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**Section:** Sports

### a.m. chatter

Napp back to class

Johnny Napp isn't finished Cowboying Up and Partying Down, but he is going back to school. Former James Madison basketball player **John Naparolo**, who left the Dukes to pursue a career as a country music singer and uses "Johnny Napp" as his stage name, left school before the spring semester of 2006 to move to country's mecca - Nashville.

But after 2 1/2 years of chasing his dream, he realized he needed to shore up his backup plan.

"It's been in the back of my mind for a while now," he said by phone last week while driving from Harrisonburg to Wilkes Barre, Pa., for a weekend concert. "It's just one of those things, no time really seemed like the right time. I just decided I gotta go back and not keep making excuses."

**Naparolo**, who left school with a 3.12 grade-point average, just 24 credits short of a degree in marketing, scheduled all of his classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays so he could still play shows on weekends. After the show in Wilkes-Barre, he has a concert Saturday in Mount Juliet, Tenn., then another on Sept. 27 at Cattle Annie's in Lynchburg. His next date after that will be back at Cattle Annie's on Nov. 8, but this time he will be opening for Big Kenny of the group Big & Rich, known for its hit "Save A Horse, Ride A Cowboy."

**Naparolo** admits he would like his career to be further along by now. He recently signed his fourth management contract with a Nashville-based company called The Consortium, and he still doesn't have a record deal.

"The biggest thing for me is the frustration with not being able to see a lot of progress," he said. "I mean, looking back four years, I've made a ton of progress vocally and in terms of live credentials. ... I draw certain progressions from that, but it still takes a long time. Everybody in Nashville says 5-10 years is what it takes, and it's frustrating, because you never know when your break is going to be."

- Dustin Dopirak