

Both baseballers over .300

Wilkerson and Rackley key Tar Heel hitting corps

by John Dunlap
Staff Writer

"I was a real little kid and my brother, who is about eight years older than me, would throw a rubber ball and I'd hit it with a stick. One day I hit one completely out of the back yard. He couldn't believe it and I couldn't believe it."

That same kid is now playing right field for North Carolina and has been hitting college pitchers in the last month like a man possessed. His name is Mike Wilkerson.

"When I was 11, I remember it real

well. I hit the first homerun I'd ever hit. I couldn't believe it. I don't hit many homers."

The same kid who smacked a homer at age 11 is now one of the top hitters in the Atlantic Coast Conference this year. He has been hitting in the high .300's all season and is in a good position to be voted All-ACC. He plays second base and his name is Steve Rackley.

As Carolina's baseball team has traveled what at times has been a rocky road this past season, Wilkerson and Rackley have been examples of

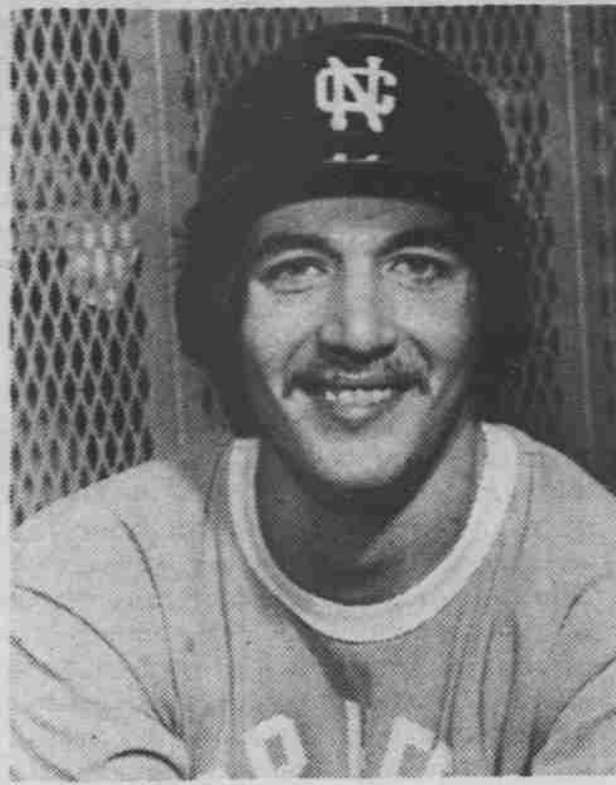
solidarity. Carolina needed all the support they could give.

Example — Steve Rackley leads the team in hits with 37. He has doubled eight times and tripled once enroute to a .349 average. Batting from the left side, Rackley has been the man Carolina looks to as a baserunner.

Example — Mike Wilkerson started the season 0 for 17 at the plate. Wilkerson is now batting a cool .315 with 34 hits. He must be living right. One of his three homeruns was a three-run shot that beat Duke on a sunny Sunday at UNC.

Mike Wilkerson is a senior at UNC. He transferred to Chapel Hill from Louisburg Junior College of which he said, "It's good ball, but it's not that much better than high school."

At Carolina, "you have to be so keen on fundamentals. When you botch up a play like a bunt or sacrifice, you really feel bad because you feel that you ought to be able to do it right every time," Wilkerson said.



Steve Rackley

Looking at personal qualities, Wilkerson points to confidence as the single most important reason for his success.

"I've got my confidence back. Once you go up to the plate and hit the ball hard consecutively a number of times, you get your confidence. It's just a matter of going to the plate and reacting. When I'm loose at the plate it carries over to the field and I make good catches," he said.

Wilkerson plans to travel down to Sarasota, Fla. for a rookie league tryout. This is a group of eight teams that play all summer. It may also prove to Mike Wilkerson whether he can play

pro ball.

Steve Rackley has been hitting well from the very first of the season. But recently a flurry of lefthanded pitchers have left him worried.

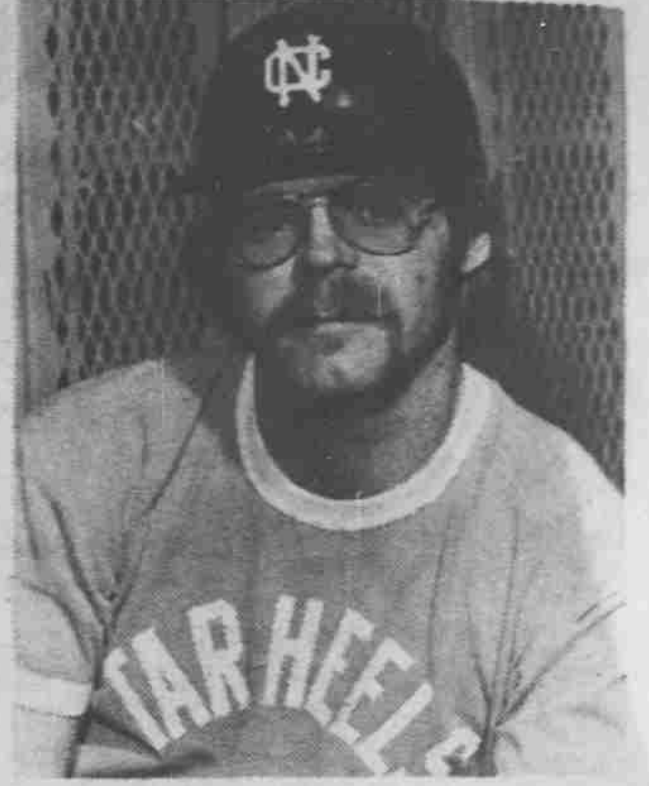
"I started off working real hard at the beginning of the year. Things started falling together and my timing came real quickly to me," Rackley began.

"My confidence has been real high most of the year. Any pitcher that pitches to me I feel I can hit. If you think you can hit, then you're going to, most of the time."

"I'm having troubles with lefthanded pitchers mainly because I haven't seen many this year. We haven't got any lefthanded pitchers on this team to practice against."

Rackley has played both second and third base in an infield that has been the downfall of many good Carolina pitching performances this year. He feels that much of the Tar Heels' infield trouble stems from lack of time at any one position.

"There's been a lot of rotating in the infield. We just haven't worked long enough at one position. But the last



Mike Wilkerson

couple of games we've played super defense. We're getting really aggressive out there."

Rackley is a sophomore at UNC, something not too many UNC opponents can be very happy about. Rackley, like Wilkerson, is from Raleigh.

Both Rackley and Wilkerson feel the Tar Heels will be ready to face Virginia in Raleigh in the opening round of the ACC tournament. For Carolina's sake, one can hope that they will be as ready as they have proven to be all year.

The Daily Tar Heel

SPORTS

IM softball: tall man's sport?

by Brad Bauler
Staff Writer

UNC Intramurals just might have one for the record books this year: the world's tallest championship softball team. The UNC Varsity Basketball team, known as the Granville AW Roundballers, defeated Ehringhaus A Blue in a grueling nine inning championship softball game Monday.

Led by the hitting of Walter Davis (three for four) and John Kuester (four for five), the basketball team blasted Ehringhaus pitcher John Justus for 12 runs and 18 hits. The Ehringhaus team was not intimidated by the formidable lineup of LaGarde, Kupchak, Ford, Hoffman and Hanners as they batted in nine runs off the 10-hit pitching of Tom Zaliagiris. The heated contest, marked by many emotional outbursts from each team, was a two-hour affair including two extra innings.

In other action on the softball circuit, Kappa Psi Blue defeated Phi Delta Chi Blue 5-3 in a pharmacy school showdown. In the most exciting game of the day, Gary Dunham recorded his second win this season over the arch-rivals.

In the fraternity white division, Alpha Phi Omega defeated Sigma Phi Epsilon to take its second championship in a row. The Sig Eps had control through the fifth inning when they led 5-2, but the APO white team was not to be denied as it carried the game into extra

innings and scored one run in the eighth to secure the victory.

Immediately after the contest, manager Murray Jones accepted the sportsmanship award for the APO white team.

The Graduate-Independent championship went to the perennial champs, the Econgrads. The smooth pitching of Larry Davidson resulted in a

comparatively easy 10-6 victory over Law blue. Davidson scattered 10 hits, while striking out four to insure his team's victory. The deciding runs came in the fifth inning, when the Econgrads exploded for four hits and three walks to bring in five runs. Law Blue made a terrific effort to come back in the bottom of the seventh, as they scored two runs but left three stranded.

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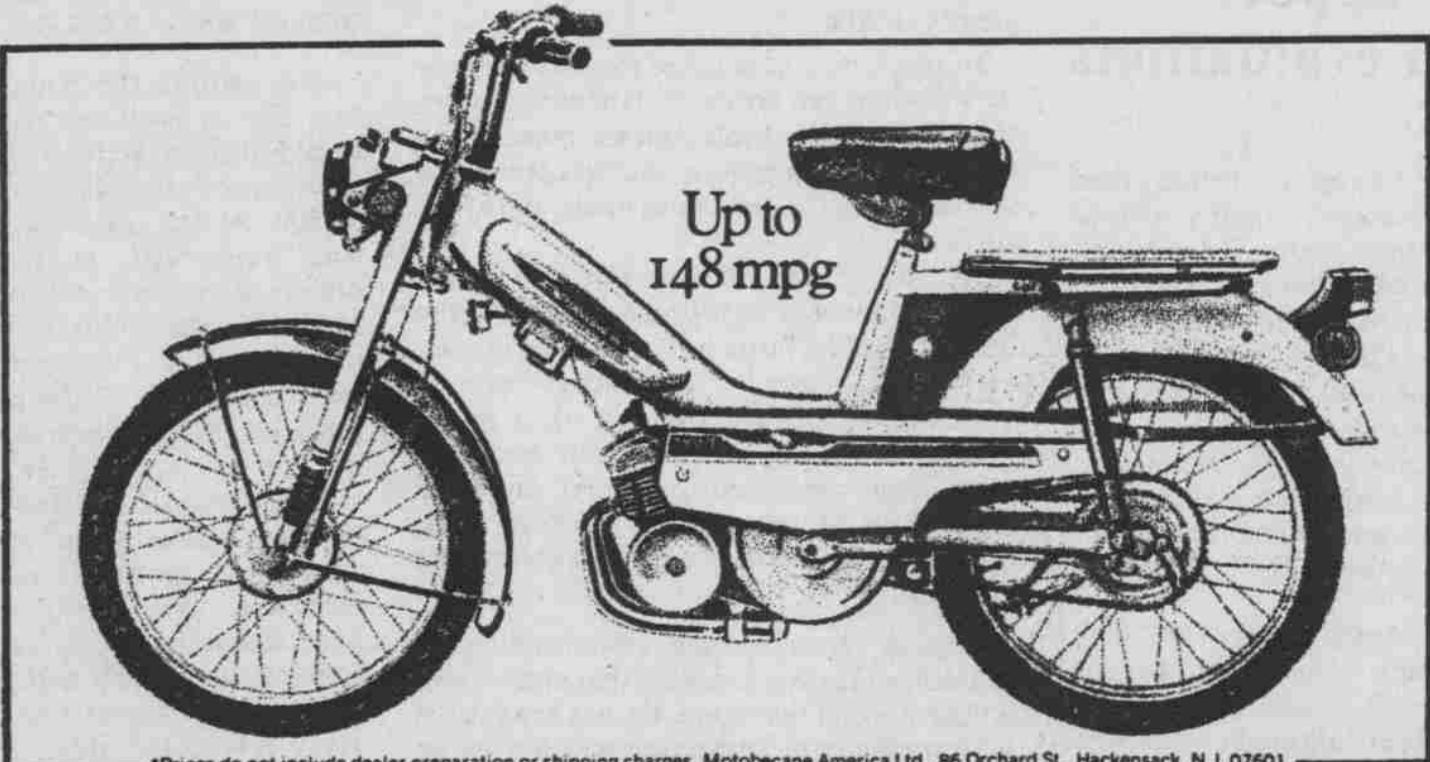
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