

Tar Heel women set goals high for season

After a second-place finish in the Women's National Invitation Tournament last year, the UNC women's basketball team faces a demanding schedule eagerly as it looks to build on a growing program.

By SCOTT PETERSON

THERE are quite a few signs and posters decorating the walls of Jennifer Alley's office. The most philosophical of all for the Tar Heels this year reads "No goal is too high if we climb with care and confidence."

Alley, in her fourth season as coach of the North Carolina women's basketball squad, has added a banner recruiting year to already steady lineup returning from last year's 21-15 team.

Coming off a second-place finish in the Women's National Invitation Tournament in Amarillo, Texas, last season, the Tar Heels have set some far-reaching goals despite a demanding schedule.

"The girls said they would like to be in the finals of the state tournament, Atlantic Coast Conference tournament and make it to the regional tournament," Alley says. "Underlying these is the fact that they would like to win all of them. They are very realistic about goals and are working hard to meet them."

"Playing in the WNIT helped the team tremendously. It was a peaking point for us and we ended the season on a positive note."

If the Tar Heels are to realize their goals, they must first survive a vigorous schedule that includes 11 of last year's top 20 teams and early season games with defending national champion Old Dominion, Virginia, N.C. State and Clemson.

"We play 15 of the top 20 teams as they are ranked now," Alley says. "We have added Penn State, Pittsburgh, and Texas along with South Carolina, N.C. State, Maryland and Old Dominion. Along with that, six or seven teams in our region are ranked. It is one of the toughest regions in the nation."

"We either had to play Old Dominion at the beginning or end of the season, so I choose the beginning. Some coaches like to ease into their season. I've jumped into ours with both feet."

Alley has an excellent nucleus to work with this year, having lost only Bernadette McGlade to graduation. McGlade has not left the UNC program altogether, because she's serving as an assistant to Alley this year.

HENRIETTA Walls, a 6-foot-2 sophomore, will fill the void at center depending on how freshman Tresa Brown develops early in the season. Brown, 6-3, led Raleigh Sanderson to three state championships and a 72-5 record as a prep standout.

Kathy Crawford, a member of the WNIT All-America team last year, came on strong at the end of last season and promises to contribute to the Tar Heels' scoring punch this year as a sophomore.

Meredith White, 5-10 junior with good ball handling ability, will see action at forward as will freshman Cindy Miller.

Senior Aprille Shaffer will again quarterback the Tar Heels from the point. Senior Charlene Boykin and freshman Eileen McCann will battle for the other guard spot.

"I feel like our team is effective and we are capable of challenging

everybody on our schedule," Alley says. "We are a little shorter, but comparable with everybody else in the ACC."

"It used to be if you had a six foot girl playing for you, you thought you had a giant. Now she is one of four little people on the court."

"N.C. State and Maryland have dominated the ACC in the past with Carolina and Clemson knocking on the door. Clemson will be unbelievable this year and Maryland lost (Kris) Kirchner, but will be more balanced and stronger."

"The women's league will be as competitive as it ever has. You go through a period of dominance when one team gets the jump on the rest or recruits the big girls."

"It is similar to topsy-turvy standings of the men's league. Every game is going to be competitive. We'll have to struggle to come out on top."



Aprille Shaffer

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