

That ol' albatross

Carolina seeks first win in nine losses against State

by Susan Shackelford
Sports Editor

UNC seniors Brad Hoffman, Mickey Bell and Ed Stahl arrived in Chapel Hill four years ago—at the same time a soft-spoken Shelby native, David Thompson, also arrived on a campus only a few miles away in Raleigh.

Tonight, when UNC entertains N.C. State in another matchup for all seasons, these senior personalities, who have led their respective squads, meet for the final time in regular season Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) competition.

The UNC students who waited up to 45 hours for a ticket, the sponsors of this week's Climax activities and nationwide basketball enthusiasts realize the intensity of the UNC-NCSSU rivalry. But for the Tar Heel senior trio, the 9 p.m. Carmichael Auditorium clash means even more.

It represents an albatross they've worn around their necks since the last half of their

freshman seasons.

In that year, 1971-72, Stahl, Hoffman and Bell participated on a junior varsity team that split games with N.C. State's jayvees. The varsity, which went on to a 26-5 record, also won one and lost one against the Pack.

That last loss to State was the first of nine straight UNC defeats. This is the albatross: UNC has good teams but can't beat Thompson and company.

Already this season, N.C. State has handed UNC a pair of setbacks—82-67 in the Big Four Tournament in Greensboro and 88-85 in an overtime contest January 18 in Raleigh.

Both times UNC played the defending national champions after they suffered a loss in the preceding game, which may have psychologically worked against the Heels.

ACC Race

Tonight, both squads are trying to rebound from losses. State still may own an

edge on incentive, however, since it could still finish in a tie for first. If State beats Carolina and Clemson defeats Maryland Wednesday, the three are tied for the top spot.

Carolina bowed out of the regular season ACC race last Saturday with a 65-62 loss at Charlottesville to the University of Virginia. What, then, is on the line for Carolina when it hits the hardwood in front of 8,800 screaming home fans?

Pride.

The three seniors would like finally to remove the albatross that has existed during the era of David Thompson, who last year was voted national player of the year and this has been the most important factor in the Wolfpack's success this season. This is evident in State's loss to Clemson Saturday, when Thompson fouled out with 16 minutes remaining.

Containing Thompson, who is flanked by able Monte Towe, Tim Stoddard, Phil

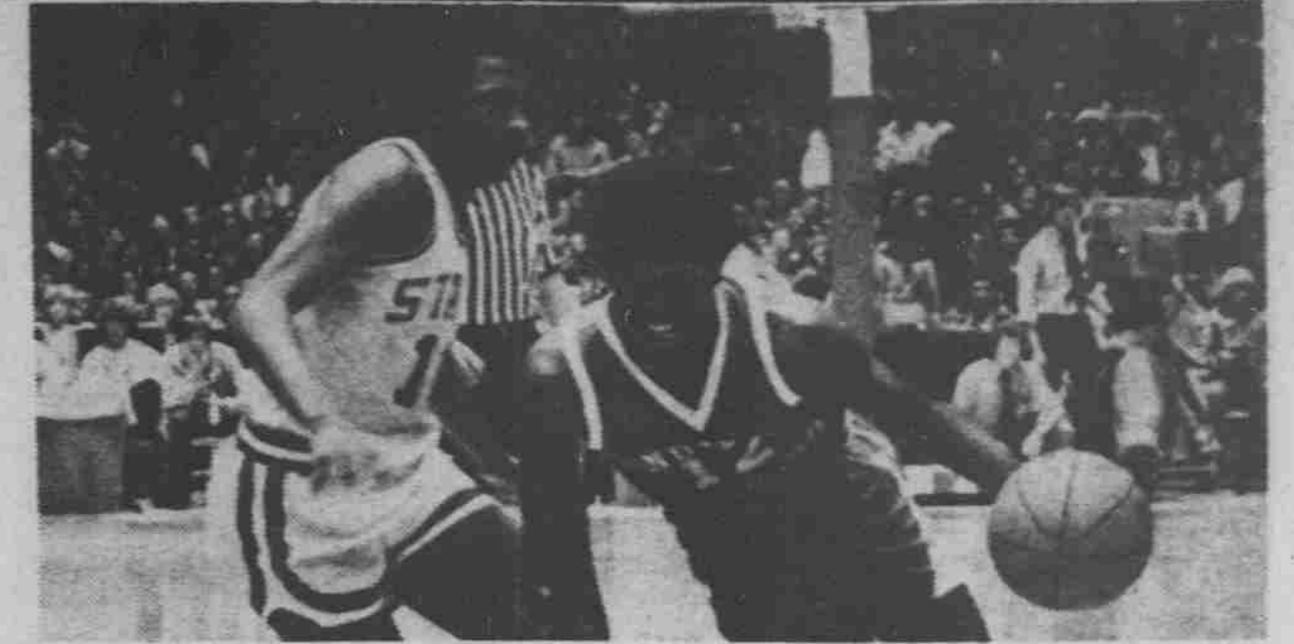
Spence and Morris Rivers, is essential for the Tar Heels, who are now 6-4 in the ACC and 16-7 overall. UNC's Mitch Kupchak and Walter Davis hope to counteract the 6-5 forward.

Kupchak excels

Kupchak is the leading scorer and rebounder for the Tar Heels, with averages of 19 and 10 respectively. Davis, who has slumped a 48 per cent field goal average, is hitting 16.4 points a game and is depended upon for his defense.

Hoffman has a 10.6 point average in the backcourt, while fellow guard Phil Ford tops the assist category and contributes 14.4 points.

In general, the Tar Heels' team shooting and rebounding must show a marked improvement for a UNC win over State. Against Virginia, the Heels shot 41 per cent from the floor and got five fewer rebounds than the Cavaliers.



Phil Ford gets past State's Morris Rivers in the last UNC-State battle in Raleigh.

DT versus Goliaths

by Kevin Barris
Sports Writer

Tonight's game with N.C. State is now on everyone's mind, especially those people who must battle the Wolfpack underneath in that all important war of the boards.

"It's a must win," said Ed Stahl, "that's all there is to it. It's a momentum factor. It's a game to get us ready for the ACC (Atlantic Coast Conference) tournament. If we can get it together against them, then we'll know what we'll have to do in the tournament."

Stahl, along with Tommy LaGarde and Mitch Kupchak, had certain ideas what they and Carolina will have to do to break the hold State has had on the Tar Heels for the last nine games.

"We're going to have to control the tempo against them," LaGarde said, "because they like to fast break; and we're going to have to

stop David Thompson."

"We'll have to play as well as we did against them over there," Stahl said. "I think that was one of our best team efforts."

"If we just do the things we can do, all together," said Kupchak, "that would be enough, I'm sure. We don't need to do anything really different, just play the way we've been playing, and perhaps execute a little better."

All three emphasized rebounding as the key to the game.

"Rebounding is really essential to any victory in the ACC," Kupchak commented, "or any victory against a powerhouse, because nobody makes all their shots and you've got to get the rebounds so you can get the fast break going."

"Whenever we've out-rebounded the other teams, we've won," LaGarde said, "and in the games we've lost, we were out-rebounded. That's a good indication to me."

Davis sees win tonight over Pack

by Bill Kay
Sports Writer

"David Thompson is a great player and he always seems to save his best for us," Carolina's 6-5 swingman Walter Davis explained, "but one player can't do it all."

The fact of the matter is N.C. State's Thompson in his three-plus varsity seasons has yet to lose to a Dean Smith team and has simply been devastating.

UNC's last encounter with State at Raleigh was another of those games. Behind by six points with just over a minute remaining in overtime State stormed back to win, 88-85. "We were in a good position to take the game at Raleigh," Davis said, "but we had some bad breaks and lost the momentum."

Davis sees a different outcome this time around. "We're going to win this one," the Charlotte native insists.

Carolina-State encounters are always important games for both teams no matter what's at stake, and tonight's game is no exception.

"Games with State are always tough because they're so emotional," Davis added, "the team that wants it most will win, it's that simple."

After back to back ACC losses to Maryland and Virginia the Tar Heels are a hungry bunch of athletes.

The ex-South Mecklenburg High standout owns a 16-point average but his percentage from the floor has dipped below the 50 per cent mark recently because of some poor shooting. "My shooting has been off," Davis admits, "there's no doubt about that."

What few people realize, however, is that Davis is second to Phil Ford in assists surpassing his total of last year, and is second to Mitch Kupchak in rebounding.

The slender Davis refutes the notion that there has been added pressure on him this year after a stellar freshman season. "I knew what the other players were capable of," Davis said referring to a team that had to adjust to the loss of an outstanding senior class. "Everyone contributes around here."

"Coach Smith cares about you as a person, not just a basketball player. He stresses togetherness and teamwork. He never looks ahead, as a matter of fact he hasn't even mentioned the ACC Tournament yet."

Davis believes Carolina is a "good" team, but must improve on things like reducing the easy basket and controlling the defensive backboards to become the great team they would like to be.

"We're looking forward to the State game," Davis said, "we are determined to play hard."

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"Sweet D"

UNC Bell rings true

by Bill Kay
Sports Writer

Senior Mickey Bell isn't a prolific scorer or a flashy ball-handler but he goes about his job on the basketball court with remarkable consistency. He does all the little things so well.

"I don't have the ability of a Ford or a Davis," said Bell, a key reserve in tonight's game with N.C. State, "so I have to make up for it in desire and hustle."

"It's an honor to play at all at Carolina," the 6'4" Goldsboro senior emphasized.

Bell is one of three seniors on this year's team and has averaged 16 minutes a game, coming in at the small forward position to spell his roommate Walter Davis and playing on the Carolina blue team. His lack of scoring punch has been negated by his overall hustle, tenacious defense, and concentration on fundamental team basketball.

Bell is not your typical college basketball player. He entered UNC without a scholarship and is leaving with one.

"I never thought I'd be playing at Carolina even though I always had the desire," Bell said. "I wasn't a standout in high school and my coach advised me to go to a small college to play ball."

However Bell caught the watchful eye of one Dean Smith who welcomed him to the fold as a sophomore. Smith gave Bell a three-year basketball scholarship. A great amount of responsibility is placed upon seniors in Smith's system and Bell is no exception.

He has reacted with a 72 per cent shooting accuracy from the floor (18 of 25) and has been an asset in Carolina's scheme of things. Nobody will soon forget Bell's vital rebound in Carolina's win at Maryland and many are

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