



# The Charlotte Post

THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY SINCE 1906

WEEK OF AUGUST 13, 2026

VOLUME 52 NUMBER 43

WWW.THECHARLOTTEPOST.COM

\$1.50



ADOBE STOCK

A report published by Housing Justice Coalition details the extent of benefits Charlotte Douglas International Airport provides American Airlines. The coalition is pushing city leaders to strike a new contract that obligates American to improve pay and benefits for contract workers and address displacement in communities impacted by airport growth.

## Advocates report on extent of CLT airport benefits to carrier

*Housing Justice Coalition urges public review, better wages in American deal*

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

An alliance of housing advocates wants the next contract between the city of Charlotte and American Airlines to empower service workers and communities near Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

Housing Justice Coalition released a report last week at its annual Housing Justice Assembly detailing demands for the city to negotiate a better lease agreement between the air carrier and Charlotte Douglas International Airport. The sides are negotiating a 10-year deal between the city and American after the most recent contract expired in June. The airport and airline agreed to use terms and

conditions of the existing pact and will have no impact on customers or operations at the world's sixth-busiest airport.

"Both the airport and the airlines remain deeply committed to Charlotte and maintaining CLT's role as a critical driver of connectivity and economic growth for the region," Charlotte Douglas said in a June statement.

The coalition's report, "A Bad Deal: How the City of Charlotte is Bankrolling American Airlines," details how the Dallas, Texas-based corporation profits from local and state initiatives that pump millions of dollars into the airline's coffers along with lower lease rates for space. The paper also argues American, which controls 80% of the gates at

Charlotte Douglas, benefits from contractors paying lower wages to employees while charging higher ticket prices.

The advocacy coalition, which aligns with Service Employees International Union, is lobbying city leaders to negotiate a contractual obligation to improve salaries and benefits for workers as well as compensate people impacted by airport expansion.

The city, housing advocates insist, should include:

- A 90-day public review and comment period for the lease agreement before City Council approval.
- Encourage American and its contractors to adopt standards for service

Please see **ADVOCATES** | 2A

## CMS chief reinstated after issues identified

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Crystal Hill has returned to work as Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools superintendent.

The board of education voted Tuesday to end her paid leave after a seven-week investigation into oversight and administrative concerns. The panel determined in a joint statement the "review identified issues that will require ongoing attention as it relates to leadership and operational practices. We will address these issues directly with Dr. Hill."



Hill

The board declined to reveal the charges against Hill or what sparked the investigation conducted by Brooks Pierce, an independent law firm.

Hill, who was placed on leave June 17, will return to work Wednesday, in time for the start of the 2026-27 school year later this month.

"We believe this provides the best path forward while maintaining continuity and stability for our students, employees and families," the board's statement read. "The

Please see **CMS** | 2A

## Millions lose with SNAP overhaul

BLACK PRESS USA

As part of last year's Big, Beautiful Bill, President Donald Trump made significant changes to the work requirements and funding structure for food vouchers.

An estimated 4 million people have lost Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits as a result of changes the Trump administration made to the program.

NPR reports that SNAP has seen a rapid decline in enrollment and participation since Trump's "Big, beautiful, bill" became law last July. The law implemented new work requirements for anyone with a child over 14, former foster children, veterans, and even people aged 55 to 64. What makes the changes particularly cruel is the fact that most people on SNAP already work in part-time, low-income jobs. It's just hard to make that new 80-hour monthly threshold on a part-time job. I say that as someone who also works part-time in a job where I'm contractually limited to under 40 hours a month.

Starsky Wilson, president of the Children's Defense Fund, told NPR that the speed of the tax law's impact has shocked him. "We're upset about how quickly this has happened," Wilson told NPR. "There are some supports that are

Please see **MILLIONS** | 2A

### « APPRECIATION »

## Edward Fort, architect of NC A&T expansion

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Edward Fort Ed.D., who led North Carolina A&T State University's surge as an academic and economic engine over 17 years, died Aug. 9 at age 94.

Dr. Fort led A&T during an explosive period of development from 1981-99 that positioned the historically Black college to expand its national reputation as a leader in engineering and research. A&T, the nation's largest HBCU with 15,275 students enrolled during the 2025-26 academic year, produces more Black engineering graduates than any college in the U.S.

"Dr. Fort played an invaluable role in the devel-

Please see **EDWARD** | 2A



Fort

## Dr. Kimberly Scott appointed Mecklenburg health director

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Dr. Kimberly Scott has been upgraded to Mecklenburg County's public health director.

Scott, who was appointed interim director since January, was appointed to permanent status by County Manager Mike Bryant. She succeeds Dr. Raynard Washington, who was appointed New Jersey health commissioner by Gov. Mikie Sherrill.

"I'm honored for the opportunity to serve as Mecklenburg County Health Director and work toward our collective vision of assuring the health and

safety of our diverse and changing community today and for our future generations," Scott said in a statement. "We have a talented and dedicated public health team that I'm excited to continue to work with, alongside partners, community organizations, and residents."

Public Health is one of four departments in Mecklenburg's Health and Human Services Agency, employing nearly 1,000 people. The department provides clinical services, investigating potential cases of infectious diseases, conducts restaurant inspections and staffs Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools with nurses.

"Dr. Scott is a proven public health leader with a deep understanding of

Please see **DR. KIMBERLY** | 2A



Scott

the charlotte post  
FOUNDATION

## POST BEST GALA 2026

**BLACK TIE / FORMAL ATTIRE**  
RECEPTION & DINNER: 6-10 PM

**Saturday, October 3, 2026**  
Hilton Charlotte Uptown

**thepostfoundation.org/2026PBBE**  
SPONSORSHIPS • SOUVENIR ADS • QUESTIONS: 704.376.0498

Malcomb Coley  
Luminary

Mary Towe  
Educator of the Year

Maya McClain  
Top Senior

Jade Mungal  
Top Senior Runner Up

### STAY IN TOUCH

Snapchat: thecharpost  
X: @thecharpost  
Facebook: The Charlotte Post  
Instagram: @thecharlottepost



#PaperThursday

INSIDE  
Sports 5A  
Life 1B  
A&E 5B  
Classified 4B

Digital edition:  
www.thecharlottepostnewspaper.com

To subscribe: (704) 376-0496 or online  
http://tcppc.com/Subscribe

Please  
Recycle



# Advocates report extent of CLT airport benefits

Continued from page 1A  
workers in accordance with the proposal from SEIU 32BJ and negotiate in good faith.

- Create an economic impact fund funded by American for neighborhoods facing displacement due to airport-related growth in ZIP codes based on Charlotte Douglas expansion plans.

- A fund for community block grants funded by the air carrier to support small businesses, neighborhood organizations, and neighborhood-led nonprofits.

"The City has significant contractual leverage to demand community benefits," the report's authors wrote. "Airlines benefit from long leases with airports. Other airports have similarly leveraged leases to pressure airlines into acting for the good of the greater community. In December 2025, the Denver City Council rejected a lease with the airline Key Lime over its contracts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

"As the movement to bring fair wages to CLT has grown in size and power, Charlotte's corporate lobbies petitioned North Carolina Republican lawmakers to quietly add a provision to the 2026 NC State Budget. The provision attempts to block labor standards gained through contract negotiation. Corporate interests' efforts to erect legal roadblocks show the movement for a fair lease threatens the status quo."

According to American, the air carrier employs more than 16,500 people

in Charlotte, with an annual payroll of more than \$2 billion.

"American has been committed to Charlotte for decades and supported \$4 billion worth of infrastructure improvements at the airport in just the past decade," an American spokesperson said upon announcement of the extension. "We are proud of the vital role our hub plays in connecting the region to the world - driving more than \$30 billion in economic activity annually across the state and supporting more than 150,000 jobs. We continue to make meaningful progress toward a long-term lease agreement, and this extension will support continued discussions."

**Airlines benefit from long leases with airports. Other airports have similarly leveraged leases to pressure airlines into acting for the good of the greater community.**

Housing Justice Coalition report on Charlotte's airport lease

# Edward Fort, NC A&T chancellor emeritus, dies

Continued from page 1A  
opment of North Carolina A&T, laying our essential foundation as a research university and making possible so much of who and what we are today," A&T Chancellor James R. Martin II said in a statement. "The great Sir Isaac Newton once wrote, 'If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.' Dr. Fort's shoulders were broad, and from them we saw a future that he first envisioned and that we now work daily to make reality. We are grateful, indeed, that A&T was so large a part of his life's work."

As chancellor, Dr. Fort led A&T's transformation as a leader in engineering and technology education. During his administration, A&T initiated more than 30 new academic programs and earned approval for its first doctoral degrees - mechanical engineering and electrical engineering - in 1984.

The university also completed more than \$50 million in construction, including McNair Hall - the College of Engineering's headquarters - and a new F.D. Bluford Library as well as \$30 million in renovations and a \$9 million research center at the library's former site, which was named the Edward B. Fort Interdisciplinary Research Center in 1997.

During Dr. Fort's tenure, A&T's enrollment grew and the Greensboro campus' academic reputation expanded beyond STEM excellence. The College of Arts and Sciences theater arts program, for example, earned a pair of first-place Kennedy Center/American College Theater festival awards.

Even after stepping down as chancellor, Dr. Fort was a presence on A&T's campus as an education professor in the Department of Leadership Studies and main-

tained an office in Bluford Library, where he could often be found reading, writing and working well into his 80s.

A Detroit native, Dr. Fort started his education career as curriculum coordinator for Detroit Public Schools in 1964 and was a visiting professor at the University of Michigan as well as adjunct professor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. He also taught at Michigan State University. He was hired as superintendent of the Inkster Michigan Public School System in 1967 and the Sacramento, California's City Unified School District in 1971.

From 1974-81, he was chancellor of the University of Wisconsin Colleges, which included 14 two-year campuses before taking moving to A&T.

President George H.W. Bush appointed Dr. Fort to the first President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities and in 1991 as well as becoming the first Black member of the NASA Advisory Council when he was appointed by NASA Administrator Admiral Richard Truly.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton appointed Dr. Fort to NASA's Blue Ribbon Commission on the Redesign of the International Space Station and in 1994 was appointed by U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Capital Financing Advisory Board.

Dr. Fort earned bachelor's and master's degree in educational administration from Wayne State University in Detroit and served two years of military duty in West Berlin, Germany before earning a doctorate in educational administration and finance from the University of California in Berkeley.



MECKLENBURG COUNTY  
Dr. Kimberly Scott takes the oath of office as Mecklenburg County public health director. Scott, who succeeds Dr. Raynard Washington, had been interim director since January.

## Dr. Kimberly Scott sworn in as Mecklenburg's health director

Continued from page 1A  
the health needs and challenges facing our community," Bryant said. "In her role as interim director, she has helped guide the county through challenging outbreaks of measles and cyclosporiasis while continuing the department's efforts to improve the health and quality of life for all residents. We conducted a national search, and the best candidate was right here."

Before her appointment as interim director, Scott was assistant director of the Population Health Division since 2022, where she was responsible for resources to design, implement, and evaluate programs and initiatives.

She was also tasked with building relationships between the health department

and community partners, increasing access to local health priority data, and overseeing the Offices of Chronic Disease Policy and Prevention, Violence Prevention, and Health Equity.

Scott has more than 15 years of experience as a public health practitioner at nonprofits, local government and academic settings, including Live Well Wake Manager in Wake County; vice president of community health at Horizons Community Solutions in Albany Georgia, and health educator at Georgia Public Health.

She was also a data collections specialist at National Children's Study, a federal research project that examined how biological and environmental factors impact children's health and development.

## CMS superintendent reinstated

Continued from page 1A  
Board did not take this action lightly. When serious concerns involving district operations and oversight are raised, the Board has an obligation to investigate them thoroughly, carefully consider the findings and act in the best long-term interest of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

"With the review complete, our focus remains on the start of the school year. CMS has strong leadership throughout the organiza-

tion, and district leaders, principals, teachers and staff have worked throughout the summer to ensure our schools are ready to welcome students on August 25."

Hill joined CMS in 2022 as chief of staff, was promoted to superintendent a year later as the first Black woman to lead the nation's 16th-largest school district with 143,000 students and a budget of \$2 billion.

Board Chair Stephanie Sneed said in an Aug. 7

statement the district received a report on the investigation but didn't act up on it. Four days later, Hill was reinstated.

"We appreciate the patience of our community, families and employees throughout this process," the district declared. "Our students remain at the heart of every decision we make, and we are committed to providing them with a strong and successful start to the new school year."

### « BLACK BRILLIANCE »



OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Morrie Turner created Wee Pals, the first racially diverse comic strip, which was syndicated in 1965.

## Morrie Turner added diversity to comic universe with Wee Pals

By Herbert L. White  
herb.lwhite@thecharlottepost.com

Morris "Morrie" Turner (1923-2014) was the creator of Wee Pals, the first racially diverse comic strip.

Turner, who was born in Oakland, California, started drawing caricatures in the fifth grade and transitioned to cartoons in high school. He joined the Army Air Force following high school graduation, and while on guard duty drew cartoons, which led to his hiring by Stars and Stripes to draw a series, "Rail Head," that was based on his experiences during World War II.

Following the war, he created community affairs publications for the Oakland Police Department while freelancing cartoons to national publications, starting with Baker's Helper, which bought one of his cartoons for \$5.

Turner, who had no formal art training, sought out professional cartoonists for advice. When he questioned why there

were no people of color in cartoons, his mentor and Peanuts creator Charles Schultz suggested he create one. That suggestion became the series Dinky Fellas, which transformed into Wee Pals, which in 1965 became the first multi-ethnic cartoon syndicated in the United States. Wee Pals is syndicated in more than 100 newspapers worldwide. On Sundays an additional panel called Soul Corner details the life of famous people of color.

Turner wrote several children's books, including "The Illustrated Biography of Martin Luther King Jr." Turner was honored by the Cartoonist Society in 2000 with its Sparky Award and inducted into the California Public Education Hall of Fame. He is the subject of a film called Keeping the Faith with Morrie. Bill Keene, the artist behind the Family Circle cartoon, so admired Turner's work that he added a Black character to his series named Morrie.

Connect with The Post on social media



## Millions of Americans lose with SNAP

Continued from page 1A

still slated to go away later this year. So, there could be an even greater sense of desperation among children and their families as we come to the end of this year."

As if the work requirements weren't already having an adverse impact, the Trump administration is set to implement changes to SNAP's funding model this October. The federal government is

now requiring states to allocate millions in additional funding to keep SNAP up and running. If a state can't afford to provide the extra funding, there's a real chance SNAP may stop being available in that state. There simply aren't enough food banks or supplemental government programs to help mitigate the impact of SNAP completely disappearing.

"There's no replacement for SNAP if a state gets rid of it," Wilson told NPR.

# In uncertain job market, advice for college students

By Clayton Henkel  
NC NEWSLINE

It's move-in week for college students across North Carolina. And once students have gotten settled into their dorms, their attention will turn to getting the classes needed to fulfill their chosen major.

But which career paths are a safe bet in 2026?

U.S. employers cut 23,000 jobs in July. Job creation for May and June was also revised downwards, showing a combined loss of 103,000 positions.

A report by outplacement and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas found artificial intelligence remains the top reason for job cuts, accounting for almost 11,000 of the announced cuts last month. It's the fifth straight month AI has been the leading explanation that employers have provided for eliminating jobs.

"AI is shifting the labor market, it is not dismantling it," writes Andy Challenger, chief revenue officer for Challenger, Gray & Christmas, in their latest report.

Technology, financial firms, and the government sector accounted for the most job losses in July.

Gerald Cohen, chief economist with the Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise, calls the latest employment data worrying.

Cohen said economists are actively debating whether AI is going to create massive job losses in certain fields - careers one would want to avoid - or if it will create new career pathways.

Careers projected to see major disruptions in the near future include marketing and public relations, customer service, technical writing, journalism and web development.

Cohen says ultimately, it may come down to how a person uses artificial intelligence to their advantage.

"If you're a critical thinker, learn how to use AI and learn how to leverage it, [choose] whatever field that's going to inspire you," Cohen said in a call with reporters.

North Carolina State University economist Mike Walden said two or three years ago, he would absolutely have recommended a young person heading to

college pursue a degree in technology. It's a less safe bet these days.

"Now that's up in the air because of AI," said Walden. "AI is a technology that can replace people."

Walden believes that while it's unclear to what extent that may happen, AI is more likely to change certain jobs than to eliminate them.

"There's a part of decision making that only humans can do," Walden said.

Walden told NC Newsline the uncertainty AI creates may help promote social sciences.

"Social sciences are fields where you rely on human interaction, being able to assess other people, being able to work with other people," explained Walden. "That's actually something that I would tell students going to college, and say, certainly look at technology, but don't forget the social sciences. I think that may very well have a rebirth in the new economy that has AI."

Walden said skilled trades are another area where AI can't easily replace humans.

"I'm also a big promoter of skilled fields that maybe require just community college," Walden said. "We need entrepreneurs, we need plumbers, we need electricians. That's not what a lot of people think about when they go to college, but prospects for those jobs, I think, are very, very good."

For those newly graduated or early career professionals who are still struggling to land a job, Cohen says it may not be AI's fault.

"One of the reasons why the unemployment rate for folks with bachelor's has been rising faster than the unemployment rate with folks without a bachelor's degree is not because of AI, but because of the impact of remote work and the fact that it's harder to gain [certain] skills from remote work," Cohen said, "and it's harder to learn from other workers when you're remote."

Cohen said he's a big proponent of flexibility, but the truth is many employers are still grappling with managing and growing employees who aren't on-site as the workplace continues to change.



The Charlotte Post

## While We Don't Deliver Door-to-Door, We Do Deliver to Your Mailbox

Stay connected to the stories that matter.

Have the Post delivered straight to your mailbox with a convenient mail subscription.



www.thecharlottepost.com

The Charlotte Post

www.thecharlottepost.com

Build it. Fix it. Love it!

Your dream home doesn't have to stay a dream. Whether you're buying your first home, renovating a fixer-upper, or starting fresh with new construction, SouthState is here to help. Our Construction & Renovation Loans make it easier to turn "just a house" into your home.

- Finance new build or renovations
- Options for primary or secondary homes
- Flexible payment solutions while you build

Ready to get started? Give us a call!

866.229.5628  
Mortgage@SouthStateBank.com  
SouthStateBank.com/CharlottePost

All loans are subject to credit approval and program guidelines. SouthState Bank N.A. NMLS ID # 403455. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.

# The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

Gerald O. Johnson | CEO/PUBLISHER

gerald.johnson@thecharlottepost.com

André P. Johnson | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

andre.johnson@thecharlottepost.com

Herbert L. White | EDITOR IN CHIEF

herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

Published weekly by The Charlotte Post Publishing Company Inc., 5118 Princess Street, Charlotte, NC 28269 (USPS #965500). Subscription is \$65 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Charlotte, NC. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Charlotte Post, PO Box 30144, Charlotte, NC 28230

## What NC budget means for teachers with experience

As an experienced science teacher in North Carolina, finding innovative, authentic resources to engage my students has never been easy.

After all, math and English are the tested subjects, and school funding and professional development often follow the areas the public sees – and judges – first. The new state budget has made my job even harder.

On the surface, lawmakers say this budget improves educational outcomes for students. An EdNC headline announcing its passage highlights funding for "raises, literacy, and math." But for teachers like me, the reality looks very different.

While my salary has increased by 5.4%, the cost of living has risen by more than 11%, meaning my purchasing power has continued to decline. Even more troubling, legislators have once again excluded teachers with 14 to 29 years of experience from any future salary increases, sending a clear message that experience – the very quality that research consistently links to improved student outcomes – is not a priority to be compensated.

At the same time, resources I have relied on to teach effectively have been stripped away.

For the past 14 years, the North Carolina Office of Environmental Education has been one of those resources. It has provided professional learning, classroom lessons, innovative teaching strategies, and partnerships that have transformed both my teaching and my students' learning.

When I was assigned to teach environmental science, I received the course – but no curriculum and few instructional resources. The Office of Environmental Education became my lifeboat. Through its workshops, field experiences, and network of experts, I gained the knowledge and confidence to make environmental science relevant, engaging, and authentic for my students.

Those experiences led to collaborations with educators, scientists, nonprofit organizations, and industry professionals. They opened doors to field trips, guest speakers, internships, summer employment opportunities, and career pathways that many of my students had never imagined.

The environmental education practices I learned also inspired research projects, presentations at national conferences, professional credentials, and graduate studies that strengthened my effectiveness as a teacher.

The impact extended beyond my Environmental Science classes. I incorporated environmental education best practices into Physical Science, where my students demonstrated higher achievement. I documented those results in a research study, Using Environmental Education Best Practices to Teach Physical Science, and shared the findings with educators at the National Science Teaching Association Conference so other teachers could make science learning more meaningful for their students.

The Office of Environmental Education has also strengthened North Carolina's national reputation as a leader in environmental literacy. Educators from other states have pursued North Carolina's Environmental Educator Certification to build their own teaching capacity.

By investing in teachers, our state has extended its influence well beyond its borders while enriching learning experiences for students here at home.

Although the office provides its resources free of charge, I chose to invest \$50 of my own money 14 years ago to earn my Environmental Educator credential. That modest investment has paid dividends for more than 2,500 students who have benefited from the knowledge, experiences, partnerships, and opportunities the Office made possible. Few public investments can claim that kind of return.

Yet the new state budget effectively eliminates the Office of Environmental Education. It also gives experienced teachers a raise that fails to keep pace with inflation, followed by a decade with no additional salary increases for educators with 14 to 29 years of experience.

North Carolina cannot expect to improve student outcomes while simultaneously disinvesting in the teachers and programs that make those outcomes possible. At a time when our state should be preparing students for an increasingly complex economy and the environmental challenges of the future, we are instead dismantling one of our most effective and affordable educational resources.

North Carolina can – and must – do better. We should invest in the teachers who stay, the programs that work, and the students whose futures depend on both.

*Dorothy Holley Ph.D. teaches chemistry and forensics at West Johnston High School near Benson, North Carolina. In 2026, she was named the American Association of Chemistry Teachers' Chemistry Teacher of the Year.*



DOROTHY HOLLEY

## Boliek's boards make rules less democratic

North Carolina Auditor Dave Boliek may not have wanted to hog the headlines in a year when he isn't on the ballot.

But thanks to his recent actions to weaponize GOP majorities on elections boards to push anti-democratic rules and early voting changes, Boliek is making quite a name for himself ahead of the midterms.

When he was elected as Trump's pick for auditor in 2024, Boliek became the highest-ranking Republican in the executive branch. That's how the GOP lawmakers, hellbent on stripping elections powers from Democratic governor Josh Stein, used a legal loophole to let Boliek hand-pick election deniers and other anti-voter voices to the State Board of Elections.

He was also able to choose Republicans to chair elections boards in all 100 counties, handing the GOP a majority on five-person county elections boards – like those in Rowan, Pitt, and Harnett that have become noticeably more divided as they take up 2026 elections options.

Through his hyper-partisan election appointments, Boliek, the only auditor in the country with the au-

thority to make them, also handed his friends in the legislature what they wanted: another means to cast doubts on fair elections, while putting more barriers in place for Democratic voters. Democrats shouldn't be the only ones concerned.

Last week, Boliek's State Board of Elections advanced proposed rules that would allow a simple 3-2 majority in each county to toss eligible votes cast using legal voter ID exception forms. If GOP members don't believe your reason for not being able to show photo ID, your vote, regardless of party, won't count.

State Board of Elections' data shows if this rule had been in place in 2024, one party would have decided the fate of ballots cast by more than 4,600 eligible North Carolinians. That's over 10 times the amount of the 401 votes statewide that it took to elect the current chief justice of the N.C. Supreme Court – the same person who coincidentally led the effort to reinstate NC's voter ID law in the first place.

If Boliek has his way, it appears another pivotal N.C. Supreme Court seat could be determined by whether these types of votes are counted this fall.

This proposed rule is particularly dangerous given how toxic county boards' deliberations on early voting options have become on Boliek's watch.

In Pasquotank County, where Republicans and Democrats had been able to compromise on early voting plans before, this year Boliek's GOP board chair made clear that he was choosing "recommendations" from the auditor's staff based on the right options for right-wing voters.

He joined with the two other Republican members to "drop Sunday" voting options as Boliek's team had directed and eliminate the county's only early voting site from Elizabeth City State University – a popular location used by the historically Black college and community in federal elections since the pandemic. Republicans opted instead to move the county's single early voting option to the small county board of elections office currently under renovations, with no guarantees that the building nor the parking lot will be ready to handle an election this year.

Granville County's election board members also made national headlines last week during the county's third contentious meeting on voting options. Despite signaling otherwise, GOP members ultimately refused to compromise with their Democratic colleagues as they had in previous cycles, instead taking direction from former party chair who was texting them verbatim what to say to justify cutting two pop-

ular sites used by at least 70% of the county, including 90% of Black voters, but keeping a site demanded by Republicans.

These hyper-partisan plans follow months of bitter county-level meetings, assorted ethics complaints against Republican members, and public records requests proving that Boliek's staff pressured local officials, leading to the resignation of his "eyes and ears on the ground" Dallas Woodhouse, who already had a decade of experience requiring Republican-friendly plans.

Woodhouse's departure won't change that Boliek himself took the unprecedented step of making direct asks of his local appointees, including in Anson County where he demanded the chair add a site to boost GOP turnout, with similar demands in Moore County, which ultimately fell on deaf ears.

Fortunately, some bipartisan county boards of conscience are listening to their communities rather than capitulating to Boliek.

In Jackson County, the auditor's office now infamously told Republican board members there that they should shutter a campus site or lose their jobs. One GOP member fired back, "kiss my ass."

It's now voters' turn to be that angry.

*Sailor Jones is state director of Common Cause North Carolina.*

## Food is everywhere as neighbors struggle

The line to the food pantry at Episcopal Church The Redeemer near where I live in Shelby has grown longer with each passing week.

The church distributes food on Wednesdays to around 300 people. Another church, Shelby Presbyterian, set up a community fridge in response to a noticeable increase in members and non-members reaching out to the church for help, including utility bills and food.

And this was before the federal government shut down (and then reopened). There is still a lot of uncertainty when it comes to SNAP and what food assistance benefits those who rely on the

program will get.

In Cleveland County, 21% of the population receives SNAP benefits. If the community fridge being emptied as fast as it can be filled doesn't indicate necessity, maybe the cars lined up around the little churches does. The news is similar around North Carolina as food pantries and deliveries see surging demand.

This will only get worse. Community members and food pantry directors told NC Health News that demand is surging and food pantries may not be able to keep up with federal dollars expected to be limited in the coming weeks, even with the government reopening.

It's worth knowing that for every one meal a food bank provides, SNAP provides nine, according to data from Feeding America, a nationwide network of food banks, pantries and feeding programs.

We need innovative solutions to meet the needs of our people. In Cleveland County, I really love the work of Broad River Community Market, co-founded by farmers Megan Murphy and Dylan Emory.

Their goal is simple and revolutionary: use their skills and donations from other farms in the area who have excess crops to give free and fresh food for whoever needs it, no questions asked.

The first pop-up Broad River Community Market was planned for early October 2024. It turned out to be just 10 days after Hurricane Helene had left parts of the county destroyed

and without power. During a state of emergency, Dylan and Megan knew they needed to step up. So they thought about postponing.

Ultimately, they chose not to postpone their debut pop-up – and got straight to work.

Several farms have stepped up to donate

crops to meet the needs of an impoverished community struggling to afford groceries. Shelby is the largest city in Cleveland County with around 22,000 residents, and has one of the highest poverty rates in western North Carolina at 31.4%.

Donations are another way community members

have stepped up to keep the Broad River Community Market rolling.

Utilizing our own resources to help our own rural communities is so important. It is our responsibility to take care of one another.

*Stevie Brooks is founder of the community-building group Kudzu Coalition.*



STEVIE BROOKS



Windsor Run® has everything you need for vibrant senior living.

- Gain time and freedom from house maintenance.
- Enjoy stylish residences and on-site amenities.
- Benefit from a safety net of on-site support.

“Living here is more affordable than we thought, and we’ve gained so many benefits—more than we ever anticipated.”  
—Rob L., A Community Resident

Discover **MORE** great reasons to choose Matthews’ premier community.

Call **1-877-508-7364** for your free brochure.

  
**Windsor Run**  
BY ERICKSON SENIOR LIVING®

Matthews  
WindsorRunCommunity.com





HERBERT L. WHITE | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Parker McQuarrie, a transfer from New Haven who spent two years at UCLA, is competing against Wagner transfer Damien Mazil for the starting quarterback role at J.C. Smith.

# Spirited QB duel at JC Smith

Transfers Parker McQuarrie and Damien Mazil battle for starter’s job two weeks into preseason drills

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Age and lack of experience are common bonds in Johnson C. Smith’s quarterback derby.

A pair of 20-something transfers, Parker McQuarrie and Damien Mazil, are vying for the starting job with Josh Jackson, a mid-semester transfer who ended spring camp as the presumed starter, the third option. Golden Bulls coach Maurice Flowers didn’t indicate a favorite after the first week of preseason drills in which they alternated practice ses-

sions with the first team, but a decision is expected by Aug. 18.

“We had our summer workouts and things like that, but once we get to training camp, it’s a two-week competition before we start getting ready for our first ball game,” he said. ... “Just very pleased with both of them. They’re both doing great things with the offense, and we’re not in a position where we need a quarterback that’s going to be going slow and learning along the way.”



Flowers



Mazil

The Golden Bulls return a veteran offense that averaged a school record 33.6 points per game in 2025, including five preseason All-CIAA picks – three of them linemen – as well as 2025 all-conference selections Bobby Smith at tailback and receiver Brian Lane.

“Our football team is an experienced football team, and we need to play football involving everyone on the roster,” Flowers said, “and that includes being able to throw the ball efficiently when we need



McQuarrie

to.” Mazil and McQuarrie are football veterans, albeit unproven at the collegiate level. Mazil, a 6-foot-2, 200-pound graduate transfer who played at Division I FCS Wagner, passed for 719 yards and four touchdowns over four seasons with the Seahawks in addition to rushing for 138 yards and another score. In 18 career games, Mazil completed 80-of-151 passes (53%), including 18-of-39 (46%) for 97 yards and an interception in 2025 as Wagner posted a 5-7 record.

Please see **QUARTERBACK** | 6A

## Golden Bulls charge to No. 8 in national HBCU polling

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Johnson C. Smith football is expected to do big things according to a national poll.

The Golden Bulls are No. 8 in the Box To Row top 10 preseason media ranking of Black college programs with 57 points overall and a first-place vote – the only Division II team to receive one.

JCSU, which went 10-2, won the CIAA title and advanced to the NCAA Division II playoffs last year, finished eighth in the final 2025 poll.

The Golden Bulls are one of two CIAA teams in the rankings, along with No. 10 Virginia Union. The top six are Division I FCS squads, led by South Carolina State with 205 points. The Bulldogs finished 2025 at No. 1.

Prairie View is second with 184 points, followed by Alabama State (160), Jackson State (144), North Carolina Central (88), Delaware State (86) and Albany State (68), the highest-ranked Division II club. Benedict, which opens Aug. 29 against JCSU in Columbia, S.C., is ninth.

Box to Row preseason top 10:  
1. South Carolina State

- 2. Prairie View A&M
- 3. Alabama State
- 4. Jackson State
- 5. North Carolina Central
- 6. Delaware State
- 7. Albany State
- 8. Johnson C. Smith
- 9. Benedict
- 10. Virginia Union

## Hough opens atop Magnificent Seven rankings



MAIT LACZKO | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Hough High, which opened the 2025 season with a win in the Keep Pounding Classic and closed with the North Carolina 8A football title and No. 1 in the Magnificent Seven poll, will try to duplicate the feat in 2026.

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Hough High starts the 2026 football season in the same spot 2025 ended.

The Huskies, who swept to the North Carolina 8A title and a 14-0 record last year, will kick off 2026 at No. 1 in The Post’s Magnificent Seven of programs in public school conferences. Hough is the lone team from the Greater Charlotte Athletic Conference to make the rankings.

Behind the Huskies are a trio of Meck Power Six teams in Mallard Creek, Chambers and West Charlotte with conference rival Independence sliding in at No. 7. Palisades is the lone Southwestern Athletic Conference squad to make the cut in fifth while Charlotte Catholic from the Southern Carolina 6A/7A is sixth.

The Magnificent Seven going into the Aug. 21 opening week:

- 1. Hough. There’s no disputing who has the best chance to walk off with a state title when the season wraps. The Huskies don’t have a lock on Mecklenburg’s talent, but it feels that way. They certainly have its best coach in DeShawn Baker.
- 2. Mallard Creek. The Mavericks have

Please see **TWO-THIRDS** | 6A

## NC gears up for the University Games

When Cary officials first announced they had snagged the World University Games before COVID-19 hit, 2029 seemed like a century away.

Now look. It’s 2026, which already is half over, and in just three years the second- largest global Olympic sporting event will hit the Triangle, the Triad and surrounding counties.

Hill Carrow, who is spearheading the local committee of WUG 2029, says to expect over 600,000 spectators to watch 7,500 athletes from over 100 countries compete in 19 Olympic sports during the July 11-22 event. The estimated economic impact across the region is \$370 million.

Why Cary?

“Cary is highly rated as a community around the United States,” Carrow said. “Cary has excellent facilities: the tennis complex, USA Baseball has its national headquarters here, and WakeMed Soccer Park has hosted more NCAA championship events than any other venue in America.”

A luncheon was held last month at Rush Hour Katering in Morrisville to mark the halfway point and to celebrate women’s sports. I admit the women’s sports part grabbed my attention.

Please see **NC PREPS** | 6A



BONITTA  
BEST

## Meck Power Six coaches sound off on hot topics in preseason

By Cameron Williams  
cameron.williams@thecharlottepost.com

The Meck Power Six will again be one of North Carolina’s premier football conferences.

The conference, which consists of Butler, Chambers, Mallard Creek, North Mecklenburg, Independence and West Charlotte, is full of state championship aspirations, former champions and perennial powers. The conference’s coaches sat down for a roundtable discussion about the MPS, coaches pay and various other topics pertaining to the state of high school football.

Time to pay up

Earlier this year Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools did not include coaching pay increases in the 2026-27 budget proposal. Meanwhile more than 20 CMS executives made \$200,000 or more last fiscal year.

Since 2018, coaches’ stipends have remained at \$5,000 annually despite North Carolina’s cost of living increasing more than 30% and 32% in Charlotte.

“As far as leadership, in my mind, I think the coaches agree,” Mallard Creek coach Kennedy Tinsley said. “we’re leaders of our team. And so, if you’re a

leader and you’re responsible for an area or a group of people, then you deserve to get paid. So, when someone brings up payment, in my mind, I don’t think it matters how much people are getting paid because we’re talking about the value of kids’ futures, and if they’re doing a great job, then they deserve what they deserve. I think our focus is in order for us to continue to keep what we do important, then the value of the job has to be considered more by the leadership, and that would mean pay.”

Consider Carrollton (Ga.) High, which will host West Charlotte in

a non-conference game. Carrollton’s coach earns over \$200,000, compared to Mecklenburg public school programs where coaches get just \$5,000 on top of their teaching salary.

“I think [out of state games] give our kids an experience,” Independence coach Robert Williams said. “We are a really good football conference. But, going down to South Carolina, seeing their amenities, their stadiums and going to places like Carrollton is going to be similar to a college football game. Those programs spend money in their

Please see **MECK** | 6A

# NC preps for World University Games

Continued from page 5A

tion first because you all know how big a fan I am.

There was a women's pro sports panel with one of my favorite basketball analysts, Debbie Antonelli; North Carolina Courage President Francie Gottsegen; and Thayer Lavielle of The Collective at the Team.

Antonelli moderated the women's college sports panel consisting of North Carolina Central new head coach Olivia Gaines, who had just returned from a recruiting trip in Las Vegas; UNC women's rowing head coach Erin Neppel; and UNC rowing student-athlete Sarah Knox Harper.

The No. 1 consensus among everybody was the explosive growth of women's sports, whether it's college basketball, the WNBA, softball, soccer, flag football, you name it. As Aretha Franklin sang in one of her hits, "Sisters are doing it for themselves."

"The depth of the talent, to see how it has grown has been phenomenal," Gottsegen said. "WakeMed Stadium seats 10,000, and we sell out every game. ...We are the second smallest (soccer) market in the league."

As the third-longest tenured basketball analyst in the industry, behind Dick Vitale and Bill Rafferty, Antonelli has seen the good, the bad and the ugly in women's sports. One of the biggest

changes she's seen is the increased fan base among men between the ages of 21-35.

"Now, you have them going into the bar to wait for the [women's] game to start, coming out of the bar, going into the game and then going back into the bar to talk about the game. That didn't used to happen," she said.

Antonelli covered Gaines as a player at South Carolina under coach Dawn Staley.

Gaines, who was still feeling the aftereffects of jet lag, said her main agenda since being hired in May is building relationships with alumni and the community. One surprise she didn't expect was the number of student-athletes who decided to stay put.

"I could only bring in three kids," she said. "The other players could have left after the coach left, but they wanted to stay."

NCCU has opted into name, image and likeness for the first time, which puts the fundraising pressure on both coaches and administrators.

Carrow said the WUG 2029 will host both a women's and men's basketball game on NCCU's campus to help raise funds for the programs.

Three years is closer than you think.

*Bonitta Best is sports editor at The Triangle Tribune in Durham.*

# Meck Power Six topics

Continued from page 5A

programs to have that kind of experience. We are playing a South Carolina team. I think mostly everybody in [the conference] is going to have a South Carolina game. Going to these places shows that our athletes can play with anyone in the country."

**How many classes are too many?**

Last season was the first in which North Carolina had eight divisions since 2020-21 when four classifications were split into single- and double-A based on school enrollment. Back then coaches felt some class playoff brackets were diluted by teams with losing - and sometimes winless - records advancing to the postseason.

Some of the same issues rang true in the new 1A-8A classification with numerous first-round blowouts and byes required for some divisions' top two or three seeds.

"I think 8A was a little much," North Meck coach Darryl Vereen said. "I thought maybe 6A should have been the cap, but I'm fine with it. I think it gives a lot more teams an opportunity to get in and make a

run in the playoffs, so overall, I am fine with it."

Tinsley added: "I agree with [McFadden and Vereen]. I think six would have been a good number but no more than seven. I think eight somewhat waters down two classifications a lot, which ours [8A] is watered down. It ends up being top-heavy because of the area but watered down nonetheless."

**Same faces in new places**

Half of the six coaches are new, but none came from outside the conference. McFadden at West Charlotte came from Independence, Williams at Independence was an assistant at West Charlotte under Sam Greiner and Donald Littlejohn Jr. at Butler was as well.

"It's been easy," Littlejohn said. "I've known these kids since they were freshmen, so for me it is almost like a continuation of before. I think I had it easier because I am a coach not necessarily taking over a new program because I am just kind of returning back to the same parents and same community and things like that. ... For me, it has been kind of like coming back to a happy

place."

For Williams, things were different. Acclamation to the community and players were done early on, so the transition was smooth.

"I didn't have the luxury of knowing the kids, but the kids that I have they have bought in," he said. "We all have the same mission, so, it has been pretty easy. The biggest thing is, it is football wherever you're at, so just getting the X's and O's and getting the guys around that can coach, build those relationships with the kids so things can run smoothly."

McFadden said the West Charlotte community and alumni is something he had never seen before and the preparation has been good.

"Our team has been intact pretty much since I've been there," McFadden said. "The guys that have been showing up, having the guys that showed up, it's been good. We're having a good summer so far. The transition has been smooth. Kids are starting to kind of get used to the coaching, the new coaching styles, and the new things and accountability things that we're putting in place."

# Two-thirds of Meck Power Six in The Post's Magnificent 7

Continued from page 5A

been slowly moving up the ranks of the county's top teams and appear ready to grab the ring in the uber competitive Meck Power Six.

3. Chambers. Former West Charlotte quarterback Jamouri Nichols is now with the Cougars, which adds another level of intrigue to this rivalry.

Second-year coach Captain Munnerlyn believes Cham-

bers can do damage in 2026 with Nichols running the offense.

4. West Charlotte. The Lions, who started 2025 as No. 1 in the rankings, has undergone a radical transformation, starting at head coach. D.J. McFadden now leads a young group looking to establish a winning identity. How quickly will they mesh in what might be North Carolina's toughest conference?

5. Palisades. The Pumas have come a long way for a program going into its fifth season. They went 8-4 to advance to the postseason

but believe there's enough experience and talent to push them to elite status in Mecklenburg.

6. Charlotte Catholic. The Cougars went 7-5 (3-3 in Southern Carolina 6A/7A) last season, which qualifies as a downer for a program with such a rich history. Catholic is retooled and eyeing a comeback.

7. Independence. The Patriots have a new coach in Robert Williams, who was a West Charlotte assistant last year. Can he get his new squad up to speed quickly in the Meck Power Six with a new direction?

# FIFA chief caught offsides and MLS has a new commissioner

By Steve Goldberg

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

If you saw just one of the 104 World Cup matches aired on American television the past two months, there's a higher-than-average chance you saw FIFA president Gianni Infantino at least once, and probably more than that.

He seemed to be at all of them, and if he wasn't, it felt that AI would insert him there as if that was a mandated obligation of the Fox network.

For those of us who have followed the game closely for more than a minute, the way Infantino gazed over the matches playing out before him was familiar. We saw it in the form of Sepp Blatter, FIFA's president before him, and in the eyes of Joao Havelange, the president before Blatter. They seemed to watch the games, not as the fans they once were but more like an emperor lording over gladiator battles whose sole purpose was to deepen their clutch on power and the fortune that came with it.

For all the controversy Infantino engendered leading into the largest World Cup ever - from made-up peace prizes designed to curry favor from President Donald Trump to outrageous dynamic pricing resulting in mortgage-based ticketing - it was an exceptionally watchable tournament with myriad storylines from heart-warming to soul-sucking.

There was the joy of the unexpected success of Cape Verde countered by the incessant whining and petulant play of Argentina.

But the Teflon that Infantino enjoyed as game followed game until a most-worthy Spain captured the Cup has finally worn through. His hubris finally crossed the line at the end of July when he championed the partial sale of the governing body's commercial rights to investors.

As reported by pretty much everyone, and on the heels of the most profitable global sporting event ever - \$15 billion by FIFA's claims - Infantino announced plans to create a subsidiary called FIFA Forward Enterprise, which would run the commercial and event operations of FIFA's competitions, including the men's and women's World Cups. The scheme would allow private investors to buy up to 20% of the company, with a target of raising over \$4 billion from third parties.

By no surprising coincidence whatsoever, the lead investor was reported to be Thrive Capital, founded by Joshua Kushner, the younger brother of Jared Kushner, also not coincidentally son-in-law of President Donald Trump. While FIFA said the proceeds would be reinvested into global football development, that message

has probably been compromised by World Cup host cities claiming FIFA has failed to deliver on payments promised for their efforts.

Reaction was quick and harsh. UEFA, the most influential and largest confederation within FIFA, immediately stated it would boycott future events if Infantino's plan moved forward, beginning with September's Women's Under 20 World Cup.

There was turmoil within FIFA as well. Carlos Cordeiro, a senior adviser to Infantino and a former U.S. Soccer president, resigned in protest and called the plan "a bad deal for football" and "a bad deal for the long-term future of the game."

Luis Figo, the former captain of Portugal and a star at Sporting, Barcelona, Real Madrid, and Inter Milan across two decades, posted on X:

"Today I join others from across our game and call for Gianni Infantino to resign as FIFA President. Infantino has debased the office that he promised to elevate. He has lied, deceived and tried to feather his own nest at the expense of the game he is supposed to serve. He has lost the support of his senior staff, his closest advisers, the vast majority of people who devote their lives to this sport and even, it would seem, the FIFA Peace Prize winner. It is too late to save his dignity, but it is not too late to save football. He should go. Now."

After convening what it called a "crisis meeting" in Morocco, FIFA issued a statement saying "mistakes" had been made in the plans to create FFE but insisted Infantino had the "full support" of the members of its management board present.

The next FIFA election, at which Infantino intended to stand for reelection, is scheduled for March 2027. To win, he would require a majority of 106 votes from FIFA's 211 member nations.

**MLS names new commissioner**

Having previously put a deadline on his tenure as commissioner of Major League Soccer, Don Garber's successor was announced after a vote by the league's board of governors.

Larry Berg, co-owner of the Los Angeles Football Club, will take over those duties as MLS moves towards matching its schedule to the European calendar in 2027.

While in Charlotte for the MLS All-Star Game, Garber told The Post he would remain as commissioner through the 2026 season and chairman of the Board of Governors through the end of his contract in 2027.

Under Garber's leadership, which began in 1999, MLS grew from 12 to 30 teams, including Charlotte FC's debut in 2022.

"I'm honored to lead Major League Soccer into its next era," Berg said in a statement.

# Quarterback derby at JCSU

Continued from page 5A

McQuarrie's résumé is even thinner. A four-star recruit coming out of high school, he spent two years at UCLA without playing. The 6-7, 235-pounder completed 19-of-47 passes (40.4%) at Independence (Kansas) Community College in 2022 before a couple of seasons as a backup at FCS New Haven.

"We're going to go with an older guy," Flowers said. "Parker, being a guy with two years to play, he's an older guy, 23 years old. And then Damian, he's a grad transfer that has one year who's 23 years old also.

We want an older guy to lead us right now, very similar to what Kelvin Durham did last year."

Durham, who quarterbacked the Golden Bulls to a 10-2 record, the CIAA title and a Division II playoff berth in his lone season at JCSU, was a three-year starter at Fort Valley State before transferring.

Regardless of who starts the Aug. 29 season opener at Benedict, there'll be opportunities for each to contribute - McQuarrie for his arm strength; Mazil as a dual threat. "There'll be plays for both of them," Flowers said.



MATT LACZKO | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Tyger Smalls scored a goal and chipped in an assist in Charlotte FC's 2-0 win against Atlas FC in a Leagues Cup game Aug. 8, 2026, at Bank of America Stadium. In two Leagues Cup starts, Smalls made three goal contributions (two goals, one assist).

# Riding Tyger Smalls in Leagues Cup

By Cameron Williams

cameron.williams@thecharlottepost.com

Tyger Smalls is doing his part to advance Charlotte FC's chances of advancing in the Leagues Cup.

Smalls tallied a pair of goal contributions in the Crown's 2-0 win over Atlas FC Friday at Bank of America Stadium. In the 78th minute, the third-year winger was alone on the near side of the pitch for a cross to Liel Abada for the go-ahead goal. With five minutes of stoppage time added, Atlas brought its goalkeeper out for one final attack, but Charlotte secured the ball and Smalls knocked it into an empty net.

"It's good to get these two wins," said Smalls, who scored on a penalty kick in a 3-0 win against Pumas in the tournament opener, "but, obviously we have a job to go do (against Pachuca). Hopefully we go into that game with some confidence. Obviously, it's [in Charlotte] as well, so I'm looking forward to that."

As a result Charlotte went into Tuesday's match against Pachuca in the group stage finale on a five-

game unbeaten streak at home (four wins and a draw) and consecutive clean sheets. "We are obviously focusing on Leagues Cup at the moment until we are back to MLS play," Smalls said. "Some of the things are quite similar, so it is just about keeping it going and just focusing on our next game, which is the next step."

Charlotte manager Dean Smith was impressed with Smalls' recent form and thinks he can continue to be a key part of the team's success. Smalls, who has no goal contributions in eight MLS games as a substitute, has three in two League's Cup starts.

"Tyger has always gotten unfair criticism," Smith said. "I know the talent that he's got. Unfortunately for him, as with other young wide players, we've had designated players in their positions, so it is hard for them to break into those spots, and when they do, they don't get a lot of minutes. But I have said for a long time that he is a really talented kid. ... Pleased for him because he works hard."

**No Pep for Pachuca**

Smith said Charlotte needed to come out with the same mentality against Pachuca they showed in the second half against Atlas.

"There's 10 MLS teams that won the first game," he said, "so, you have to step up now again. It is back to game one mentality. You've got to go and win if you want to have a chance of progressing. We weren't great in the first half, but we didn't give many big chances away. I thought [Atlas] had a lot of possession, but the possession was in front of us and made it with their center backs."

Charlotte played FC Pachuca without Pep Biel, who received a red card after the final whistle.

"I didn't see what happened," Smith said. "I didn't hear what happened. I asked the referee, and he said [Biel] said something to him. Unfortunately, although I'm learning, my Spanish isn't that good. The referee couldn't translate it into English, so I told him to tell me in Spanish, but I couldn't tell you that one."