

SPORTS MONDAY

Monday, February 15, 1999

The Daily Tar Heel

UNC Men Top Hofstra In Lacrosse

UNC senior midfielder Jeremy Carey (left) scored three goals and had three assists to lead the Tar Heels to a 14-12 scrimmage win against Hofstra. See Page 9.



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BRIAN MURPHY
PLAYER TO BE NAMED LATER

Tar Heel Woes Grow With Terp Drubbing

This season was supposed to work differently. It was supposed to start out rough and then get better.

Back in November, North Carolina's men's basketball team had every reason to struggle.

The Tar Heels were adjusting to life without NBA lottery picks Vince Carter and Antawn Jamison. Back-up point guard Ronald Curry was still throwing passes for the football team. Forward Vasco Evtimov was still sidelined by an NCAA ruling.

But instead of struggling, they flourished. Veteran leaders Ed Cota and Ademola Okulaja stepped up and carried the Tar Heels to victories against nationally-ranked foes Purdue and Stanford. UNC claimed the preseason NIT title. Sophomore center Brendan Haywood was dunking at will and the team climbed all the way to No. 3 in the polls.

It could only get better. Fast forward to February. The Tar Heels, now fully equipped, should be clicking on all cylinders and revving up for the Big Dance.

Instead of fine tuning, Coach Bill Guthridge is still juggling his line-up. The players are still trying to find their roles. Just three games away from the ACC Tournament, the team is headed in the wrong direction.

Instead of getting better, UNC seems to be getting worse.

Those victories against Purdue and Stanford seem a long time ago. Shocking losses at Georgia Tech and Clemson stick out. As does an alarming 0-3 record against ACC heavyweights Duke and Maryland.

Saturday's loss to the Terps highlighted the weaknesses that plague these Tar Heels - a general lack of quickness, lack of secondary ball handlers and lack of a go-to scorer.

The athletic Terps flew to the ball, swatting 14 Tar Heel shots away. They trapped UNC from start to finish, and the Tar Heels never managed to figure it out.

Maryland forced Cota, UNC's primary ball handler, to give up the ball and failed to let him get it back - leaving UNC's offensive duties to Curry and Max Owens.

The two combined for four points on 2-of-10 shooting and four assists in 31 minutes of play.

And while Maryland turned to Steve Francis for points at crucial times, no Tar Heel stepped up to deliver in the second half.

Worse, the game was not an aberration - but a continuation of poor play. Three losses in five games, including a horrendous showing in Clemson.

After two consecutive trips to the Final Four, this March is looking like less of a joy ride and more like a nightmare.

The Tar Heels have fallen to 12th in the national polls and following Saturday's debacle will fall further. A No. 3 seed in the NCAA Tournament is looking less probable than a fourth or fifth seed. UNC will most likely begin the tourney in some far off region like Washington or Wisconsin.

The Tar Heels just don't look so good when viewed through the NCAA magnifying glass.

■ Quality wins - none since the NIT.

■ Last 10 games - 6-4, with tough games against N.C. State and Duke remaining before the ACC Tournament.

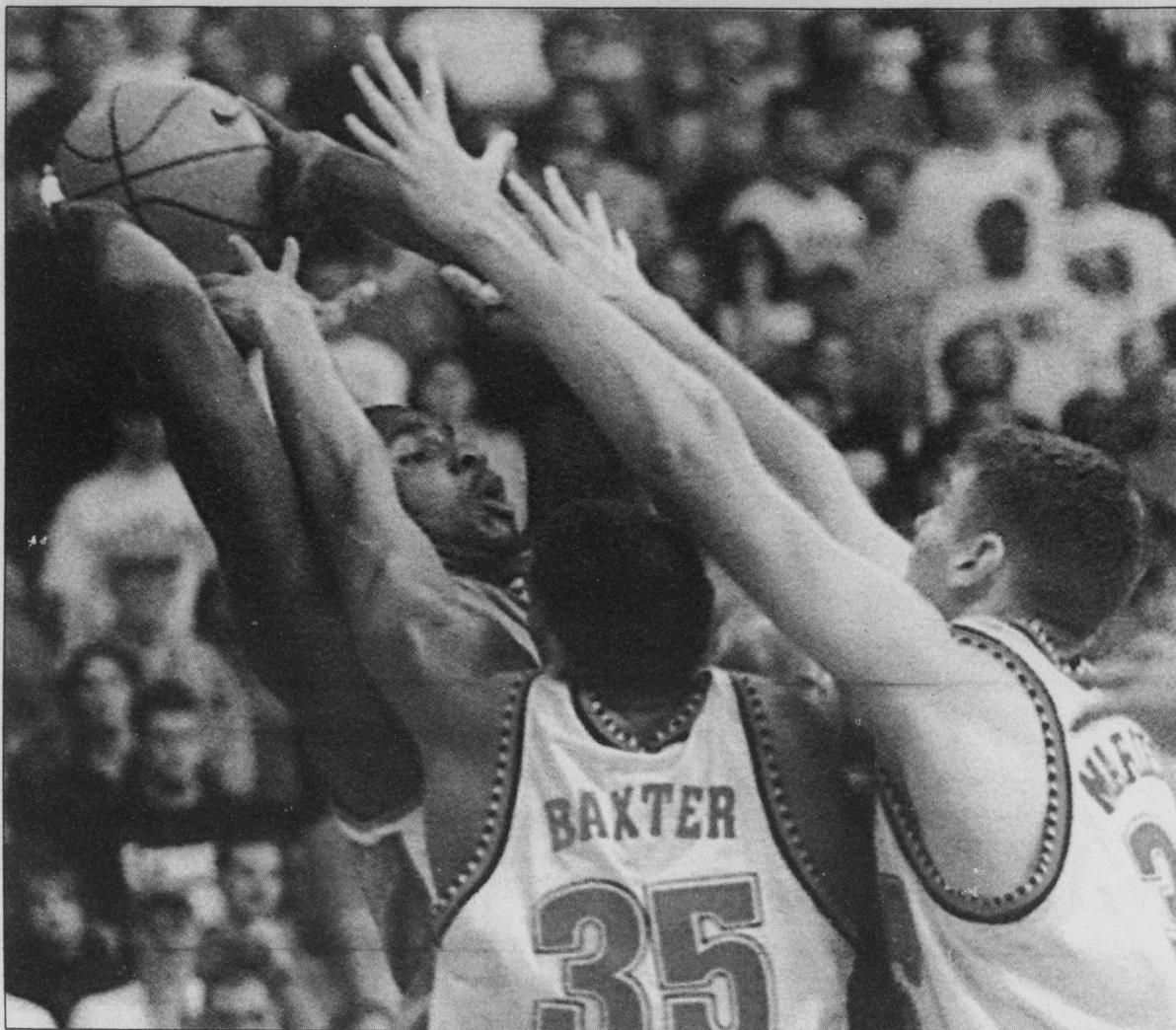
■ Bad losses - Do California, Clemson and Georgia Tech count?

With the selection show less than a month away, UNC has little time to right the sinking ship, little time to revert back to its November form.

It has few opportunities to register the type of wins that can carry a team deep into the post-season. And few ideas on how to fix what's broken.

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MARYLAND 81, UNC 64



UNC point guard Ed Cota tries to pass over the trapping limbs of Maryland's Lonny Baxter and Mike Mardesich. The Terps' defense held Cota to five points on 2-of-5 shooting in the Tar Heels' loss to Maryland on Sunday.

DTH/DAVID SANDLER

Terps Trounce Lackluster Tar Heels

By DAVE ALEXANDER
Senior Writer

COLLEGE PARK, Md. - By all appearances, North Carolina is running on a treadmill these days.

For every two steps forward, the Tar Heels seemingly take two steps back.

File Saturday's 81-64 loss to No. 7 Maryland at Cole Field House under the 'Steps Back' category.

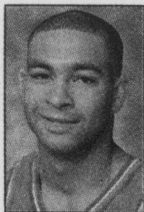
"We played horrible," said UNC forward Ademola Okulaja, who led the Tar Heels with 15 points. "You can't expect to play the way we did and come out with a 'W' on the road against a highly

ranked team in the ACC and in the nation. It's a horrible, nasty feeling."

Just how bad did the Tar Heels play?

They converted one field goal in the final 8:57, committed a season-high 25 turnovers and allowed an opponent to shoot 50 percent or better from the floor for only the third time this season.

Even more disheartening was the fact that this undeniable dud dropped UNC



UNC forward Ademola Okulaja led the Tar Heels with 15 points in Saturday's loss to the Terrapins.

(19-7, 7-5 in the ACC) two and a half games behind second-place Maryland in the league standings.

The lackluster effort also came less than a week after a 98-64 UNC win against Florida State, arguably the Tar Heels' most complete effort of the year.

"I can't believe the way we played," UNC point guard Ed Cota said. "They just manhandled us out there. This is probably our worst game all year."

It was the most lopsided win by Maryland against UNC since 1975, when the Terps defeated the Tar Heels 96-74 in Carmichael Auditorium. The win capped a season sweep of UNC by the Terrapins, only the second time an ACC team has swept a season series from North Carolina since 1993-94.

The decisive stretch came midway

through the second half, when Maryland (22-4, 10-3) used a 13-4 run to secure a 14-point lead with 6:50 to play.

At the offensive end, Terps' guard Steve Francis (22 points) scored on three consecutive Maryland possessions during the run - once on a follow-up dunk, once on a 3-pointer and once on a second-chance bucket in the paint.

On defense the fire was fueled by Terrapin center Lonny Baxter, who made his third consecutive start in place of senior Obinna Ekezie, who was lost for the season when he tore his Achilles tendon in practice last week.

Baxter collected three blocks during a string of five Tar Heel possessions in which UNC scored only once. Baxter

See MEN'S BASKETBALL, Page 7

UNC Nips Virginia at Home With Late Overtime Surge

The Tar Heels outrebounded the Cavaliers 52-41 for the game, including a 5-2 edge in the overtime period.

By M. LEE TAFT
Senior Writer

For 39 minutes on Sunday, it looked like Virginia would spoil the North Carolina women's basketball team's senior party.

But in the final minute of regulation, UNC tied the score at 70, forcing an overtime before the No. 14 Tar Heels beat No. 17 Virginia 82-80 in extra minutes in front of a Senior Game crowd of 5,951 at Carmichael Auditorium.

In the final seconds of the game, Virginia (17-7, 10-4 in the ACC) got three looks at the basket but couldn't get a shot to fall for the win.

"We couldn't have drawn the play better," UVA. coach Debbie Ryan said.

"We got exactly what we wanted. We just didn't finish."

The Cavaliers gave the Tar Heels a little bit of help, picking up two technical fouls in the game. The most costly came with 2:47 left in OT, when Svetlana Volnaya slammed the ball to the floor after being called for traveling.

Jessica Gaspar hit the second technical free throw, breaking a 76-76 tie. On the next possession, LaQuanda Barksdale followed a missed Nikki Teasley 3-pointer to put UNC (24-5, 11-4) up three.

On the next possession, UVA. center DeMya Walker hit a layup and was fouled by UNC's Natasha Davis. The ensuing free throw tied the game at 78.

Walker hit a jumper in the lane with 1:20 left, putting the Cavs up by one. But Teasley matched that shot with one of her own to put UNC up for good.

The Tar Heels pulled down five rebounds to UVA's two in the extra period. UNC outrebounded UVA. 26-19 in the second half, 52-41 for the game.

"I knew coming in that rebounding would be the key to the game," UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell said. "If we could control that, I knew we could win. We

didn't in the first half."

With her seniors on the floor in the first half, Hatchell's squad fell into a hole. The Cavs jumped out to a 24-12 lead by the second media timeout. UNC shot a just 11 for 31 from the field in the half, while Uva. hit 19 of 35 of its shots.

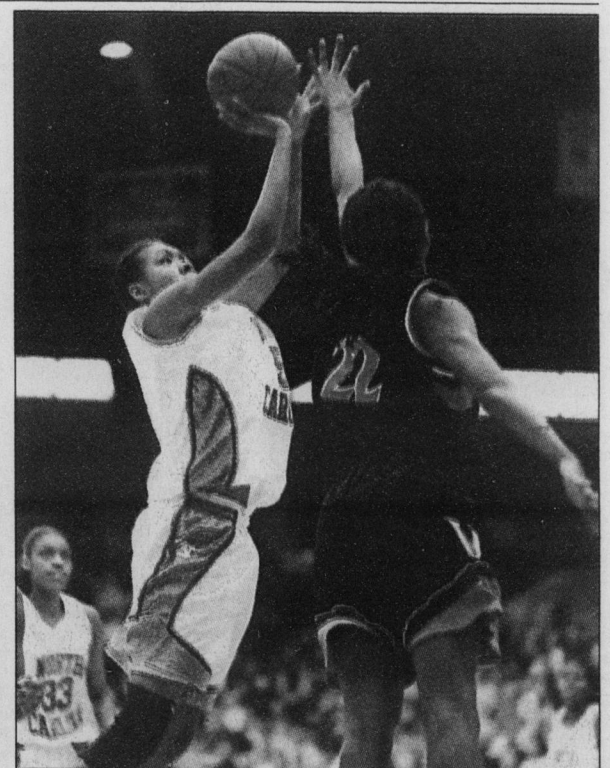
At the half, UNC switched its defense from its traditional man-to-man to an uncharacteristic zone, trying to shut down UVA's inside game. Virginia's Lesley Brown had torched the Tar Heels for 14 first-half points.

"We couldn't guard her," Hatchell said. "They were able to penetrate too much in the first half. They could drive in and dish off really easily."

UNC started the second half with a small offensive explosion, cutting a 12-point deficit to five on three consecutive possessions. The Tar Heels crashed the boards, getting more opportunities for second-chance points.

UNC slowly clawed its way back into the game, making big defensive stands to hold off the Cavs. Virginia hit only two field goals in the last 6:08 of regulation, as UNC dominated the boards.

See WOMEN'S BASKETBALL, Page 7



DTH/SEAN BUSHNER

UNC senior Natasha Davis shoots over Virginia's DeMya Walker during the Tar Heels' win against the Cavaliers at Carmichael Auditorium.

UNC Soccer Commits Violation

Megan Parker signed a national letter of intent to play for UNC but never received any financial aid.

Associated Press

The North Carolina women's soccer program and coach Anson Dorrance could face sanctions after a recruit signed a national letter of intent even though she did not receive a scholarship.

UNC Athletics Director Dick Baddour says freshman walk-on Megan Parker signed the contractual agreement last year that bound her to attend the school but also required the school to help pay her way. But Parker received no financial aid.

Recruiting rules prohibit walk-ons from signing letters of intent, Baddour told The News & Observer of Raleigh.

"We should not have sent her a national letter of intent unless we were going to offer her a scholarship," said Baddour, who called the violation the first of its kind in his nearly 13-year career in the athletics department. "Those two things go hand-in-hand."

After arriving at UNC last summer, Parker was injured and was cut from the team. Baddour learned of what happened only when Parker sought a transfer to another school.

Baddour, citing personnel privacy laws, declined to discuss any possible disciplinary actions UNC might take involving Dorrance. North Carolina also reported the case to the ACC.

The program could face penalties from the ACC or the Collegiate Commissioners Association, the organization that oversees the national letters of intent.

"In my view ... this would be classified a secondary violation," Baddour said. "When you have a large program with a lot of student-athletes and you have a multitude of rules, you occasionally run into these sort of problems."

Dorrance did not return telephone calls seeking comment.

In a civil lawsuit filed six months ago, former Tar Heel players Debbie Keller and Melissa Jennings accused Dorrance of making lewd comments about team members, questioning them about their sex lives and twice making sexual advances to Keller.

The lawsuit awaits trial in federal court in Chicago.



North Carolina coach Anson Dorrance is facing his second major off-the-field problem in the past six months.