

## Heels, Pack Commit To Tournament Of Champions

By LEONARD LAYE  
Sports Editor

North Carolina and N.C. State have each made two-year commitments as hosts for the new Tournament of Champions, a college basketball event designed to bring some of the nation's top teams to Charlotte when the city's new coliseum opens in 1988.

The ACC teams will participate in the tournament in alternate seasons, with the Tar Heels playing in the inaugural event Dec. 2-3, 1988.

The remainder of the field has not been filled but tournament officials

said Monday they hope to have nationally ranked teams play each year.

"What we wanted to do was get North Carolina and N.C. State firm first, then go really hard after the other teams," said Richard Giannini of Raycom Management Group, which will sponsor the tournament. The management group is a subsidiary of Raycom, Inc., an independent television sports network which co-produces ACC basketball and produces conference telecasts in several other areas of the country.

"We are talking to national caliber

teams and they have great interest in the event," Giannini said. "We hope to attract teams from the four geographic regions of the country."

Tournament officials are talking with Kentucky and are close to signing the Wildcats for 1988, a source close to the event told The Observer. Giannini and Rick Ray, Raycom president, will attend the NCAA convention next month in San Diego and will talk to representatives of other schools at that time.

Raycom hopes to attract top teams with the lure of a major event in a

large new facility (capacity 23,500 for basketball) and a payment officials hope will exceed that of any college tournament other than the NCAA championship. The games will be televised by Raycom and sold for national syndication.

"We see a great need for a national media event in early December to make the transition from football to basketball," Ray said.

The tournament will be played each

See TAR HEELS Page 4B

## Tar Heels, Pack Commit To Tournament

Continued From Page 1B

year in early December, on the first weekend after the Thanksgiving weekend.

Coaches Dean Smith of North Carolina and Jim Valvano of N.C. State attended Monday's press conference.

"It's a great concept," Valvano said. "It's going to be very successful. Some clubs in this country enjoy the early-season competition."

Said Smith, "This will be good for Charlotte, and Charlotte has always been good to the university. The strong field will help."

Plans for the tournament after 1991 are incomplete

but officials said other N.C. schools including Wake Forest, Duke, UNCC and Davidson could serve as host teams in the future.

A local advisory committee will assist with the event and will designate a charity to receive part of the proceeds. The committee has 21 members and is headed by chairman John W. Harris and vice chairman John Belk.

"We've been working on this for about three years," said Paul Buck, long-time director of the Charlotte Coliseum. "It's going to be a top event."

Harris said the trophy awarded each year to the tournament champion will be named for Buck.