

Tar Heels prepping for KU forward Patterson

Game is headliner for ESPN Tip-Off

BY POWELL LATIMER
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Senior North Carolina forward Danny Green said he had one question after hearing of Kentucky's 103-111 loss to heavy underdog VMI on Saturday.

"Was anyone playing defense?" A valid question, especially given that Green's Tar Heels face that Kentucky team tonight.

But regardless of how poorly Kentucky defended their opening opponent, the Tar Heels will certainly be focusing their own defense on slowing down Kentucky forward Patrick Patterson.

Patterson's numbers from KU's season-opener were not overwhelming — eight points, seven boards — but numbers can be deceiving.

North Carolina and Roy Williams remember all too clearly the 19 points and nine rebounds Patterson hung on the Tar Heels as a freshman last year.

"Physically, he is extremely imposing," Williams said. "When he posts you up down low, you stay posted up. I mean, he can bury you underneath the basket and you cannot get around him."

In fact, one of the biggest anomalies in Kentucky's box score Saturday was that Patterson took only four shots. That's an anomaly that UNC expects the Wildcats to correct.

"I would bet that Patrick would be much more of a factor in (tonight's) game," Williams said. "And they're probably going to do a lot more things trying to focus on him."

And if Kentucky coach Billy Gillispie needed any more impetus to look to the post, All-America forward Tyler Hansbrough will not play tonight, Williams said Monday.

That makes Deon Thompson Patterson's primary defender, with help from two freshman big men, Ed Davis and Tyler Zeller.

"I'm pretty sure I'm going to be the one guarding him," Thompson said. "And I'm going to accept it and do the best I can."

So how will Thompson, neither lauded for his defense nor considered a liability, slow down Kentucky's best threat?

"Just wall him and make him score over me," Thompson said. "That's the best I can do to make him score over me. Don't pick up silly fouls or foul him while you're trying to get position on him."

When Thompson goes out, Patterson also will provide the first test down low for UNC's two freshman forwards, Zeller and Davis.

Davis in particular could shore up UNC's rebounding woes, as the Tar Heels out-rebounded under-sized Penn by only 10.

"I mean, he's 6'10" and he can get up off the floor," Thompson said of Davis. "He wants to rebound, and I think that's a big thing when you try to rebound the ball is that you have to have a want to do it. And he definitely has that."

"He can bury you underneath the basket, and you cannot get around him."

ROY WILLIAMS, ON KU'S PATTERSON

And Williams is not hesitant to test the skills of Davis and Zeller against Kentucky — even in a game that serves as the centerpiece of ESPN's 24-hour College Hoops Tip-Off Marathon.

"I think it is extremely important to get them as many minutes as you can in game-type scenarios," Williams said. "We can't simulate in practice with Patrick Moody and J.B. (Tanner) and those guys what we're going to face with Patrick Patterson tomorrow night."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

THE LOWDOWN ON TONIGHT'S GAME

Kentucky vs. No. 1 North Carolina
Smith Center, 9 p.m.
Broadcast: ESPN
Radio: 1360 WCHL

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Backcourt Kentucky struggled to defend the perimeter Friday, giving up 47 combined points to VMI's starting backcourt. Look for Ty Lawson and Wayne Ellington to bounce back and light up UK in similar fashion. **Edge: UNC**

Frontcourt Last year Patrick Patterson put up 19 points and nine rebounds at UNC — and that was against Tyler Hansbrough. Without their top big man, the Tar Heels will be hard pressed to stop UK down low. **Edge: UK**

Bench Despite scoring 103 points Friday, UK got just 18 from its bench. As he showed against UPenn, Ed Davis has the potential to be a key energy guy off the bench. Look for Davis to be the game's difference maker. **Edge: UNC**

Intangibles While Kentucky is looking to prove its loss to VMI was a fluke, UNC also has a statement to make. Expect the Tar Heels to come out determined that they're still a formidable team without Hansbrough. **Edge: UNC**

The Bottom Line — North Carolina 87, Kentucky 73

—COMPILED BY DAVID ELY

Breland shines in UNC rout

BY DANIEL PRICE
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

The post again dominated the stat line from the onset for the North Carolina women's basketball team in its 102-68 demolition of Kennesaw State.

Jessica Breland paced the team with a game-high 19 points and 10 rebounds with just one missed shot — but what a glorious missed shot it was.

With six minutes remaining in the game, Breland had a chance to make history. On a breakaway with no Lady Owls in sight, Breland took a couple steady dribbles and launched herself from two feet toward the basket, attempting to become the second UNC women's player to dunk in a game.

It didn't quite work out.

The ball came out of her hand on the way up and rolled around the rim as she yanked it down, falling off the edge into the hands of Italee Lucas, who in turn scored two of UNC's 25 second-chance points.

"I wish it was at the beginning of the game, I probably would have got it," Breland said. "I was a little tired. My legs were dead. ... It's easier when you're catching it off an alley, 'cause you're basically just pushing it in."

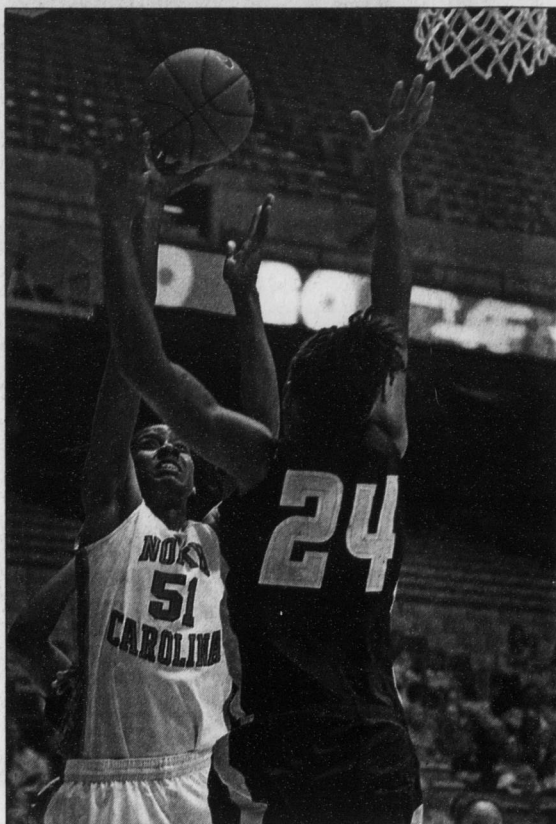
Established North Carolina starters Cetera DeGraffenreid, Rashanda McCants, Iman McFarland and Lucas were on the bench to start the game after finishing poorly in the Tar Heels' last game, a 77-65 win against Virginia Commonwealth. But the new lineup didn't slow down the Tar Heels against Kennesaw State (1-1).

"Pretty much, it was more of a wake-up call," Lucas said. "We didn't do some things we should have done in the first game. Coming off the bench, that was good for us."

Apparently it was. Lucas had a career-high 16 points and DeGraffenreid dished a personal-best 10 assists.

The Tar Heels (3-0) shot 53 percent on the game, but even when they did miss, it usually wasn't the end of the possession — UNC recorded offensive rebounds on 20 of the team's 43 missed shots.

But UNC struggled to hold onto



DTH/ERIC VELARDE

Jessica Breland led the Tar Heels with 19 points Monday and missed only one shot — what could have been the second dunk ever by a UNC woman.

the ball for portions of the game, turning the ball over six times in the first four minutes and ending the game with 27.

"We had a lot that we shouldn't have had," coach Sylvia Hatchell said. "We're going to have to look at some of those ... But Kennesaw State, they were quick. They were athletic."

She'la White, who started in place of DeGraffenreid, never really got in sync. She shot just 1-of-6 and had only one assist to go along with two turnovers.

But she did well to walk off the court after the game at all. With 8:21 remaining in the first half, White got a breakaway opportu-

nity and went up for a contested lay-up.

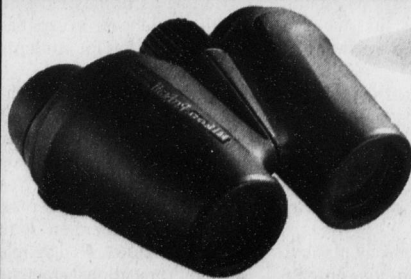
Kennesaw State's Jennifer Baker wasn't about to let her score, and she met White in the air and knocked her hard to the ground, causing White's head to bounce hard off of the floor.

DeGraffenreid came in to shoot the free throws, but White re-entered three minutes later no worse for wear.

"She was fine. She said she didn't even feel her head," Lucas said. "She said her elbow hurt more than her head. She's a tough cookie."

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