



"Doing a little cheerleading," the Tar Heel coach applauds the effort of one of his players.



## Polls often inaccurate

Basketball's 'Top 10' not necessarily best 10

By Lenox Rawlings

"Top 10" is a unique American vagary connoting organized analysis. Society rewards order and tidy categorization in business, finance and education. It is, therefore, no strange phenomenon that we attach some validity to anyone's "Top 10" in anything.

Given the choice between a significant, non-best-selling novel and a trite bestseller, we invariably choose the latter. We go to see the movie "Airport" and shun "Women In Love."

And in the sports world, our organized minds collate each week's national wire service basketball polls. The AP and UPI rankings are often inaccurate because they minimize schedules, injuries and homecourt advantages, but we believe in them.

Who can forget Houston's 1968 Astrodome win over UCLA, which operated with an injured Lew Alcindor? Houston was named the year's No. 1 team by AP, Elvin Hayes the top player, and Guy Lewis the best coach.

Two months later UCLA ran Houston off the court and literally breezed to its second consecutive national title the following night. Alcindor demolished Hayes and quiet John Wooden returned to Westwood with another NCAA watch.

AP now waits until season's end to distribute its spoils, but inaccuracy persists. Notre Dame, every fan's alma mater, generally ranks higher than ability merits. Tradition also carries over from one year to the next; last year's best will certainly obtain prominent national ranking early regardless of experience or potential.

Ratings are merely another form of entertainment, evolving from an entertaining game. With a chuckle and a smile, we now look at the polls and the teams.

### UCLA, USC imposing

UCLA (11-0), gunning for its fifth straight NCAA crown, rightfully tops both wire service polls. Sidney Wicks, perhaps the best college player anywhere, blends well with a superstar cast. Curtis Rowe, Henry Bibby and Steve Patterson are back, and the Bruins have improved a seemingly invincible defense.

But don't concede anything yet. A team initiated USC, but based in Los Angeles and not Columbia, is pushing UCLA in the Pacific-Eight conference as well as nationally.

The Trojans, virtually unnoticed by some preseason forecasters, are undefeated. Paul Westphal and Dennis Layton form the best guard combination in the country, and Coach Bob Boyd's team has recorded single victories over the Bruins the past two seasons. The national championship may easily be decided before the NCAA playoffs begin.

Marquette, led by Dean "The Dream" Meminger, captured the NIT last year and is undefeated this season. Coach Al McGuire scheduled three good teams—Notre Dame, Long Beach State and New Mexico State—along with 24 mediocre opponents. Meminger is very good, but Marquette should flop if it enters the postseason fight.

Penn., frequently underestimated because of its Ivy League status, is for real. All five starters are back plus some excellent sophomores. The Quakers are also undefeated, and should contend for the Eastern Regional crown.

Strength of the next three ranking teams is debatable. Western Kentucky, rated fifth, lost a narrow battle to South Carolina in the Holiday Festival Classic and barely nipped East Tennessee. Carolina fans who saw the Tar Heels demolish East Tennessee have reason to question Western's prowess.

South Carolina (sixth) and Jacksonville (seventh) are similarly unconvincing. The Gamecocks have suffered three straight losses, two of them prior to this week's polls.

Western Kentucky and Wake Forest whipped Jacksonville, and the Virgin Islands gave the Dolphins a brief scare before submitting.

Kansas, Kentucky and Notre Dame, round out the "Top 10." All three should advance to the NCAA playoffs, but Kansas stands the best chance of making the final round of four.

In the last analysis, the polls are not a true indicator. The Atlantic Coast Conference champion should rank high nationally, but this year's infighting is furious and unpredictable, and the survivor will not emerge without several scars. Given the conference's outstanding record against outside foes, the ACC tournament winner should be an influential force in the NCAA playoffs, although that team may easily be unranked.

## Tar Babies ready for Richmond frosh

by David Zucchini  
Sports Writer

The Carolina freshman basketball squad, fresh from last Friday's satisfying 73-64 revenge win over the Duke Blue Imps, goes after its sixth victory of the season tonight at 6:00 in Carmichael Auditorium as they play host to the freshmen of Richmond University.

The Tar Babies, whose only loss this season came at Duke, 68-65, received sparkling performances from forward John O'Donnell and center Bobby Jones in their triumph over the Blue Imps.

O'Donnell, a 6-6 190-pounder out of New York City, poured in a game-high 32 points against the Dukes before fouling out late in the ballgame, while Jones, a 6-9 pivotman from Charlotte, threw in 23 points and grabbed off 16 rebounds while leading a late Tar Baby surge with four crucial layups.

Freshman coach Bill Guthridge praised his Tar Babies for what he called a "determined team effort," but added that neither Carolina nor the Blue Imps played to their full potential in the contest, which was characterized by occasional ball-handling lapses.

Guthridge singled out 5-11 guard Ray Hite, who chipped in with five points.

"O'Donnell and Jones both had their usual good games," he said, "while Hite played well on defense and in setting up our offense."

Hite, a hustler from Hyattsville, Md., has not received the attention that he deserves, although he currently ranks third among Tar Baby scorers with a 6.5 average.

Jones and O'Donnell, who are most of the Tar Baby show, sport identical 26 point averages, while Jones holds a commanding lead in rebounding with an average of 17 takedowns per game. O'Donnell is second with a 6.0 rebounding average.

Teaming with O'Donnell and Jones on the front line tonight will be 6-3 forward Darrell Elston, who had his troubles in the Duke contest but made an impressive debut in the Tar Babies' 85-70 win over Gaston College after a long bout with mononucleosis.

Fred Gianiny, a 6-0 guard who dropped in five points in the Duke contest, will probably join Hite in the backcourt to complete the Tar Baby starting lineup.

The Tar Babies, who have posted wins in their last four outings, have a 5-1 over-all record and are 2-1 in ACC play.

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