SPORTS

Ironic win over Tech gives Tar Heels shot at first-place ranking

By KURT ROSENBERG Assistant Sports Editor

In an afternoon filled with irony for North Carolina's basketball team, the most ironic event of the day didn't occur until several hours

after UNC had beaten Georgia Tech. It didn't seem to make a lot of sense for a team that had just gotten by a mediocre opponent to be staring at the very real possibility of a No. 1 ranking, but that's what happened anyway. First-ranked UCLA lost to Alabama Friday night and Iowa defeated No. 2 Indiana Saturday. And today, North Carolina will learn if its 72-65 victory over Tech Saturday was enough to earn the top spot in the nation, a familiar position last

North Carolina, Michael Jordan and Sam Perkins excepted, had one of its poorer efforts of the year, but if it comes off the game ranked first, even Dean Smith probably won't mind very much.

year, a strange and unexpected one this season.

The other examples of Saturday's irony, while less significant, were

It was ironic, for instance, that the Yellow Jackets, whose only ACC win came against Clemson, managed to keep the game close almost the whole way. Especially when you consider that they started three freshmen and played without their No. 1 center, John Salley, who missed the game with an injured leg. It seemed kind of absurd that Tech, which started two forwards who measured 6-foot-5 and 6-foot-2, was even on the same court with the much taller and much stronger Tar Heels, win-

Despite all that, North Carolina, after opening up an 11 point lead late in the game, wasn't assured of a win until Perkins and Buzz Peter-

son combined for seven free throws in the last 1:35. Georgia Tech coach Bobby Cremins said, "I though we might lose by 50. We were concerned about coming in and not being prepared."

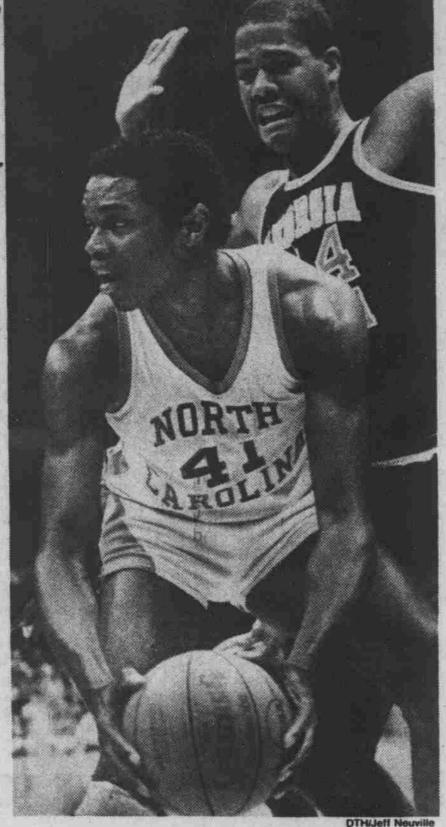
While the Yellow Jackets were obviously prepared, Smith was unprepared for some of the things that transpired. He couldn't have expected his team to shoot 39 percent from the field, nor could he have imagined the Tar Heels would shoot better from beyond the three-point line than from inside the circle in the second half. The explanation? There's irony in that, too.

Usually, miserable shooting percentages are the result of either poor shot selection, great defense, or a combination of the two. Saturday, North Carolina worked the ball, took good shots, and unless it was Jordan firing, usually missed. Take away Jordan's 39-point outburst and UNC shot 11 for 41 from the field. Excluding Jordan and Perkins, the starters shot 0 for 16.

We needed every one of (Jordan's) points today," Smith said. "I was very pleased with our shot selection, but they didn't drop. I hope we shoot better, or we're in trouble."

Even in Jordan's performance, irony could be found. Going into the game, he had been the worst three-point shooter of any UNC starter, with a 26.3 percentage. Shooting from beyond 19 feet was about the only part of his game that opponents hadn't considered a real threat.

All that's changed. Now Jordan will have to be viewed as a threat no matter where he is on the court. He made six of seven three-point field goals and also got credit for North Carolina's first four-point play when he nailed a 21-footer, got fouled by Mark Price and converted the free



Sam Perkins grabs the ball in Greensboro ... scored 23 points in 72-65 win Saturday

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Another irony. Jordan said the call on Price was a bad one and the four-point opportunity should not even have come about "He never touched me," Jordan said.

But Jordan wasn't going to complain about that, or anything else that happened in the game. "I just felt confident about everything that I

North Carolina is known for its balanced scoring attack. Ironically, the scoring Saturday was incredibly unbalanced. Jordan and Perkins combined for all but 10 of the team's points.

"We didn't plan for it to be the two-man scoring parade that it turned out to be," Smith said. "But we don't mind those two taking the

it's terrific

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Wrestlers give in to Wolfpack; hope to keep Top 20 spot

By MICHAEL PERSINGER

The 18th-ranked North Carolina wrestling team had hoped to solidify its place in the top-20 Friday night when they faced the No. 14 N.C. State Wolfpack in Carmichael Auditorium.

The Tar Heels appeared on the way to realizing that goal, winning three of the first four matches to jump out to an early 12-3 lead. Then

the bottom fell out. UNC received early victories from Al Palacio, at 118 pounds, John Aumiller at 126 and Matt King at 142 to take an early advantage. The

lead didn't hold up for long. The Tar Heels went on to drop five of the final six weight classes and the match, 25-16.

"We got an injury at 118 that we didn't count on (Steve Love dislocated his elbow), and that got us behind early," N.C. State coach Bob Guzzo said. "I was proud of the way we fought back all the way. We knew that we had good people once we got to 150, and we were happy to go strength against strength with them."

The Wolfpack got a victory from Steve Koob over Tim Plott at 150, and a superior decision by defending ACC champion Chris Mondragon over Tad Wilson to pull N.C. State within one at 12-11, which set up the showdowns in the higher weight classes.

The Wolfpack emerged victorious in the pivotal matches at 167 and 190, with Craig Cox heating Bill Gaffney in a superior decision and

John Connelly decisioning Bob Shriner to put the Wolfpack ahead to stay. At 177, the Tar Heels got a major decision from Jan Michaels over the Wolfpack's Greg Fatool to pull UNC even at 16-16.

After those three matches, all that remained was the heavyweight matchup, with the Tar Heel's Tommy Gorry facing 400-pound Tab Thacker in a match in which UNC needed at least a major decision to win the match. It was also one in which Gorry was given almost no

Early in that final match, it appeared that Gorry, diminutive in stature when compared to the huge Thacker, had a chance to pull off the upset. Gorry had Thacker off balance in the first period, almost

"With a guy as big as Thacker, sometimes when you get him on his back, he has a hard time getting off of it," UNC coach Bill Lam said.

The upset was not to be, however, as Thacker rallied to pounce on Gorry and force him to retire with a rib injury. Gorry suffered torn and bruised cartilage, and he will miss about two weeks of action, according

Lam placed the blame for the loss on Wolfpack victories at 167 and 190. "Gaffney doesn't handle pressure well, and that is certainly something he will have to work on," Lam said. "I thought that even if he didn't win he would keep it within about three points, and then big victories at 177 and 190 would almost assure a win. As it turned out, we didn't get the wins we needed."

Weekend Round-up

Cagers smash rival Georgia Tech

Kathy Crawford's name probably wouldn't be found anywhere near the top of Bernie McGlade's list of favorite people right now.

In fact, it almost looks as if Crawford has a personal vendetta against McGlade, having spent the past week or so slashing and revising any of the UNC alumna's records she's come

First, it was McGlade's career scoring record at UNC; Crawford took a scythe to that with a 14-point output against Wake Forest. By Saturday, things were really getting personal. Before, it had been the former UNC great Crawford was after, now it became Georgia Tech head coach McGlade.

Crawford led North Carolina in the hunt after old-star-now-coach-at-rival-school McGlade, and went in for the kill with a 22-point, 13-rebound knife in the side.

Tresa Brown added some potent poison of her own, hitting on the Yellow Jacket defense for 22 points in North Carolina's 96-58 gnashing of Georgia Tech.

Behind 54-29 at the half, the Yellow Jackets were never in the chase. Anita Maione man 12 points and Cindy Cochran voiced her sup-

BLOOM COUNTY

port with 10 in the losing cause.

North Carolina, now 15-5 overall and 4-2 in the ACC, travels to Clemson Wednesday for a 6:30 appointment with the Tigers.

Despite what coach Derek Galvin called a lack of quality judging and a general lack of organization by the host school, the UNC gymnastics team still cruised to an easy victory in a three-team meet at William and Mary University on Saturday.

UNC posted 164.05 points. Host William and Mary followed at 159.4 and Princeton brought up the rear at 146.6.

Even though the Tar Heels had their lowest team total of the season, Galvin said that the women definitely showed some improvement over their losing effort against Duke the

"We were just as good if not better on bars and the vault than we were against Duke," he

said. "We weren't as weak as our scores in-

Though she did not win her race, UNC women's track star Joan Nesbit ran the mile under the qualifying standard for the NCAA championships Saturday in the Mason-Dixon Games in Louisville, Ky.

Nesbit's time of 4:47.5 was 2.5 seconds better than the mark of 4:50 required of NCAA qualifiers. However, she finished second behind Brenda Webb of Athletics West.

"She was real competitive with going out and racing most of the people," UNC assistant coach Skip Miller said. "She was competitive with everybody except Brenda Webb."

Though Nesbit's performance was better than the NCAA standard, only the top 20 qualifiers will run in the NCAA indoor championships March 10-12 in Pontiac, Mich.

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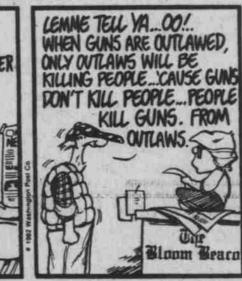
Basketball ticket distribution has previously been avoided on Tuesdays and Thursdays: however, the scheduling of the Virginia distribution on Tuesday, Feb. 1 was

Because this is mid-term season, the

Carolina Athletic Association does not want any student to miss a class or test to wait for tickets. Numbers will be checked at 8 a.m., 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. Tickets will be distributed at 5 p.m. There will be no check-in at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 12 noon or 1 p.m.

by Berke Breathed

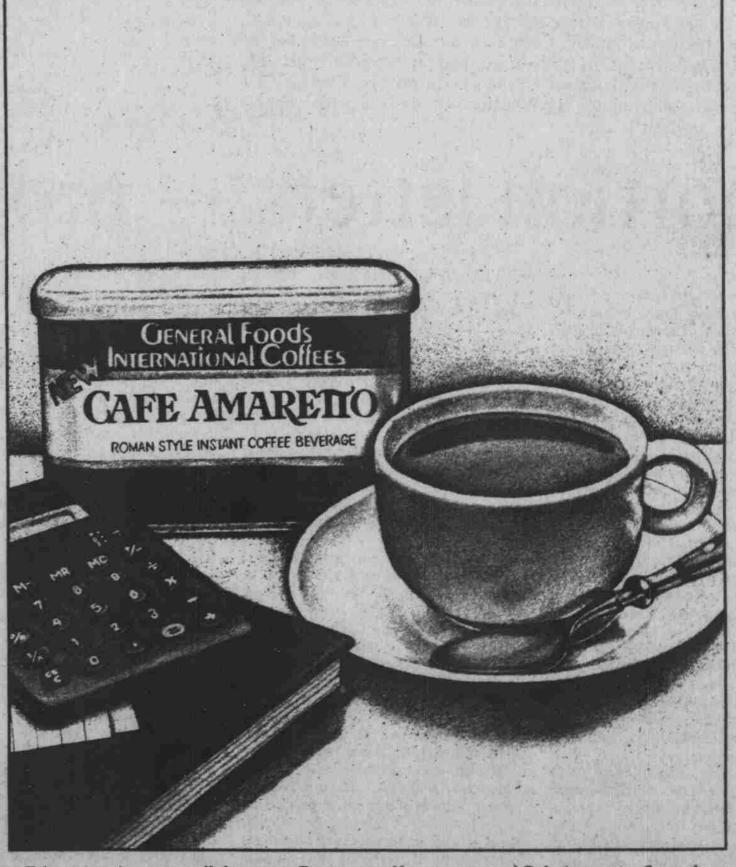








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