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SPORTS

Heels stun No. 3 Cavs

By MIKE BERARDINO Staff Writer

What a night for women's basketball! With an ACC record-setting crowd of 11,174 on hand in Charlottesville, Va., North Carolina's Darlene Cannon hit a five-foot jumper at the buzzer to lift UNC to a heartstopping 60-58 victory over third-ranked and previously-unbeaten Virginia. The 5-5 Cannon's shot, which was launched over a forest of taller defenders, wiped out a Cavalier comeback from 11 points down and was her only field goal of the game.

"The play was designed to go inside to Kathy (Wilson)," Cannon said. "But when I saw she wasn't open, I took the shot myself and it went in." Under normal circumstances, senior guard Pam Leake would have taken the crucial attempt for the 15th-ranked Tar Heels. But Leake, whose game-high 15 points enabled her to move past Kathy Crawford into second-place on UNC's career scoring list, fouled out with 4:50 to play.

Virginia, which beat UNC 81-76 in Carmichael on Jan. 25, had tied the contest at 58 on Nancy Mayer's driving four-footer with 0:21 left. But Cannon responded with her last-second heroics to send the overflow Orange-and-Blue clad crowd home empty and lift injuryplagued North Carolina to its ninth win in its last 10 games. UNC is 17-5 overall, 7-2 in the conference. Virginia dropped to 20-1 and 8-1.

For most of the game, the Cavaliers performed like one would expect a team playing before 11,000 people for the first time to perform. Obviously nervous, the highly-touted Wahoos fell behind 31-23 after the first 20 minutes thanks to hideous nine-of-39 shooting from the floor.

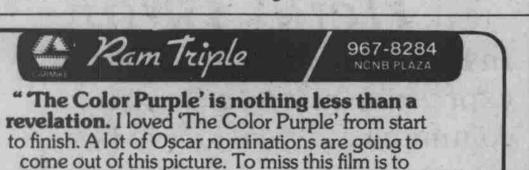
In the second half, Leake awoke from her shooting slumber to can 11 of the Tar Heels' first 21 points. When freshman guard Liza Donnell hit an eight-foot banker over Mayer with 6:52 remaining, UNC was up 54-43 and appeared in control. Donnell finished with 12 points on the night.

But Virginia didn't win its first 20 games by quitting when things got tough. North Carolina didn't hit another field goal until Cannon's at the buzzer, as the Cavs scrambled back with a suffocating pressure defense and some timely free-throw shooting. Junior forward Liza Lank nailed four freebies down the stretch, the last two with 1:28 left to pull the Cavaliers within one at 57-56.

After Cannon's connection on the front end of a one-and-one at the 0:32 mark put UNC ahead by a basket, Donnell's errant follow of Cannon's second attempt was pulled down by Lank. Thus, the stage was set.

Tia Poindexter notched a team-high 12 rebounds for the Tar Heels. Dawn Bryant ripped down 15 caroms for Virginia in pacing the hosts to a 47-45 rebounding advantage. Bryant added 10 points on four-of-five shooting to provide the only semblance of accuracy for a Cavalier team that shot a woeful 29 percent (21-72) on the evening.

Cannon, a junior who had been sidelined for the previous eight games with a foot injury, downplayed the overflow crowd's effect on the game. "We just played real intense and for the most part we kept (the crowd) out of the game."



The boys with poise: UNC out-cools Tech

By LEE ROBERTS Sports Editor

North Carolina has the best college basketball team in the country, and for good reason: the Tar Heels have tremendous depth, are well-disciplined and of course, wellcoached.

But one of the biggest reasons North Carolina is No. 1 was displayed in Tuesday night's thrilling 78-77 OT victory over Georgia Tech.

That reason is an intangible, a factor weighing heavily in the Tar Heels' favor every time they take to the court, yet a factor that never shows up in a box score, can never be neatly quantified, packaged and sold in a blue shade by Carolina Pride. That factor is the poise this North Carolina team displays game in and game out.

A lot of words bounced around both the Tech and UNC locker rooms Tuesday, but the word commanding most sportswriters' pens was "poise."

Tech's Mark Price, who had thrown away a key basket and missed a key free throw, commented: "We, uh . . . lost our poise a little bit."

Meanwhile, North Carolina was maintaining its composure and rallying from a 13-point deficit.

"The reason we thought we could come back," UNC guard Steve Hale said, "was because we've done it before."

Hale went on to explain why these Tar Heels never seem to mind when they're down, be it nine points with four minutes to go at Marquette, 13 points down with 12 minutes to

press box club

go at Georgia Tech . . .

"When you haven't done it, you can talk about coming back, but there's that seed of doubt in your mind," Hale said. "When you have that tradition of doing it, you have the confidence you can do it. That's why we didn't panic. When you're down 13 with 12 minutes to go, there's so much time. That's an eternity."

And so, with strength of mind and singleness of purpose, these Tar Heels forever seem to pull victory from the fires of defeat. But what is the difference between great athletes and great athletes who have composure as well? A lot of fingers point in the direction of coach Dean Smith.

"Coach Smith is so poised," forward Joe Wolf said. "He's so poised, it reflects on us. In the huddles, he's very organized and positive."

In fact, during one of the last time-outs Tuesday, with 20 seconds to go in overtime, Smith was calmly directing his troops with a grin on his face.

"We have a lot of fun in different situations," guard Jeff Lebo said. "We're relaxed. We try to have fun whether we're up 20 points or tied in overtime."

The poise of the Tar Heels when the game is on the line has translated into a lot of fun for UNC fans, as well. 'Cause it's fun, fun, fun to be 23 and one.

This writer says UNC #1, Syracuse the best

By JAMES SUROWIECKI Staff Writer

Dean Smith

All right, let's get things off on the right foot. UNC is No. 1 in the nation, and until the Tar Heels lose again, they certainly deserve to be at the top. If I had a vote, I'd vote for UNC. The team has proven itself with the win in Atlanta. But I still think Syracuse is the best team in America. I guess we just have to wait for the NCAA Tournament. It should be fun.

... the poise-meister

It's been a long time since two games like St. John's-Syracuse and UNC-Georgia Tech were played within three days of one another. Both games were supremely exciting, came down to the last minute and featured some of the best players in the country strutting their stuff. This is what college basketball is all about . . . Walter Berry of St. John's has firmly established himself as the top player in college basketball. He's averaging 23.9 points and 11.4 rebounds a game, and even The SportWashington. I can't really decide if Alford or Del Curry belongs at the offguard, but Alford has the stats and the free-throw shooting, so he plays.

You know, ordinarily Mark Price would be an automatic pick for an All-America team, but his constant failure in big games (Georgetown last year, Michigan and UNC this year) take him out of contention. And his stats really can't compare with Alford or Curry . . . As for Len Bias, he's having a magnificent season, but seen in the context of Maryland's disastrous year, his statistics are perhaps less impressive than they might otherwise be. After all, he is the centerpiece of the Terps' offense, the man they try to go to every time down the floor. And he doesn't rebound enough. How can he score 41 points and have only six boards, like he did against Duke? And here again, his stats are significantly worse than Berry's or even those of Harper.

Rafael Addison, after a very slow

he has a great touch around the basket and has proven himself to be a fine rebounder. His performance in the second half against Georgia Tech was just magnificent . . . Why does Cliff Ellis, coach of Clemson, schedule a host of out-of-conference wimps every year? The Tigers accrue no benefit at all from playing patsies, and just set themselves up to be destroyed in the ACC. Getting 12 easy wins helps you not at all when

tournament time arrives. This is a curious UNC basketball team. The Tar Heels are clearly the No. I team in America, and deservedly so after their victory over Tech. But there is not a single prospective first team All-American on the team. Looking back at teams that have dominated the No. I spot for weeks at a time, it's hard to remember a team that didn't have at least one All-American. I don't mean teams like Villanova or N.C. State which won the national championship, I mean teams that were No. I for a one like that. Strange.

Kenny Smith might have been that player, but he has been very disappointing this year. Oh sure, he's a solid point guard, but the man who was the Jet has had his engines cooled off this year. Against David Rivers of Notre Dame, he looked a little bit out of place, and he really looked bad on the muffed fastbreak at the end of the Tech game.

... More revealing than mere images, though, are his stats. He's averaging 11.8 points, 6.5 assists, 1.6 steals and 2.8 turnovers, good stats but not the kind we have come to expect from him. The Pearl, by comparison, is averaging 11.9 points, 8.2 assists, 3.2 steals and 3.1 turnovers. Oh, and for everyone who think the Pearl plays out of control, he has a significantly better assist-toturnover ratio than Kenny.

Villanova looks like it is NCAA bound after a very slow start. The 'Cats are 16-9 and the selection committee loves to select defending national

