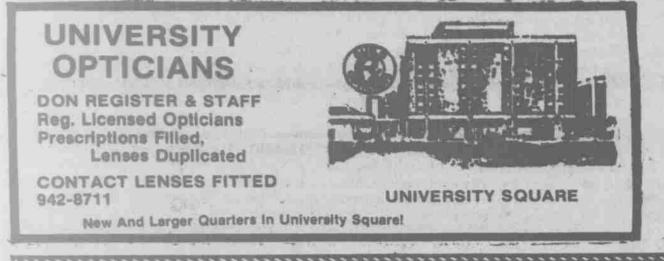


Tony Waldrop in Atlantic Coast Conference mile competition



# ACC mile champion

# Waldrop to run in California

### by Bill Kay Sports Editor

One of the nation's most respected and talked about collegiate athletes returns to action this coming Saturday.

Tony Waldrop, premier miler of the track world, heads a demanding field when he runs in the California Relays at Modesto, Calif. The Relays annually draws the top trackmen on the West Coast and also attracts most of the other top performers across the country. To no one's surprise, Waldrop is the headline feature of the event and everyone will be trying to defeat one of the most successful runners in track history.

Waldrop's most recent win came in the Atlantic Coast Conference Championships held last Tuesday in Chapel Hill. Although weakened by a chest cold, Tony showed his hometown faithfuls why he's the best as he sprinted past Duke's Steve Wheeler in the race's last 220 yards for a winning time of 3:59.8.



Described by UNC basketball coach Dean Smith as "an intense competitor, along the lines of a George Karl", Carolina has signed its second grant-in-aid basketball player for next season.

Tom Zaliagiris, 6-5 swingman from Tommy Lagarde's alma-mater—Detroit Catholic Central High—has become the second player along with Rocky Mount's standout Phil Ford to receive a basketball scholarship from the University of North Carolina.

"Credit belongs to Tommy Lagarde," Smith says. "He's the one who's been telling Tom about Carolina all year. Lagarde is happy with the Carolina situation and he didn't see why Tom couldn't fit right in. We're very happy to have Zal coming and we



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think he will contribute a great deal to North Carolina in many ways. He is an excellent student and competitor."

Smith first saw Zal as a junior while he was scouting Tommy Lagarde in Detroit.

"Carolina doesn't usually go as far for most players as other schools do," Smith said. "But after recruiting Lagarde we thought we were making a good decision." Zal could be a sleeper as he didn't make All-American in high school but is described by his coach, Bernie Holowicki, as "one heck of a competitor."

Zaliagiris, in addition to 22 points, 12 rebounds and awesome defensive responsibilities, managed five steals a game and eight assists. He was forced to play center this year on defense and combat 6-10 centers since Lagarde had left. Central was expected to fall flat on its face after the departure of Lagarde but Zal picked up the slack and the team finished with 19 wins and only three losses.

"I don't know whether I could call myself an all-around player." Zal said, "but that's the way I like to think of myself. I visited UNC on the weekend of May 5-6, and I decided to sign with Coach Smith because I think he is the best basketball coach in America."

Zaliagiris has been described as a great competitor, an exceptional student and a terrific leader.

At times he's so competitive he's violent.

He dives after loose balls, he gets after people all over the floor, he controls the offense and crashes the boards.

Smith emphasized that Zal is the Carolina type-team oriented player and is impressed with his competitive drive.

"We think that Tom has all the tangible skills such as passing, shooting, defense and rebounding to be a success in college, but more importantly, he possesses the intangibles—much like George Karl—in that he has a great competitive spirit and is truly a team player," Smith said.

Coach Smith continued, "When I saw him as a junior I could tell he possesses that inner quality of a leader as he displayed an intense desire to win."

With the addition of Tom Zaliagiris, Carolina will have depth in the backcourt along with Hoffman, Kuester, Ford, Harrison and some junior varsity standouts. Smith doesn't expect Zal to move right in to a starting berth but is optimistic that his addition will add depth not only to the backcourt but the frontcourt as well, much in the same way Walter Davis is doubling now.

Asked about the range of talent that he has available to him, especially in the backcourt. Smith merely said, "We have very good talent as does everyone in the ACC."

That is precisely the problem, but then again in Coach Smith's words, "next year should be a very interesting one."

### "People will never know how really sick Tony was at the ACC meet," Tar Heel Coach Joe Hilton said. "I don't believe he would have even attempted to run the race had it not been here in Chapel Hill.

"It is amazing that he was even able to run. It is unbelievable that he broke four minutes."

Waldrop, record breaking UNC senior, will be shooting for his 10th consecutive victory in the mile this year when he takes his position in the starting blocks in California. His previous nine wins have all come in less than four minutes. Seven of those victories were indoors.

## 11 Straight

Counting his last two races of the 1973 season. Waldrop has now run 11 straight sub-four minute miles, a feat never before achieved in the track world.

Besides his convincing victory in the ACC Championships, his only other outdoor mile this year was a 3:53.2 clocking in the Penn Relays. Only the inconsistent Jim Ryun, who holds the world outdoor record at 3:51.1, has ever run the mile faster than that. Waldrop is expecting another tough race

Saturday.

"I'm not really sure who will be in the race, but I do know that the field will be a strong one," Waldrop said. "I'm just glad I've got a few days to rest and get rid of this cold."

# Waldrop Modest

As usual, Waldrop is modest about his chances of breaking the four-minute barrier again.

"My only goal in each race is to win," he says.

"Of course, I would like to break four minutes if I could. But that's not really important. I just hope I can run well enough to win," he concluded.

The race at Modesto Saturday is one of three left in Waldrop's sensational Tar Heel career. He will also compete in the NCAA Championship in the important meet at the University of Texas on June 6-7-8, and the AAU Championships in June.

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