

Tech wins first baseball title

By KURT ROSENBERG
Staff Writer

ATLANTA A season that began with high expectations and rose to unexpected levels of disappointment appeared well on its way to coming full circle Saturday night, and the setting could not have been more appropriate.

The fifth-seeded Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets, playing before their home fans at Rose Bowl Field, came back to defeat Clemson, 7-5, to win their first ACC baseball championship. They swept through the tournament without a loss, displaying the offensive potency that had eluded them during the ACC season, which they finished with a record of just 6-7-1.

They did both, although during the final game of the double-elimination tournament it appeared as if Clemson would force a championship game on Sunday. The Tigers had opened up a 4-0 lead in the first two innings.

But in the fourth inning, the Yellow

Jackets tied the game. Walt McConnell singled, scored on Carl Sittler's triple. Sittler came home on a wild pitch, Jamie Sims walked and K.G. White, who has been used sparingly this year, homered.

Clemson took the lead in the sixth when Scott Dillon, who set a tournament record with 12 hits, homered, but Tech tied it in the seventh on a single by Jeff Mons, a sacrifice by Steve Newbern and an RBI single by Keith Kerver. The Yellow Jackets took the lead for good in the eighth when White and Mike Yancey singled. White scored on a wild pitch and Newbern singled home Yancey.

"It's a culmination of a lot of work," said tournament MVP Scott Jordan, who went 11-for-20, hit three home runs and stole seven bases to set a tournament record. "We expected to have a good season in the conference and we didn't show it. We knew we had the best team, and we just had to go out and prove it."

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Scott Johnson: "I just don't know how to explain it. It was a big shock."

And it was all over so quickly.

They had opened the tournament in the same fashion they had performed over the past month, when they had won 26 of their last 30 games. A 15-2 thrashing of Duke in the first round seemed to reassure them that they were, as they had said, the team to beat. "It's got to help us out a lot as far as momentum goes," Devy Bell was prompted to say on Wednesday afternoon.

But the momentum ended when the second game began. Roger Williams pitched yet another excellent game for UNC on Thursday, but Clemson's George Stone pitched better. The Tar Heels failed to duplicate the offense they had displayed against Duke, accumulating just six hits, striking out eight times and getting three runners caught stealing. And UNC lost a dramatic 3-2 game in the ninth inning.

But after returning to their hotel rooms late that night, the Tar Heels came back to the stadium Friday afternoon with what they would later say was a fresh attitude, the disappointment of the evening before wiped from their memories.

"I think we came out with a clean slate," Surhoff said. "I was ready to play, and I think the other guys were ready to play. It may not have looked like we were ready to play, though."

Not baseball, at least. North Carolina lasted until the bottom of the first inning. A 1-0 UNC lead, scratched out when Brian Chandler's infield single scored Surhoff, evaporated quickly, as would the Tar Heels' hopes of defending their ACC championship.

After posting the lowest earned-run average of any starting pitcher on the team this season, Brad Powell watched his ERA disintegrate in a matter of minutes. He got the first batter, Keith Kowalski, to ground out to shortstop.

But it was like batting practice for the Cavaliers after that.

Dennis Barth singled to center. Bill Narleski hit a long double to center. Jeff Booker singled to center. Dan Maynard walked. Woody Hall singled to center. Kent Savedge singled to center. Mickey Fuqua walked on four pitches. After David Horton struck out, Kowalski came up for the second time in the inning and hit a three-run triple down the right-field line.

With UNC trailing, 7-1, Tim Kirk emerged from the bullpen for some desperately needed relief.

The roof had caved in on the Tar Heels at precisely the wrong time psychologically. They showed no life, managing only three hits the rest of the way. The pitching that had brought them so far in recent weeks had already vanished. And now, the hitting that had at times this season been downright vicious, was nowhere to be found, apparently having been completely used up against Duke.

"In everybody's head . . ." Johnson started, searching for the right words to describe effect of Virginia's early explosion. "I'm sure it affected everybody."

It now appears that the Tar Heels' hopes for an NCAA bid rest on a three-game series at Florida State starting May 17.

They know that a poor showing in Tallahassee could very well keep them out of the regionals for the first time in four years. They know also that a better showing in the ACC tournament could have helped their chances. Defending their championship would have ensured an NCAA bid.

"When you've been in the championship game five years in a row and won it three times, I think you've got to realize that every year's a challenge," coach Mike Roberts said. "This year, we just didn't seem to be able to accept the challenge."

Chambers is lone bright spot for tennis team in ACCs

By SCOTT FOWLER
Assistant Sports Editor

A lanky blond, armed with the most vicious groundstrokes the UNC Tennis Center had ever seen, provided most of the excitement for Tar Heel tennis boosters in an otherwise lackluster ACC tournament for the North Carolina netters.

Jeff Chambers smoked to a 6-1, 6-1 win over Clemson's Richard Matuszewski in the finals of the No. 2 singles division, enabling the Tar Heels to avoid a total shutout in individual championships. However, Chambers' victory wasn't enough to keep the Tar Heels from falling back into third place in the final team standings, behind the Tigers and Maryland.

Clemson won its fifth team title in the last six years by amassing 132 total points, including three singles division winners and all three doubles flight winners. "We expected to win this one," Clemson coach Chuck Kriese said, "and now we're going to go try and win the NCAAs."

If not for Chambers, the tournament might have been remembered as the year of the total collapse for the Tar Heels. UNC had finished the opening day of play on Thursday in a strong second place, and even had a slim chance of catching the front-running Tigers.

Instead, UNC lost four head-to-head matches with Clemson and seven of nine matches on the day. Only

Chambers won in singles, taking a 6-4, 6-3 victory over Georgia Tech's Kenny Thorne.

So Chambers was the Tar Heels' lone representative in the finals. And his opponent, Matuszewski, was ranked No. 36 in the country, seeded No. 1 in the division and had beaten Chambers only three weeks ago. "I was so pumped to play well, though," Chambers said.

It showed. Chambers jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the first set, splitting the lines time and time again with a heavy topspin forehand and lethal two-handed backhand. "But when we played at Clemson, Matuszewski had gotten off to a terrible start there too," Chambers said. "So I knew I couldn't let up."

He didn't. Matuszewski kept trying to come in and control the net against Chambers, and the sophomore kept making him pay for it. Time after time Matuszewski could only wave at passing shots or gaze at a topspin lob that floated over his outstretched racket. "It was hard for me to find a place on the court where I was comfortable," Matuszewski said in a soft voice after the match was over. "I didn't think I played bad, but his style of play just made it seem worse."

After Chambers hit a passing shot while falling down to break Matuszewski's serve again for a 5-1 lead in the second set, he smiled broadly.

Four points later the match was his, and Chambers lunged his racket toward the net, screamed "Yes!" and bounded up to the net to shake Matuszewski's hand.

"I don't think I've ever played better," Chambers said. "I don't think I've ever had a bigger win."

Chambers' one regret Saturday was that his wife of nine months, Karol, couldn't be there. She was competing in the ACC track championships for UNC. "I really wish she could have seen that," Chambers said. "She's helped the mental aspect of my game so much." Karol didn't miss the festivities completely, however, as she ran down the slope to the courts just in time to see Chambers receive his award for winning the flight.

The biggest surprise of the tournament had to be Wayne Hearn's poor performance. Hearn, a senior, had never lost an ACC match in his career, going 18-0 in the conference. But he continually had problems with his slice backhand against Clemson's Miguel Nido. In Friday's semifinals Nido won the first eight games before Hearn and most of the 200 spectators could catch their breath.

Hearn had not lost a set by a 6-0 score the entire year, a streak spanning 79 consecutive sets. He was already down 6-0, 2-0. As the crowd urged him on, Hearn whipped a down-the-line backhand past Nido on game point to win his first game of the

match. Hearn shook both fists in the air, then hit four straight serves that Nido was unable to return. Hearn went on to win that set, 7-5, and looked to have the momentum as the two went into a third and decisive set.

But amazingly, Nido won six straight games and thus served Hearn a 6-0 sandwich, winning the match 6-0, 5-7, 6-0.

The next day Duke's Jeff Hersh, who was cheered on by Duke basketball players Mark Alarie and Jay Bilas, added insult to injury as he defeated Hearn in the battle for third place, 3-6, 6-2, 6-0. "I don't think I could play any worse than I did in those two matches," Hearn, who was still voted as the conference's co-MVP for his outstanding regular-season record, said.

The person who shared that honor with Hearn was Georgia Tech freshman Bryan Shelton, who won the No. 1 flight over Nido Saturday, 4-6, 7-5, 7-5. Shelton became the second freshman in a row to win the top individual title, as Clemson's Lawson Duncan accomplished the feat last year.

Other UNC players had mixed degrees of success for the tournament. Jay Pulliam at No. 5 and Eddie Stewart at No. 3 both came in third place in their respective flights, while David Pollack and Mark DeMatteis came in fourth.

Lacrosse seniors upstaged by underclassmen brothers

By TIM CROTHERS
Staff Writer

Saturday afternoon was a memorable Senior Day for the UNC lacrosse team. Eight North Carolina seniors played in their final home regular-season game, but two underclassmen brothers stole the spotlight as junior Joey Seivold and his younger brother Gary scored three goals each to power UNC to a 10-5 victory over a strong Loyola team.

The third-ranked Tar Heels played carefully in the first half, scoring only three goals and concentrating on avoiding mistakes.

"In the first half we were kind of tentative, it was a question of nobody wanting to do the wrong thing," Joey Seivold said. "We only had 12 or 15 shots in the half, and you've got to shoot more than that."

The timid and sometimes sloppy play of both teams worked to Loyola's advantage. The No. 15 Greyhounds played a very patient offensive game, waiting for opportunities to catch the strong UNC defense off guard.

Such an opportunity occurred when Loyola defenseman Bryan Wurga took a shot from deep in his own end of the field that caught North Carolina goalie Tim Mealey straying too far away from his net. The rainbow shot flew over Mealey's outstretched stick, hit the

goalpost and bounced out, but the ball was quickly picked up and shot in by Loyola attackman Doug Trettin before the retreating Tar Heel defense could organize itself. The goal left UNC with a tenuous 3-2 lead at halftime.

The turning point in the game occurred with a little over nine minutes left in the third period. Loyola's Trettin received a pass for an uncontested point-blank shot at Mealey, who made a spectacular stick save on an almost certain goal. The ball flew into the air and was recovered by UNC. The Tar Heels charged downfield and sophomore Gary Seivold slipped his third goal past Loyola goalie Jim Williams seconds later to give North Carolina a 5-2 lead.

UNC coach Willie Scroggs said that

Mealey's save exemplified the kind of extra effort that is necessary to win any game. "At this level you need that special effort and performance," he said. "It was a two-goal swing. If you don't have a kid who can make that kind of play then you'll be facing off and they'll be one goal closer."

After Mealey's save and the transition goal, UNC utilized some substitutions to combat temperatures in the 90s and to pick up the pace of the game. The North Carolina defense became especially aggressive, frustrating Loyola's attack and feeding the rejuvenated Tar Heel offense, which outscored the Greyhounds 5-0 in the pivotal third period.

"Our defense started to create turnovers toward the middle of the third

quarter and that's what really got us going," said Gary Seivold, one of the key benefactors of UNC's scrambling defense.

The pesky Greyhounds forged a small comeback in the final period, cutting the North Carolina lead to 8-4 with 9:49 remaining. But the Tar Heels rallied on a perfect downfield pass by Chris Walker to a breaking Mac Ford, who scored the final home regular-season goal of his illustrious career on a pretty one-on-one move.

As the players cooled off and chatted after the game, UNC senior co-captain Steve Martel spoke of his fond memories of four years in Chapel Hill.

"I'd rather play here than anywhere else," he said. "It's a special feeling, a sad feeling in a way, to leave."

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