugene.

Much of the reason is that Campbell is "a little bit removed" from Eugene's social life because of his involvement with football, he says.

"If I'm not here," he says, motioning to the Oregon football offices, "I'm on the road."

Like Adams, Campbell came from a non-stereotypical background. He transferred from an all-black junior high to play on an all-white high school football team because his coach wouldn't let him play his favorite position — running back.

But Campbell planned to go to college before he ever played prep football in Texas. But even then, he had to fight the stereotype of athletics and academics being mutually exclusive. He says that his parents were "very disappointed" when he decided to go out for football.

"They thought my grades would go down," he recalls. "But they didn't. Without football, I couldn't have gone to UCLA (on an athletic scholarship)."

But what about the athlete who doesn't have academic goals like Adams or Campbell had, who needs a "black community" to survive Oregon's grey winters?

Adams doesn't think there are many black athletes like that in Eugene. "If they didn't like it here, they wouldn't stay," she says matter of factly. But they do stay, which Adams says means they must be coming for purposes other than strictly athletics.

Both Adams and Campbell acknowledge, however, that having other blacks in Eugene gives them a sense of security.

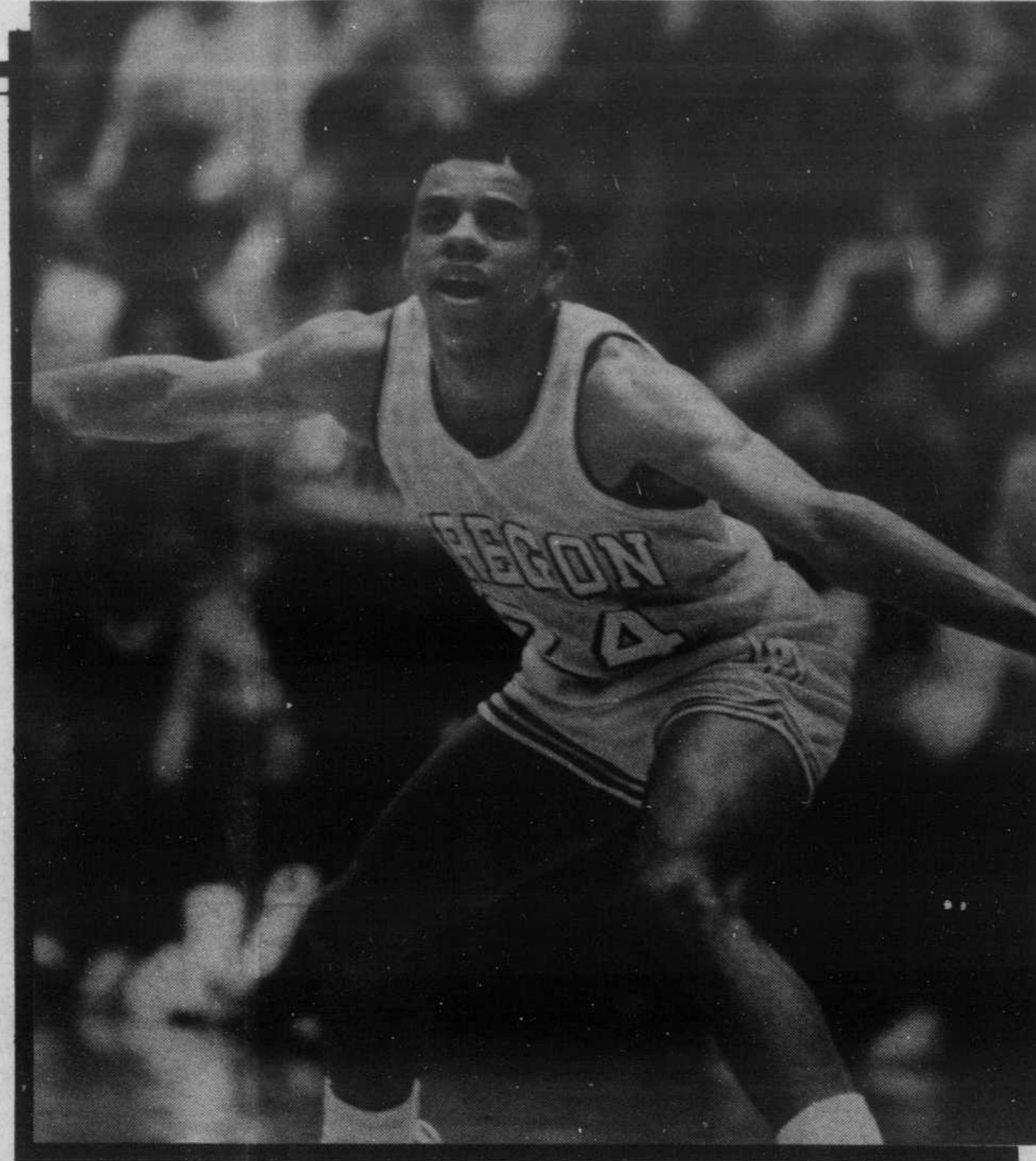
"It's a cultural identity thing," says Campbell. "You see black people so seldom in Eugene, that when you do see another black, you say 'Wow, there's another one.'"

"It's little-bitty things, like food and music. I try to get my players over to my house as often as possible because they need it, that sense of 'home cooking.'"

Bell says its human nature not to want to stand out.

"If you come from a larger place, it becomes part of the way of life to expect mixtures," she says.

White students from the Eastern seaboard or small towns face the same problems, says



Donald Dutton is one of nearly 200 black students who attend Oregon.

Barbara Nicholls, counselor for student athletes.

"Change is what is involved," she says. "White students from back East notice the lack of diversity here."

But that lack of diversity does make it easier on the black players on the Oregon football team to have a black coach, Campbell says.

"They might not relate to me if the entire staff was black," he says. "But here, they find a way to make friends. They know we have something in common, even if it's only the obvious — that we're both black."

Although Campbell remembers a few personal instances of racist remarks directed his way while he has been in Eugene, he says that this town is no more racist than any highly mixed city.

"I like this city," he says. "There are problems here, but the same problems exist in the city. You just realize the fact more here because you are aware of being one of the few blacks."

Adams believes that the white population of Eugene is "supportive of all athletes," regardless of skin color. And her experiences with the University's athletic department have been similar.

"They don't see any difference. If you can get the job done, you'll be out playing."

Because of the lack of a "black community," black athletes at the University have tend-

ed to establish a community of their own, Bell believes.

"A football player has 99 built-in friends," she says.

Adams recalls her freshman year, when she "created" her own community with fellow black athletes.

Adams agrees with Bell's belief that the process of black athletes establishing their own community is more a matter of the overwhelming "whiteness" of Eugene.

"It would be good to share across cultural and racial boundaries," Bell says. "But it is problematic with such a small minority of blacks. Historically, small groups coming into an area and trying to blend have had problems."

"Cultural dominance works against creating diversity."

Bell says she sees problems that affect black athletes, but believes the problems are more individual than skin-color related.

"I don't want to respond by lumping all blacks and all black athletes together," she says. "Blacks are individuals."

And Campbell couldn't agree more.

"I consider myself a football coach," he says. "Sometimes at the end of a function for alumni, I realize I'm the only black in the room. But I'm accustomed to being the only black."

By John Healy



Emerald photos

Eugene "Choo Choo" Young gave up his final year of college football to pursue law school.

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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES - FALL 1983

Activity	Div. *	Min. # Players	Entry Deadline	Start Date
Bowling *	M-W-C	4	10/7	10/18
Inner Tube Polo *	C	6	10/10	10/12
Slow Bike Race	M-W	1	10/12	10/12
Ultimate Frisbee Tournament	M-W-C	7	10/14	10/15
Cross Country *	M-W-C	4	10/17	10/19
Punt/Pass/Kick Contest	M-W	1	10/20	10/20
Golf Scramble Tournament	M-W-C	2	10/19	10/20
Volleyball *	M-W	6	10/24	10/26
Tennis Doubles	M-W	2	10/28	10/29
Badminton Singles	M-W	1	11/11	11/12
3x3 Basketball	M-W	3	11/14	11/15
Racquetball Singles	M-W	1	11/30	12/1
Basketball Tune-up	M-W	5	12/2	12/3
Wrestling *	M	4	TBA	TBA

*M-Men, W-Women, C-Coed
*Intramural Sport - Under IM Regulations

Results - Thanks to the Emerald, you will find the previous week's results published each week on Wednesday in Sport Shorts. Watch for scores in intramural and all campus events. We are extremely pleased to see this become a regular part of the Wednesday edition.

Intramural Bowling - If your team did not get signed up or missed the managers meeting on Tuesday, October 11, check at the RIM office immediately to get a team registered.

Special Event Today - For the time of your life, stop by at the corner of 13th and University and take part in the SLOW BIKE RACE. The object is to be the slowest bike in town.

Ultimate Frisbee Tournament - scheduled for October 15; entries due Friday, October 14 by 5:00 pm in the RIM office. There are divisions for men, women and co-ed teams.

Intramural Cross Country Meet - will be held this fall on Wednesday, October 19; entry deadline is Monday, October 17. A team consists of 4 runners for men and women, a co-ed team is 2 men and 2 women. Individuals may run unattached.



Golf Scramble Tournament - scheduled for Thursday, October 20 at 3:30 pm at Laurelwood Golf Course. Price for this 9-hole event is \$3.75. A team consists of 2 players. Each partner hits from the best lie.

Punt/Pass/Kick Contest - Here's your chance to test your kicking and passing. Come out to the IM Field at 3:30 pm and join us on Thursday, October 20.



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