

Prisoners play basketball with students from Bible college

By Daniel Rubin
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

PHILADELPHIA — This is home-court advantage. The visiting team runs a 400-yard gauntlet, past signs about drug-sniffing dogs and warnings to stick together, through hundreds of inmates milling about in uniforms the color of dried blood.

"Yo, you're a tall one!" "You're going down!"

The guests are from the Philadelphia College of Bible, 13 lanky, fresh-faced basketball players who learned the game in such places as Glennallen, Alaska, and Billings, Mont., guys comfortable saying, "Dang!" and "Good grief!"

They've traveled an hour to face a team from the State Correctional Institution at Graterford. Starting for Graterford are two murderers and three men in for drug-related crimes and armed robbery.

The officials are inmates paid 86 cents per game. The man keeping the clock is himself doing time, the scorekeeper just counting the days. And high above the court, sitting in judgment, are hundreds of jeering spectators. Going behind penitentiary walls is nothing new for the PCB Eagles. During the season, they scrimmage in a number of Philadelphia prisons. They see the games as part of their ministry, and,

afterward, they talk about Christ.

Since it's a privilege for inmates to play, the contests are surprisingly clean, says the collegians' coach, Don Martindell, 43, himself a former bible-school ballplayer. "You probably get more cheap shots from other teams on our schedule," he says. But Graterford, a maximum-security prison in Montgomery County, is different, he reminds his players before their trip Tuesday night. It's bigger, tighter, tougher. They'll bring in just one ball, entering last year, they were frisked.

Before their departure from an arena nicknamed "the Pink Palace" on their Langhorne campus, they huddle around Eric Judge, 20, a grandson of Alaskan missionaries, who offers the blessing: "Lord, we thank you for this opportunity to tell some people about You. We pray we go in with a humble attitude and play very hard and bring some respect to ourselves."

It takes a half-hour at Graterford to be processed through "The Gate," where the collegians produce picture IDs, have their hands stamped, and receive wristbands and warnings about personal contact with inmates. The trash talk starts immediately.

"If y'all can't beat no convicts . . ."

"I don't know how well they'd take to losing." And this is from the guards. In T-shirts and shorts, the

ballplayers pass five cell blocks each with 550 inmates on their left and the institutional complex where prisoners make clothing and shoes on their right. A bulletin board maintained by the Graterford Lifers advertises Girl Scout cookies.

"Yeah, they're doing 'Romeo and Juliet,' too," one of the players jokes. A stocky inmate with a shaved head and a fixed scowl veers toward them and mutters: "Rookies." "Yo, big fella, these boys can dunk," a graybeard tells Dan Mesher, at 6-foot-5 the tallest bible-school player. "Yeah?" the lean 20-year-old from Downingtown says softly. "We can dunk, too."

At the fieldhouse, a green-and-white box made of cinder blocks, the inmates warm up in white-and-green uniforms branded with the letters S.C.I.G. They have a few years and a lot of bulk on the collegians, who wear green, numbered uniforms borrowed from the prison. It can't make any of the bible-college men feel more confident to overhear the Graterford coach say that he's missing two of his best players, having thrown them off the team for brawling during their last prison-league game against the team from Camp Hill.

"There are no choirboys," says Graterford coach Joe Rogers, 30, who played guard for the State University

of New York at Utica before being hired to work at the prison. "There's a lot of athleticism and a lack of real fundamentals. A lot of (these) people never played under a whistle. They'd get a game on the corner and just play call your own fouls and what have you."

The game starts sloppily. There's no scoring or drama until Steve Melniczak, 18, a freshman from Northeast Philadelphia, drives to his right, then executes a silky crossover dribble that freezes his defender and sucks the air out of the balcony. The inmates start hooting. From the bench, a bible-school teammate yells, "Way to go, Skippy!" And that's all the Greek chorus needs. "Skippy . . ." "Skippy . . ."

But when Melniczak fakes out a second defender and flows to the hoop, the catcalls turn to cheers. "Got game!" someone pronounces. The Eagles are fluid lots of ball movement, crisp pick and rolls. Their long-distance shots fall easily at first, just net.

But Graterford rules the boards, and the collegians have little success working the ball inside for easy baskets.

The visitors are up, 21-19, at one point, but when their three-point attempts start to miss, Graterford grabs the lead and doesn't let up. A close game not in the cards, the

hungry crowd looks for other sport. The home team steals the ball but blows a three-on-none break each of the three missing easy shots.

The balcony erupts in lusty boos. "It's always that way," Rogers says. "All around the state system, they root for the other team. I don't know if it's jealousy or just the general negativity."

Four minutes into the second half, the inmates have scored 10 unanswered points when the game gets ugly. Tim Stone, 20, of Billings, Mont., sets to take a charge and is bullied over. He's called for the foul, and his coach fumes. "Why don't the calls come this way?" the coach asks. Sympathy pours from upstairs.

"They don't listen!" an inmate says. "They don't know nothing about the game!" Seconds later, Billy Manning, 22, of Newport News, Va., is hammered and collapses to his knees under the basket. This time, the refs call it.

And after a scramble for a rebound, Judge rushes off the court, his eyes tearing, his nose squirting blood. He caught a teammate's shoulder. "Back next week?" someone taunts, as the inmates crowd the railing. With five minutes to go, the Graterford coach pulls starter Richard Smith. "They're relying too much on three-pointers," says Smith, whose court used to be the Richard Allen Homes in North

Philadelphia.

Smith, 28, made the Graterford team after arriving in December 1993, having been convicted of the late-night fatal shooting of a 23-year-old neighbor. Basketball takes up most of his free time, he says. He doesn't get much opportunity to excel before people not in the system. The buzzer sounds as he talks. The final score: 89-61, Graterford.

The stands clear quickly, and the home team is hustled off, leaving the bible-college players time only for handshakes. As they make the long walk back, the halls are busier than before. Prisoners walk shoulder to shoulder with them and ask about the game. "What's wrong with y'all?" wonders a man in the parking lot.

Two players jostle over who's riding shotgun, prompting coach Martindell to chide: "Violence never solved anything." It's quiet on the way home after pleas for a Wawa stop solved anything. It's quiet on the way home after pleas for a Wawa stop and crab legs go unanswered. Most of the players have to study.

Back inside, meanwhile, Smith is no longer No. 20, the starting guard with the steady game. He's state prisoner CF4331, working off 17-1/2 to 45 years for third-degree murder. He has 45 minutes to shower before the guards lock him in for another night.

Court refuses to expand scope of Title IX

By Jan Crawford Greenburg
Knight-Ridder Tribune

WASHINGTON — Rejecting an argument by an Ohio woman banned from playing collegiate volleyball, the Supreme Court Tuesday refused to expand the scope of certain federal anti-discrimination laws.

The unanimous ruling was a victory for the National Collegiate Athletic Association, which was hit with a sex-discrimination lawsuit after it prohibited Renee Smith from playing volleyball. Smith argued that the NCAA should be liable under a federal education law that prohibits sex discrimination in "any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." The NCAA gets no federal money directly, but Smith

argued it was subject to the law, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, because it gets dues from colleges that receive federal aid.

That argument, if adopted, could have had an enormous impact. Had the justices agreed, it could have meant a host of other entities, such as vendors or other athletic associations, also were covered by the law. Those entities also could be subject to lawsuits under similar laws that prohibit discrimination in federally funded programs based on a person's race, age or disability.

But the justices swiftly rejected the argument, in a ruling that came just a month after the case was argued. "Dues payments from recipients of federal funds, we hold, do not suffice to render the dues recipient subject to

Title IX," Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote for the court. "At most, the association's receipt of dues demonstrates that it indirectly benefits from the federal assistance afforded its members. This showing, without more, is insufficient to trigger Title IX coverage," she wrote.

NCAA President Cedric W. Dempsey said the organization, which has 1,200 member schools, was pleased with the ruling. He noted that the NCAA has worked to comply with Title IX voluntarily.

The case came about after Smith said the NCAA discriminated against her by denying her permission to play college volleyball when she was in graduate school. Smith had played volleyball as an undergraduate at St. Bonaventure University and then

sought to play during her postgraduate years at Hofstra University and the University of Pittsburgh.

In denying her eligibility, the NCAA pointed to a rule that allows graduate students to participate in athletics only at the institution that awarded the undergraduate degree. Smith sued, alleging the NCAA granted waivers from eligibility restrictions to male athletes more often than it did to females.

A lower court dismissed her claim, ruling that she had not shown the NCAA was subject to Title IX. But a federal appeals court reversed the ruling, holding that Smith could pursue her lawsuit simply showing the NCAA got money from institutions that receive federal funds. The decision is not a complete victory for

the NCAA, however, because the justices refused to address other arguments about why the organization should be subject to Title IX. The justices said those arguments must first be fully discussed in lower courts.

Smith also maintains that she should be allowed to sue because the NCAA gets federal money through the National Youth Sports Program and because the NCAA has controlling authority over college athletics. Marcia Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center, said Tuesday she was heartened by the court's decision because it provided "a road map of how the NCAA ultimately will be held accountable under the civil rights laws."

"I think people in this country would be very taken aback if they had any idea that the NCAA, which has such control over intercollegiate athletics, is making an argument that it is immune from the civil rights laws and can operate these athletic-educational programs. . . . in a discriminatory way," she said.

Greenberger noted that those issues have been raised in other cases, including a race discrimination lawsuit, now pending against the NCAA. "It's just a matter of time until coverage of the NCAA by the civil rights statutes is beyond dispute," Greenberger said.

But Dempsey said the NCAA was confident the lower courts will rule in the NCAA's favor on the other issues, as well.

Superfast Internet2 just for Universities for now

By Reid Kanaley
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Not online yet? You are about to fall even further behind. An ultrahigh-speed "Internet2" was introduced in Washington today with promises of big-screen interactive video, the end of fist-pounding download delays and uses yet to be invented.

For now, however, the \$500 million system is only for experimental use by universities and industry researchers. Everyone else will have to wait. The benefits of Internet2 will not trickle down to the common, salivating Web surfer for a few years, at least. And though it will make possible Internet connections tens of thousands of times faster than a 56K

modem, Internet2 will not do e-mail or the World Wide Web.

What it will do, its backers hope, is spark a generation of innovations, what e-mail and the Web were to the current Net, to dazzle in the 21st century. "We're just about to see another explosion of interesting technology," promised David Farber, a University of Pennsylvania professor of computer science and a member of the advisory board for Internet2, Tuesday.

Penn is one of 140 universities lined up to connect to Internet2, which is based on a continentwide, 10,000-mile fiber-optic cable loop dedicated to the project for three years by Qwest Communications International Inc. of Denver. The

cable, or backbone, has been dubbed Abilene, after the Kansas town that served as a cattle transit point for the Old West.

"It's the new frontier of networking," said Greg Wood, spokesman for the University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development, a Washington-based group coordinating the roll-out of Internet2. Government agencies, telecommunications and cable companies, and others in the private sector have been racing to set up newer, faster Internet services, so Internet2 is not the first revision of cyberspace to hit the ether. But with a data-transfer speed of 2.5 gigabits per second on the Abilene backbone, it is one of the fastest.

For example, the 4-year-old government-sponsored very-high-performance Backbone Network Service, or vBNS, already connects 82 university campuses, and was state of the art for its time. But it runs mostly at about a quarter of the speed of Internet2.

Now, vBNS is being upgraded, and even has its own connection to Internet2, said Rick Wilder, director of advanced Internet technology for MCI WorldCom, which holds the government contract to run vBNS through 2000. Even the academics involved are not sure about what Internet2 will be used for. "If I knew," said Farber, "I'd be out founding a company, right?"

In the hands of bright students, he

said, "they'll figure out things that people like to do, and they'll go out and start companies." For Wednesday's introduction of Internet2, backers held a demonstration inside Washington's Union Station, where they showed the network being used for broadcast-quality video and heavy-duty remote computations.

The Internet began as a research tool for government and academia, and so it is natural that the next-generation Internet emerge from the same fertile soil, said Guy Almes, chief engineer for Internet2. He predicted uses for the network ranging from high-quality videoconferencing to telemedicine, and remote operation of telescopes

in Hawaii.

But that view has drawn some criticism. Tony Rutkowski, director of the Center for Next Generation Internet, an industry association, said he sees a place for new networks such as Internet2 to serve academia, "but the notion that they are leading the way, as with the original Internet in the 1980s, is clearly out of sync with reality."

The private sector is leading the way by "just having to meet the demands of customers," Rutkowski said.

Syracuse announces plan to ban smoking in all dorm rooms

College Press Exchange

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (CPX) - Some students at Syracuse University are fired up about the school's decision to ban smoking in all dormitory rooms in 2000. Currently, students are allowed to smoke in their rooms with their roommate's consent.

The ban stemmed primarily from concerns about the effects of second-hand smoke and the damage students do to their health when they smoke, school officials said.

Student government leaders agree that smoking is a community health issue, but they are concerned that university administrators approved the ban without input from students. As a result, the campus' student government association has asked school officials to revisit the issue.

A study conducted in November by researchers at Harvard University reported that smoking is on the rise among college students. Nearly 30 percent of them are everyday smokers, the study found. Among other things, it recommended that schools increase the number of smoke-free areas on campus and ban smoking in dorm rooms.

Students build Lego cities for class

By Clark Surratt
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Walk into the main lobby of USC's engineering school this morning, and you're likely to see some bleary-eyed students. Since 10 a.m. Sunday, teams of engineering students have been working shifts to see who can build the best city, out of LEGOs.

Four groups of students: chemical engineers, civil engineers, mechanical engineers and freshmen, were given a big pile of colorful LEGO pieces and 24 hours to build and explain their design. Beyond the basic rules, the contestants didn't know exactly what they were getting into.

"It looks like somebody took a bunch of LEGOs nobody wanted, put them in a dump truck and brought 'em here," freshman builder Shawn Lowe said. "We might have gotten leftover parts because we were freshmen," he joked later.

All the students got the same basic load of parts, but there was some variation. They were free to trade

among teams. That led to building strategies. The freshmen talked about holding back on a stylized plastic, figuring it might be valuable to one of the other teams.

Their assignment was to build a "city of the future" from the blocks. These cities would reflect their knowledge of urban design and architecture, along with details of serving city residents through roads, parks and other support structures.

The teams were free to plan in advance, but that had limited strategy. They didn't know what pieces they would have until the LEGOs were dumped out of boxes. "We basically had to figure out what we had and go from there," said Michele Price, a senior and member of the chemical engineering team.

As they began work Sunday, the chemical engineers group started working on a fusion plant to power the city and on a tower and building that would serve as their city centerpiece. Back at the freshman table, Erica von Shenk and Ryan Steinbock were working on a space

port. That was in contrast to a draw-bridge apparatus that looked like it belonged to an old castle moat.

If this LEGO competition somewhat resembles kids play, there's a good reason. One of the major efforts of the USC College of Engineering these days is to try to reach students all the way down to first grade and help bring them along as engineers. One of the goals is to help supply the state's need of a creative force of scientists.

To hear Dean Craig Rogers tell it, every young kid is an engineer until somebody steers them elsewhere. If you don't believe that, he said, watch children play with blocks, build roads in the sand and yes, make model cities. Rogers said it is a mistake to wait until students are nearly out of high school and then rush them with opportunities in engineering. "Engineering is all about problem solving and creative thinking," Rogers said. "That starts as kids and never stops."

Radical Feminist professor ordered to teach men

College Press Exchange

BOSTON (CPX) - Boston College Professor Mary Daly, who for 25 years has been teaching women-only classes, has been ordered to open up her courses to men, too.

Faced with the threat of lawsuit, college officials told Daly in December that she needed to allow men into her courses on advanced feminist theory. They've had similar talks with the self-described "positively revolting hag" in the past. The college reprimanded her in 1974 and 1989 for her women-only stance, but the issue died down each time, school officials said.

However, the latest round of complaints appeared headed to court, prompting school officials to insist that Daly change her ways because they don't give the school a "legal leg to stand on," a school spokesman said.

Daly, who has taken a leave of absence, has refused and gone public