

SPORTS

Gretzky's exploits known even in hot, humid South

Growing up in North Carolina, I never really followed professional ice hockey that closely.

How could I really be expected to? My older brother and I were playing catch with either a baseball or a football as far back as I can remember, and when we weren't playing catch, we were shooting hoops at the decrepit old goal standing at the back of our cul-de-sac.

My heroes growing up were guys like Carlton Fisk, Yaz, Earl Campbell and James Worthy. I followed baseball religiously, read up on its past greats and learned many of the game's folk tales. The same applies, to a lesser extent, to football.

During college basketball season, my wardrobe consisted almost entirely of UNC merchandise — right down to the pulled-up striped Carolina socks.

But hockey? Nah, didn't care. I knew that the NHL stood for the National Hockey League, I could recognize some of the team names, and I knew who Gordie Howe was, but that's about it. I didn't realize the futility of the New York Rangers or the dominance of the Montreal Canadiens.

In fact, the first real exposure I got to hockey was last year in Room 425 Ehringhaus. Jonathan Angel and Patrick Williams introduced me to hockey via their Sega Genesis machine, which boasted a kickin' NHL Hockey game.

Soon, Angel was the Chicago Black Hawks, P was the Kings ("Unbeatable in the black jerseys, pard"), and I was the Canadiens.

While I got to be decent at the game, I got to be more interested in the sport. For instance, I tried reading the boxscores so I could figure out who was good on my team and why I couldn't stop No. 99 on the Kings.

Certainly didn't know enough about Wayne Gretzky, aside from the fact he was married to gymnast/actress Janet Jones. Well, I knew he had won five Cups with the Edmonton Oilers, but I thought his best days were behind him.

Now, I'm more educated. Thanks to the magic of cable, sports fans should all know who the Great One is, what he looks like and how he plays.

This year's Stanley Cup finals may be the last chance to see the most dominant athlete in the history of team sports in North America at the top of his game.

At 32, Wayne Gretzky isn't getting any younger, and he's had severe enough back problems that he missed more than half of this season. But there he is, blazing the ice in the silver and black of the Los Angeles Kings, trying to lead them to their first Stanley Cup title.

As of this writing, the Kings and Habs (another name for "les Habitants," as French-speakers know the Canadiens) are engaged in a record-setting Stanley Cup best-of-seven series, which Montreal leads 3-1 with three straight overtime wins.

Gretzky has been the pivotal figure in the series, dueling with Montreal's goalie deluxe, Patrick Roy. He assisted on L.A.'s first goal in Game 1 then sealed the 4-1 win with an incredible open-net goal from an impossible angle. ESPN commentator Gary Thorne could describe it only as a "perfect shot — absolutely perfect."

Gretzky and the Kings held tough with the Habs in Games 2 and 3, only to lose early in overtime on both occasions. And Monday night, the Habs moved within one win of their 23rd

Stanley Cup when the puck deflected off a Kings' skate and into the net.

All told, Gretzky is the leading scorer in this year's Stanley Cup playoffs with 40 points. He's also the all-time leading scorer in the NHL playoffs and, of course, for the regular season.

But all this really means very little to most Southerners, most of whom don't know a thing about hockey except that it's played on ice. We just don't have the climate to get a lot of kids interested in hockey down here.

That's too bad, because it inhibits a plethora of sports fans from enjoying and appreciating the greatness that is Gretzky. Essentially, No. 99 is Babe Ruth, Michael Jordan and Joe Montana rolled into one.

He has helped redefine the game — much like Ruth revolutionized baseball — moving hockey into a more wide-open style of play, away from the brawling style of the '70s.

Like Jordan, Gretzky has long been the dominant offensive force in the league and has taken his teams from also-rans to champions.

And like Montana, he is the most clutch performer in his sport.

But Gretzky's career is winding down. It has taken five years since The Trade for the Kings to make the Cup finals. This is Gretzky's last dance, the denouement of an unmatched career.

Wednesday night, the Habs and Kings matched up for Game 5 in the Forum in Montreal. The game had not ended by press time, and when you read this, Gretzky's run at another Cup may have been officially ended.

But I can count myself fortunate. I had the opportunity to watch Wayne Gretzky, playing his best hockey, playing in the Stanley Cup finals.

With a few waves of his magic, bent wand and some graceful glides down the ice, Gretzky has reminded hockey fans, perhaps for one last time, why he is known simply as The Great One.



The following get technical fouls:

- 1. Michael Jordan: The gambling I can understand, but avoiding the press is immature.
2. Charles Oakley: Knicks forward says he wants more playing time next year. To do what, shoot more bricks?
3. Norm Charlton: Mariners reliever said, "If I throw at someone's head, and he doesn't trush the mound, I don't respect him."

4 Tar Heels selected in MLB draft

Four Tar Heel baseball players were selected in last Thursday's Major League draft, with pitcher Michael Jerzembeck selected the highest.

Jerzembeck, UNC's No. 1 hurler as a sophomore, went in the fifth round to the New York Yankees. The 6-foot-1, 185-pound right-hander compiled a 9-3 record with a 3.15 earned run average in 17 starts.

Shortstop Keith Grunewald was selected in the 12th round by the Colorado Rockies. Grunewald had a subpar junior season, hitting just .267 after a .323 clip in his sophomore campaign. Grunewald had 20 stolen bases for UNC, second on the team.

Southpaw pitcher Derek Manning, North Carolina's top winner in 1993, was selected by Oakland in the 26th round. Manning led the staff in wins (11), complete games (four), innings (117 2/3) and strikeouts (105).

Finally, Atlanta selected infielder Chris Cox in the 32nd round. The 6-0, 180-pound Winston-Salem product slammed 17 home runs this season and knocked in 57 runs.

Cox hit 49 homers in his UNC career, making him UNC's second all-time leading slugger. Only Devy Bell, who hit 57 dingers from 1984-1987, has hit more home runs in a Tar Heel uniform.

Cox was excited about being drafted by the Braves, who have assigned him to a minor-league team in Danville, Va.

"It's something you work for for 21, 22 years," he said in an interview Tuesday. "It's a relief, but I'm really happy. Plus, I love the Braves, and they need infielders, so it's a good situation."

Men's golf grabs 3rd in NCAAs

LEXINGTON, Ky. — The North Carolina men's golf team wrapped up its season in impressive fashion Saturday, carding a final-round, four-under-par 284 to finish in third place at the NCAA Championships, played at The Champions Golf Club.

UNC shot a five-under 1,147 for the 72-hole tournament, trailing second-place Georgia Tech by one stroke and national champion Florida by two. The Tar Heels shot a 283 Saturday to claim the title after trailing the Yellow Jackets after three rounds. Clemson finished fourth with 1,153.

UNC entered the final hole of play in a three-way tie for first with Florida and Georgia Tech. But Lee McEntee double-bogeyed, while Tech's David Duval bogeyed and UF's Chris Couch made par, giving the Gators the title.

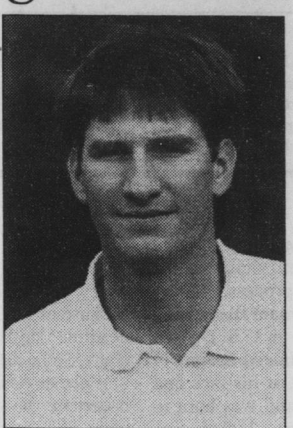
North Carolina, which failed to make the cut in last year's Championships, finished the season with seven rounds of par or better out of its last eight. Head coach Devon Brouse said the team earned its second-best finish in its history. UNC finished second in 1991.

"We played phenomenal golf," Brouse said. "That's the best golf we've played in my 16 years of coaching in the NCAA. We've never played that well in an NCAA Championship."

"I was really pleased and excited for the team. We're going to be a factor for the next three or four years."

Two freshmen paced the Tar Heels. Milford, N.J., native Rob Bradley fired a five-under 67 to lead the field after one round and finished with an even-par 288. McEntee, from Doylestown, Pa., also carded a 288. The freshmen tied for seventh in the overall individual standings.

"Lee McEntee and Rob Bradley were two of the top young players to come out (of high school) last year," Brouse said. "Their play in the regionals and nationals was not surprising because



Lee McEntee

they are certainly capable of that kind of play."

UNC senior Bill Smith of Buies Creek fired three par-or-better rounds, but after an opening-round 76, he had to settle for a tie for 16th. Sophomore Bobby Murray tied for 19th with a 291 on the

strength of a final-round 69. Junior Ryan Parnell tied for 43rd with a 297.

The individual crown went to Todd Demsey of Arizona State, who fired a 10-under 278, besting Georgia Tech's Duval by one stroke.

With Bradley showing the way, North Carolina led the field of 30 teams after one round with a four-under 284 last Wednesday. But scores got lower Thursday, courtesy of the red-hot Gators.

Florida shot a blistering 11-under 277 to grab the lead after two rounds while Couch exploded with a seven-under 65 to top the individual leaderboard. Bradley came back to earth with a 76, which tied him with McEntee and Murray for 12th after two rounds.

But Friday it was Georgia Tech that could do no wrong as the Jackets carded a 10-under 278 to grab the lead. UNC and Florida both stumbled — the Tar Heels shot a 293, the Gators 294.

A total of five ACC schools finished in the top 11 in the tournament. Duke finished in 10th place, and Wake Forest finished 11th.

"We've been saying for the last few years that the ACC is the best golf in the country," Brouse said, "and I think we proved that at nationals."

CAROLINA THEATRE advertisement for 'Sargasso Sea' and 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail'.

SLIVER advertisement featuring Sharon Stone, William Baldwin, and Tom Berenger.

HAB'S advertisement for Blue Cups and other drinks.

PLAZA THEATRES advertisement for Jurassic Park and other movies.

Tar Heels lead lax list with 8 All-Americans

Eight members of UNC's NCAA runner-up lacrosse team earned All-America honors Friday from the U.S. Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association.

Three Tar Heels were tabbed for the first-team: junior midfielder Ryan Wade and senior defensemen Alex Martin and Greg Paradine. It is the second straight first-team honor for Martin.

Senior attackman John Webster and senior midfielder Donnie McNichol earned second-team accolades. Webster joins Paradine and Martin on the USILA's South team in the North-South senior all-star game. The game will be played June 18 at Johns Hopkins University.

Three Tar Heels garnered honorable mentions: senior attackman Steve Speers, senior middle Holmes Harden and junior defenseman Chuck Breschi.

National champion Syracuse, which defeated UNC 13-12 last Monday for the crown, also had eight overall selections on the All-America squads.

Thornqvist, Wyatt All-Americans in tennis

Senior Roland Thornqvist and freshman Daryl Wyatt were named to the Intercollegiate Tennis Association's

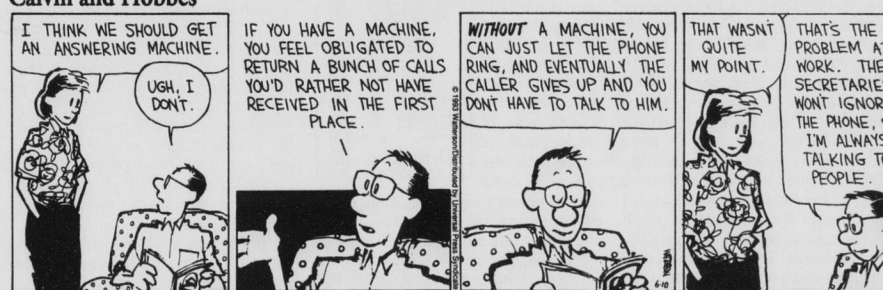
All-America tennis team Monday, with Thornqvist earning honors in both singles and doubles competition.

A native of Farsta, Sweden, Thornqvist compiled a 36-6 singles record in 1992-93 for UNC's 17th-ranked men's tennis team. He ended the season ranked fourth nationally. He also won his second consecutive Rafael Osuna Sportsmanship Award.

Thornqvist teamed with Wyatt, a Washington, D.C., native, to go 24-6 in doubles matches. The tandem finished 10th in the final ITA rankings.

UNC's No. 1 women's player, Cinda Gurney, also earned All-America honors in both singles and doubles competition. Alisha Portnoy teamed with Gurney to finish the season as the nation's fourth-ranked doubles team.

Calvin and Hobbes



THE Daily Crossword by Stanley B. Whitten

Crossword puzzle grid and clues.

Academy Award winning documentary 'The Panama Deception' advertisement.

Ram Triple advertisement for Super Mario Brothers and Hot Shots!

CHelsea advertisement for Timberlyne Village.

Academy Award Winner 'The Panama Deception' advertisement.