

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 Senior Writer

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

The assault was relentless. Maryland's athletic defenders took to the 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 starting center Obinna Ekezie is out for the season with a ruptured Achilles tendon. With his 6-foot-10 frame and 1.5 blocks-

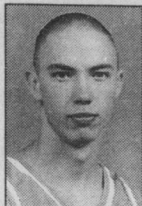
per-game out of the line-up, UNC figured it had a decided advantage in the paint.

Instead, blocks came from everywhere else — primarily from forward Terence Morris (five blocks), Baxter (four) and forward Laron Profit (three). They came via an aggressive 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 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



UNC freshman Kris Lang was blocked thrice and was held to eight points by the Terrapins.

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 possession and an omen for the rest of the afternoon.

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

"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-

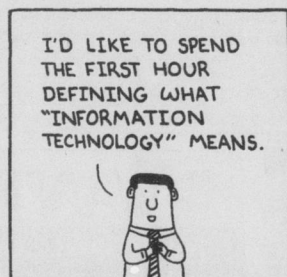
ments. We were still trying to go in and throw shots in their face, and they were just throwing them back out."

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Watered Down by Brad Christensen



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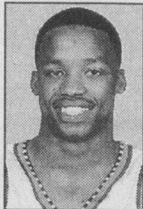


MEN'S BASKETBALL

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finished with four of Maryland's 14 rejections in the game.

"You can see it in the way some guys 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 step up."



Maryland guard Steve Francis scored on three consecutive Terps possessions during a 13-4 run.

out of his hands, they're gonna have a lot of trouble handling the pressure."

Maryland's pressure was in high gear, as Terrapin defenders often created chaos — and easy scoring opportunities — with their quickness and athleticism. The Terps were credited with 35 points off UNC turnovers.

It was the Tar Heels' third loss in 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 seen us play this bad."

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Score Box for Maryland 81, UNC 64. Includes player stats for UNC and Maryland.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

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

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

"When I'm hitting those shots, my teammates want me to have the ball," Gaspar said. "I hit my free throws today, so they kept feeding me the ball."

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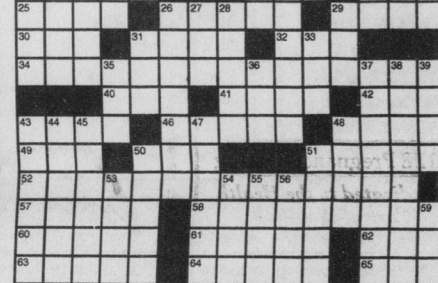
Score Box for UNC 82, Virginia 80. Includes player stats for UNC and Virginia.

THE Daily Crossword

By Matthew Higgins

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