Maryland's Block Party Fuels Terrapins Past UNC

The Terrapins swatted 14 UNC shots, including a game-high five blocks by forward Terence Morris.

BY AARON BEARD

COLLEGE PARK, Md. - They patrolled the airspace. They swarmed on shots like bees to honey. They descended on shooters like hawks to prey. The

The assault was relentless.

Maryland's athletic defenders took to skies of Cole Field House on Saturday, flying from one side of the lane to the other to erase North Carolina bids at the basket.

Fourteen blocked shots later, UNC's interior offense laid in smoking ruins in an 81-64 Terrapin victory.

"We had them in a situation where they were kind of scared to shoot," Maryland center Lonny Baxter said. "They were like, 'How could they block so many of them?"

Part of that bewilderment had to come from the fact that Maryland start ing center Obinna Ekezie is out for the season with a ruptured Achilles tendon. With his 6-foot-10 frame and 1.5 blocks-

finished with four of Maryland's 14

play that they want to play," Maryland coach Gary Williams said. "Lonny

never complained even when he didn't always get in the game. I kept telling him, 'You're gonna get a chance.' Unfortunately it was due to Obinna's

injury, but it was great to see somebody

"You can see it in the way some guys

MEN'S BASKETBALL

From Page 12

rejections in the game.

step up." North Carolina,

on the other hand, had trouble

finding anyone to rise to the occa-

sion when the

game was on the line. UNC shot a

woeful 34.6 percent from

field after the half.

floor leader, was noticeably absent from the offense with only one sec-

ond-half shot attempt.

UNC's

Cota,

per-game out of the line-up, UNC figured it had a decided advantage in the paint.

Instead, blocks came from everymarily from for-Terence Morris (five Baxter blocks), (four) and forward Laron Profit (three) via came



help defense that sought to offset UNC's height advantage inside. Seven-foot center Brendan Haywood and 6-11 forward Kris Lang frequently met double-teams the moment they touched the ball in the paint. If they didn't, it was a good bet that a Terp defender was lurking in the lane, waiting for the ball to go up. Once it did, it was sent back.

"Most of the time, the blocks were coming from behind us," UNC forward Vasco Evtimov said. "We weren't able to see where they were vestly." see where they were exactly.'

Maryland's players didn't wait long to begin Saturday's block party. Two minutes and 43 seconds into the game, Stokes blocked a 3-point attempt from

out of his hands, they're gonna have a

Maryland's pressure was in high

ar, as Terrapin defenders often creat

ed chaos – and easy scoring opportuni-ties – with their quickness and athleti-

cism. The Terps were credited with 35 points off UNC turnovers.

their past five games and their seventh

defeat in 18 contests since beginning the season with eight consecutive victories.

"I might not be able to forget about this," Cota said. "We might play them again. But it's gonna be tough to forget

about because, like I said, I've never

Maryland 81, UNC 64

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seen us play this bad.

It was the Tar Heels' third loss in

lot of trouble handling the pressure

guard Max Owens. The Tar Heels went into a mad scramble to recover both the ball and their composure; they ended up with a shot-clock violation for the ession and an omen for the rest of

"Coach (Gary Williams) told us they don't get up real high on their shots and hooks," Morris said, "so we could both-

er them by jumping at them."

Maryland notched seven blocks in both the first and second halves. In the second half, however, those blocks were the deathblow for UNC. The Tar Heels trailed 37-32 at halftime and stayed within range for the opening eight minutes of the second. Yet the Terps closed off the inside during a key four-minute span that seized momentum for Maryland and demoralized North Carolina.

Beginning at the 11:58 mark and trailing 54-47, UNC got a series of point-blank looks at the basket that would ignite its lethargic offense. But the Terrapin defense locked down. In a four-printer than the series of the series minute span, Maryland swingman Danny Miller blocked a lay-up from Evtimov, and Baxter followed with blocks of a Lang lay-up and dunk.

By the eight-minute mark, UNC faced a 10-point deficit instead of a single-digit margin. The Tar Heels shot 9 for 26 in the second half, good for 34.6

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

On offense, the Tar Heels were able to draw fouls and get on the line for free throws. UVa. guard Renee Robinson

Gaspar scored all 13 of her points from the charity stripe. She missed all three of her shots from the floor.

Gaspar said. "I hit my free throws today, so they kept feeding me the ball."

sports@unc.edu.



defended Gaspar throughout the half and picked up four fouls in the second to foul out, while Monick Foote fouled out with 1:41 left in overtime.

"When I'm hitting those shots, my teammates want me to have the ball,"

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"If I get a shot blocked, I'm gonna try to adjust," UNC point guard Ed Cota said. "Today we didn't make any adjust-

throw shots in their face, and they were just throwing them back out."

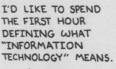
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Watered Down by Brad Christensen















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progressivism 57 Run the show 58 Stoneworks 60 Aired again

62 Dine 63 Derisive noise 64 Tractor maker 65 Mrs. in Madrid

Saint-_ 23 "Just the Way **DOWN** Sunbati

23 "Just You __"
24 Pioneer film-maker

9 Frown 14 Tankard filler 15 Greek market 16 Collar exten-

sion

17 Sobriquets
19 University of

20 Advocates of currency refo 22 Composer

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Browning
25 Part of Q.E.D.
26 Humorist
Cleveland
29 Millennia
30 Play part
31 Declare
32 D.C. old-timer
34 Advocates of
nativism

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By Matthew Higgins 28 Possessed 29 Actor Wallach 31 Columnist

Landers 33 Exclamations

of surprise
35 Jay follower
36 Single
37 Gay __
38 Blimp name
39 U-boats

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8 Indian sailor
9 Incline
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Lisbon
12 Continued
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"That was our game plan, to take the ball out of Ed Cota's hands and pressure everybody else," Maryland guard everybody else," Maryland guard Terrell Stokes said. "If you take the ball

Maryland guard Steve Francis

scored on three



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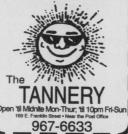
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