

Pool not adequate for diving team

By TRACY YOUNG

When Bowman-Gray pool was built 40 years ago, it was considered a national caliber pool. Today, at least for the UNC diving team, it has become somewhat of a farce.

"The pool is only ten feet deep, and that's being optimistic," diving coach Ben Aycock said. "It's not that deep under the high board. Nobody can stretch their entries."

Diver John Dameron spoke of hitting his elbows, wrist and chin on the bottom of the pool. Teammate Sue Perfater also spoke of such injuries.

"The 3-meter board sits between the 8 and 10 feet," Perfater said. "When I came here, I was used to diving into 16 feet. It's scary. You can't stretch anything."

"It's a problem especially for the

guys because they are a lot taller. They hit their heads and arms."

The danger of diving from a 3-meter board into 8½ feet of water is not easily visualized by a non-diver. A fully extended diver averages about six to 6½

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feet in length. That leaves approximately two feet of leeway before he crashes into the bottom of the pool.

Because of the danger of hitting bottom, UNC divers have been forced to react quickly by curling their bodies once they hit the water, making for a rougher dive. This style hurts the

divers in competition at better facilities, where they could stretch their entries.

"There's an added danger," Aycock said. "It's a pain for the other teams to adjust to. But they only have to adjust for one day. We have to live with it."

But lack of proper facilities is not the only problem the divers have run into. They are allowed only 1½ hours of pool time a day — at 6 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

"If you don't let the facility mess with your head, it won't," Barry Thomas said. "If you do, it will, and you won't be able to dive well. But as long as we get second rate pool time, we'll be a second rate diving team."

"It is utterly ridiculous we can't practice both boards every day," Dameron said. "We're a major college. It's not like we don't want to. Not enough effort is being made. People aren't really fighting."

A third major problem for the divers has been access to a trampoline, a vital tool in the training of divers.

Thomas, a junior, said the divers could not work with the tramp at all his first two years here due to conflicts with intramural basketball. This year, the divers have been challenged for their tramp space and time by the badminton club.

"We do have access to the trampoline on a more or less regular basis right before our pool time," Aycock said. "But the tramp is not enough. We need more board time. The IM people have control before we have control."

"We're treated like a recreational thing rather than a varsity sport," Thomas said. "When we go to compete with varsity teams we're at a disadvantage because we're treated like a recreational sport at Carolina."

With all of these problems to cope with, it's not surprising that the

Carolina finishes in the recent NCAA Zone Qualifying meet were consistently around 20th place.

In fact, while the divers had expected to finish better, many said they had not put 100 percent effort into the zone championship because they realized their efforts would be futile.

"You look around at the other pools, the coaches and the other divers," Dameron said. "You compare yourselves to them, and what can you do?"

Dameron even said he considered transferring to a school stronger in diving after this year. Although he looked at such schools as Indiana and Iowa, he has decided to stick it out at UNC.

So what is it that draws divers to Carolina and keeps them here?

It is the same thing that is keeping

"We're treated like a recreational thing rather than a varsity sport," Thomas said.

John Dameron here — the academic prestige of UNC. And few of them regret not having gone to a stronger diving school.

Janice Dalrymple, a Canadian, became interested in UNC at the suggestion of a friend in school here and she openly admits her foremost goal here is a good education.

"Traditionally, we've had the problem of people coming in and getting disillusioned and leaving the program, some for studies," Aycock said. "We haven't consistently had people here that want to do well. I think now we have people that want to do well."

Soon, though, UNC will have more

(See diving on page 11.)

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