

Sister university among best in America

# U. of Georgia shines in Athletics

by TOM HENDERSON  
Special Assignment  
Sportswriter

The University of Georgia's athletic programs are a study in the marketing of an American college. The promotion, packaging and merchandising of UGA to fans, supporters, media and most vital of all, prospective recruits is among the finest to be seen in the States. The continual prominence of Georgia's athletes on both conference (South Eastern Conference - SEC) and national levels is testimony to their dedication to college sports.

Georgia, while having academic areas of expertise, is known nationally for its teams in almost every major college sport. UGA's renowned football team, the UGA Bulldogs (same name as all other Georgia Men's teams have - women's are all Lady Bulldogs) leads the way in both popularity and success. They play out of Sanford Stadium, an 82,000 seat jewel for which there is a 20,000 seat expansion project in the planning stages. Once completed, Sanford will be the 2nd largest stadium in the U.S. behind Michigan's (104,000). The place lives and dies with football and having an average team, as they do at the present, is as bad as losing all the time. If talent alone won't win for them, the Georgia fans expect sufficient miracles to occur to at least get the team into a bowl game. In the past



they haven't been disappointed too often.

Football contributed 80 percent of the athletic department's yearly revenues while expending only 25 percent of their budget. There are pro football teams whose owners would love to have such a profit ratio.

The other big draw sport is men's basketball which also has a winning tradition, but not the impact of football. Lately though, both football and men's basketball have been overtaken by women's basketball, at least in the standings if not at the gate. Yet, Georgia not only loves a winner - they love to support a winner.

To give an indication of where UGA ranks in college tennis, all that need be said is that the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) finals are held every year at Georgia's own tennis courts - considered the best of any university in the world. This results in success for Georgia - especially in 1984 when they took both the men's and women's singles titles at the nationals. UGA also has strong teams in golf,

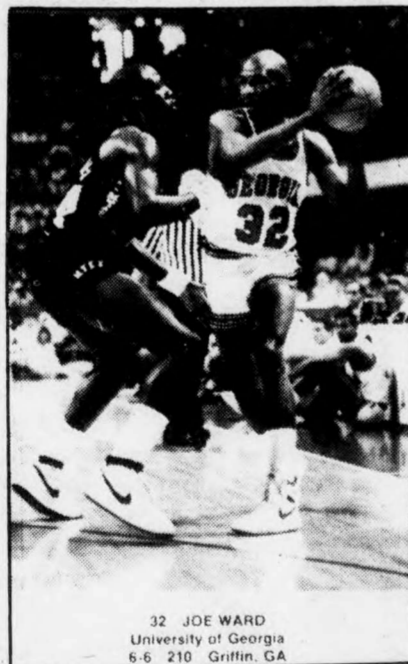


SANFORD STADIUM — UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

gymnastics, swimming, and volleyball. The track team is rebuilding, but the competition from the other warm weather areas (Texas, California, etc.) is really rough. The only area where Georgia is out of its league is baseball - the Diamond Dogs have proven to be made of glass. Even here the University is doing all it can by improving the team's facilities.

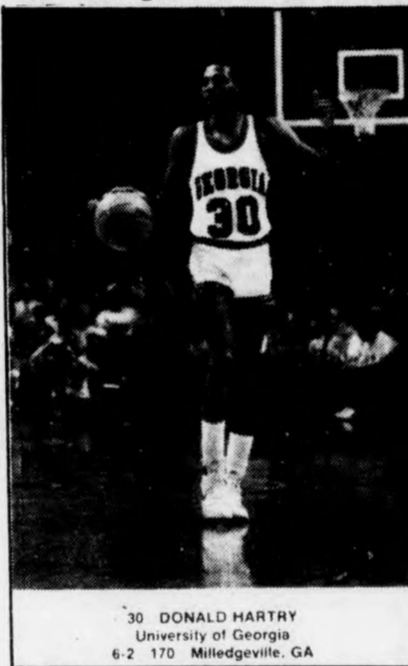
UGA competes in nine NCAA sports by giving out 246 (the maximum allowed) full scholarships to 275 athletes (some scholarships are split.) These athletic awards are worth \$4,206 (US) to a Georgia resident and \$6,468 (US) for a non-resident. That converts to \$5,804 and \$8,926 in Canadian currency.

Georgia has wonderful facilities, a large stadium and arena and is currently investing \$10 million in a training centre for the football team. But UGA is not wondrously wealthy. This is a state university supported by taxes just like UNB is. What UGA has going for it is a combination of factors - size, location, and tradition. Georgia has over 23,000 students at 13 different colleges, all located on a 42,000 acres campus in Athens, Georgia. This gives Georgia the academics to attract students so in-



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clined and the room for soft courses for those who aren't. Athens is less than 100 miles from Atlanta, the capital of Georgia and the South's biggest city as well as being one of the US's largest



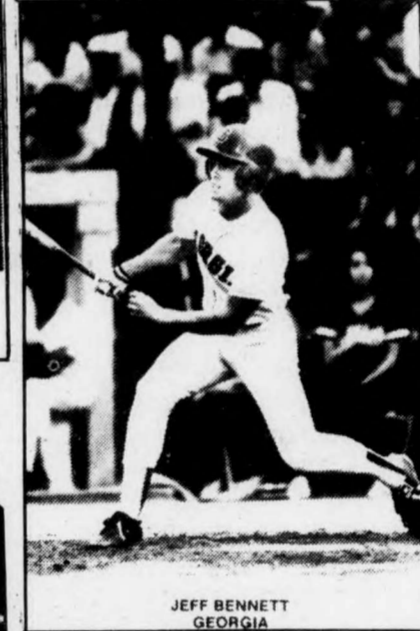
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media centers, as shown by the football team's 4 national TV appearances this year already.

UGA has always been extremely strong athletically and they pull out all the stops to ensure that this strength is perpetuated year after year. The Georgia alumni is the major contributor to the financing of this system. When it is considered that each football season ticket holder is requested to make a tax-deductible contribution to the scholarship fund before they pay their \$90 (\$15 X 6 home games) for the actual tickets, it is apparent that winning becomes important. When it is also taken into consideration that the seats on the 50 yard line and in the plush corporation-held boxes are held by those who contribute more than the

minimum \$100 - up to \$10,000, then victory is not only important - it's vital!

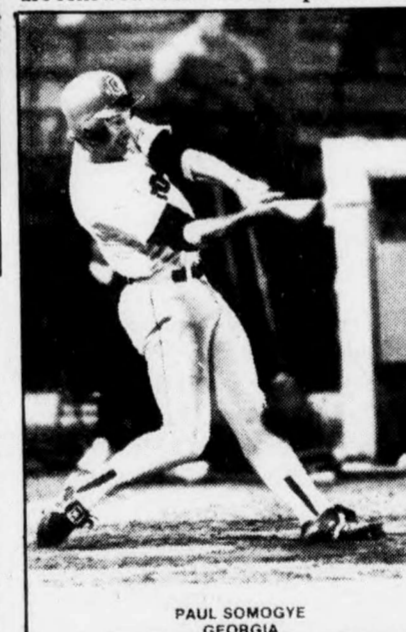
This brings us to the crux of the problem with a school in the UGA mold - the overwhelming necessity to win in order to retain the aura of a triumphant tradition which in turn brings in dollars from supporters. The big teams are not dominated by student-athletes but by those athletes who could be more aptly designated as pre-pro. These are the players that Georgia has to recruit in order to have a chance to win not only in the current year but also down the road. Every year is a



JEFF BENNETT  
GEORGIA

rebuilding year as the coaches have to have athletes from junior colleges and high schools lined up to replace (without a decrease in talent) those who graduate from Georgia.

The pressure this engenders comes to rest not only on the coaches and staff but on the players themselves as, for the most part, they are on scholarships that are renewed at the coaches option. This



PAUL SOMOGYE  
GEORGIA

is not to put forth a view that at Georgia the athlete is regarded as nothing more than what he or she can produce in their particular game because in contrast to that bleak picture players at UGA are kept on at

University as managers and team helpers if they can't finish their degrees in their four years of eligibility. But



GINA BANALES  
ALL-AMERICA  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

uncertainty exists. As does the pressure.

Of Georgia's nine sports five produce players who are looking to the professional leagues for future advancement; football, basketball, men's and women's, Golf - both sexes, and tennis as well as gymnastics, swimming, and track, volley ball, women's, baseball, and basketball. All are looking to the 1988 Seoul Olympics to earn the opportunity for endorsements, like Bruce Jenner, or the exhibition leagues, as



TERRI ECKERT  
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does Carl Lewis. The English mid term pales in contrast with the importance of such opportunities.

Each athlete on campus must ensure that she or she is receiving the best attention possible in order to compete on a national and world level. This is why even the threat of a disqualification period does not inhibit transfers who feel they've had a better offer elsewhere in terms of facilities, coaching, or competition. Such decisions are real pressure cookers.

The life of a University of Georgia athlete or coach is a good one but as with everything there is a price to be paid for it. At UGA the price is the pressure to succeed and excel. It is a high price.

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