

12/The Daily Tar Heel/Monday, April 10, 1989

Pitching, defense lead softball to tournament win

By NATALIE SEKICKY
Staff Writer

The UNC softball team, led by two strong pitching performances by Tracy Brower, defeated the competition and the rain Sunday to win the second annual Carolina Pride Invitational Softball Tournament at Finley Field.

North Carolina combined dominant pitching with consistent hitting to beat Austin Peay 6-0, North Carolina A&T 10-0 and George Mason 4-1 to win the rain-tempered round robin competition.

The Tar Heels' record improved to 23-12 with the wins.

North Carolina got off to a rocky start against Austin Peay. In the top of the first, the Governors' Leigh Pettyjohn ripped a single down the

left field line. Pettyjohn moved to second when Jane Goodson bunted, and first baseman Jena Houttekier's throw to second was too late.

Brower's first pitch to Peay's Connie Campbell was in the dirt, and both runners advanced. Campbell fled out to shortstop Gina Elmore, and Carol Gray hit a flare that Elmore tracked down at the fringe behind third base.

When the Governors' Missy Sapp drove an 0-2 pitch deep to the gap in left-center, it looked as if North Carolina would not escape unscathed. However, UNC left fielder Jenny Reed got a beat on the ball and made a run-saving catch over her shoulder.

In the bottom of the first, Tar Heel second baseman Vicki Parrott was

safe on a fielder's choice and came home on center fielder Tracey Narwid's triple to center. Narwid scored on a mishandled chopper to third by Michelle Rupp. Two infield errors enabled Tracey Beine to score, and UNC led 3-0.

Austin Peay had no other serious scoring opportunities as Brower and the UNC defense settled down to business. Brower scattered a total of seven hits, all singles, over seven innings, walked none and struck out two.

The match-up between UNC and North Carolina A&T was never really a game, ending after five innings because of the Tar Heels' 10 run lead. A&T's pitcher would have been more at home in a slow pitch game, and

North Carolina teed off for 13 hits. Rupp and Reed each had three.

"When you play a team like that, their pitching is a lot different," said head coach Donna Papa. "You need lots of discipline at the plate. We never take anyone lightly."

Senior pitcher Regina Finn threw a two-hitter, striking out three and walking one. Her record improved to 8-6.

The championship game pitted UNC against George Mason. A walk and two consecutive bunt singles loaded the bases for the Patriots and prompted Papa to huddle her infield on the mound.

"Basically I told them to make the play, to be a little more aggressive on defense," Papa said.

George Mason's Deborah Geck

grounded to second, and Parrott's decision to get the sure out at first enabled Cindy Ruff to score from third. Two fly outs to the outfield got the Tar Heels out of the inning.

In the bottom of the fifth, Elmore bunted for a single and took second on a sacrifice bunt by Reed. Elmore moved to third on a wild pitch by Amy Kunkle. Elmore scored when shortstop Julie Frise bobbed Brower's grounder.

With two out in the bottom of the sixth and runners on first and second, Reed hit a roller to Patriot second baseman Ruff, who fielded it and attempted to tag Elmore in the baseline. Ruff dropped the ball before the tag and collided with Elmore. Beine scored from second, and Elmore, who was forced to leave the

game after the collision, was awarded second due to defensive obstruction.

With the score 2-1, Brower helped her own cause by stroking a double to deep center, driving in pinch runner Finn and Reed.

Brower allowed four hits and one run, struck out eight and walked one. With Sunday's wins her record improved to 15-6.

Papa said fatigue was not a problem for Brower or the rest of the Tar Heels, despite playing three games in less than eight hours.

"Fast pitch pitchers can pitch two games in a day with no problem," Papa said. "The last three tournaments we've played we played two or three games in one day. It's a matter of pushing the runs across the plate, and today we did it."

Lax falls to Hopkins

By ANDREW PODOLSKY
Assistant Sports Editor

When you think of the premiere consistent, classy program in college basketball, you think of UNC. In college football, it's Notre Dame. Unfortunately for the fifth-ranked UNC lacrosse team, when it comes to lacrosse, there's none better than the seemingly invincible Johns Hopkins Blue Jays.

This Hopkins team is one that has won seven national titles in the last 17 years. It's a team that has had 27 first-team All-Americans in the 80s. It is also a team that, heading into Saturday, had beaten the Tar Heels the last three times the teams had met — and all three games were decided by one goal.

North Carolina has been aggressively trying to wrestle the title "best lacrosse team in the nation" from JHU since 1977, when the rivalry started. Hopkins leads the series 9-6, with eight of those games having been decided by one goal.

But number-one ranked and undefeated Hopkins struck a decisive blow towards claiming the title of nation's best with a rough-and-tumble 16-10 win over UNC on Saturday before 2,500 rain-soaked fans in Kenan Stadium.

The win improved the Blue Jays to 6-0 on the year, while UNC dropped its second straight game to fall to 6-3.

"We lost a lot of face-offs, but I thought we played hard and tough all day," said UNC head coach Willie Scroggs after the game. "Give credit

to Hopkins. They are a very good team, and their shots were on target. We feel pretty good with our performance. I thought we gave them a good game the way they've been blowing some teams away this season."

A good game might be an understatement. The young Tar Heels played the Blue Jays to an even standstill for three of the four quarters. But in the fateful third quarter, defending national champion Hopkins showed why everyone seems to think that their 1989 team might be their best ever.

Three minutes into the quarter, JHU exploded for seven goals while holding the Tar Heels to a single tally — breaking open a tight 5-5 game and transforming it into a rout.

UNC did give the Blue Jays some fits in the first half, however. After Hopkins jumped out to a quick 1-0 lead 1:06 into the game, Niell Redfern and Dennis Goldstein combined for three tallies to catapult the Tar Heels to a 3-1 lead. Redfern scored the first and third goals for UNC, both from close range. For Goldstein, who led UNC with four goals, the fun was just beginning.

Hopkins bounced back and scored two goals in the last 2:07 of the first quarter to tie the score at 3-3. The game started pretty much as expected. Both teams are known for tenacious, stick-checking defenses. With physical checks, hounding defenses and great saves by Hopkins All-American goalie Quint Kessenich and UNC's Pat Olmert, neither team

had many clean shots.

Goldstein counted his second goal of the day with a string of acrobatic moves through three defenders for a 4-3 UNC lead. After JHU's Wilkins rifled a shot from 14 yards out to tie the game, UNC's Michael Thomas completed a series of beautifully orchestrated passes with a goal from the left corner. A JHU fast-break goal made the score 5-5 at the half.

After two quarters of near flawless play, UNC goalie Olmert had trouble in the third stanza. Each Blue Jay goal was about two inches out of his reach, as Olmert seemed to be in the right position but couldn't come up with the save.

"I was just too anxious, and I was just too tense on some of the shots," explained a dejected Olmert.

To Olmert's credit, the goals were not entirely his fault. Breakdowns in the normally-tough UNC defense forced Olmert to face one-on-one confrontations — the JHU shooters were just one step quicker.

"The goalie is the guy who has the most influence on the game, and (Olmert) didn't stop some of the long shots that we know he can," Scroggs said. "But we stand behind him, and we know he'll be there for us the rest of the year."

UNC staged a comeback in the fourth quarter, with Thomas and Goldstein hitting two goals in the first minute of the quarter to bring the score to 12-8. But Hopkins bounced back with three scores for a 15-8 advantage.

The game exposed some problems



UNC defenseman Joe Breschl races upfield in Saturday's 16-10 loss to No. 1 Johns Hopkins

for UNC. The team was having trouble scoring this year, but was playing probably the best defense in the nation.

The quick Hopkins team played extremely tight and aggressive defense, but UNC scored anyway

with a patient offense. Ten goals against one of the best defenses in the nation was exactly what Scroggs needed.

What Scroggs didn't count on was the high number of defensive breakdowns the Tar Heels had. The

problem is consistency. If the Tar Heels can put both offense and defense together on a regular basis, they have the potential to give teams like Hopkins, Syracuse, Loyola and Maryland trouble in the NCAA tournament.

Tar Heels survive Cavs in 14 innings

By NEIL AMATO
Staff Writer

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Although that theory actually worked in reverse order, the UNC baseball squad got a run on "Plan B" to pick up a key ACC victory over Virginia.

Ron Maurer's bloop single with two outs in the bottom of the 14th inning sent Jesse Levis home, giving the Tar Heels a 5-4 decision in a four-hour marathon at Boshamer Stadium Sunday. The win upped North Carolina's record to 18-8 and 7-2 in the ACC.

Maurer failed to get a bunt down on a suicide squeeze play with the bases loaded before slapping a loop that landed just inches inside the right field foul line.

The suicide play, which worked to perfection in the ninth to tie the game at four, was botched the second time.

"I would go back and do it again," UNC head coach Mike Roberts said about the scrapped squeeze. "It was a cat-and-mouse situation. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. In the ninth inning, we won. In the 14th, we lost."

Maurer, who went 2 for 5 on the day and played solidly at short, described his Texas-leaguer as chance.

"It was a lucky swing," Maurer said. "It was a low, outside pitch, and I just got it to hit the line."

The winning pitcher for UNC was sophomore Brad Woodall, who pitched five innings after playing first base in the opening nine. Despite giving up the Cavaliers' go-ahead

wins in the ninth, Woodall kept the Wahoos from adding to its total in the extra frames.

"I didn't have my control when I came in," Woodall said of his shaky start on the mound. "I felt OK later, but then I started to get a little tired."

Feeling fatigue was something expected of Woodall since it was the longest stretch he had pitched on the year.

The Tar Heels, who fell behind in the top of the first on a Wahoo sacrifice fly, finally got on the board in the seventh. After second baseman Dave Arendas singled, right fielder Darren Villani hit a gapper to left-center that brought Arendas home. After an error, a walk and a popout by Levis, Wahoo walk-on Kevin Stock balked home the go-ahead run. It appeared UNC would hold on

to its one-run lead until starter Michael Hoog began to tire. Hoog, who pitched 8 1/3 innings and gave up only four hits, left a man on second in the ninth to reliever Jim Dougherty. Dougherty hit the next batter and then gave up a single to load the bases.

Roberts then brought in Woodall to try to put out the fire. After striking out Doug Johnson with an off-speed pitch, Woodall walked in the tying run on four pitches. What seemed to be the knockout blow for the Tar Heels was John McCrory's double that scored two, giving Virginia a 4-2 lead.

One reason Roberts might have decided to go with Woodall is that he had pitched against the Wahoos last weekend.

"We thought he could pitch well against Virginia because he has a good curveball and a good off-speed pitch," Roberts said. "We felt confident that Brad could get them out. It's one of those situations where you go with a gut feeling."

North Carolina came back to tie in the bottom half of the inning when Steve Estroff, who came in for Woodall at first, was hit by a pitch. After pinch-runner Detric Powell sped his way to third, pinch-hitter Matt Wooten got him home with a sacrifice fly to right, sending Villani, who had reached on a walk, to third.

Leadoff hitter Ryan Howison then squeezed Villani home to put the Tar Heels back in business. But UNC's number-two hitter Levis, who went into the game with a blistering .409 batting average, struck out, sending the game into extra innings.

The victory gave Woodall his second win against no losses in his long relief appearance. The Tar Heels, who are still very much in the ACC race, also defeated Maryland in the first game of a twin-bill on Saturday. UNC won the ACC battle 7-3 and the second game was washed out due to rain.

The Tar Heels continue their ACC slate tomorrow, when they travel to Duke to take on the Blue Devils. Game time is 3 p.m.

Sunday play drops UNC golfers to 3rd

By ERIC WAGNON
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The UNC men's golf team led Virginia Commonwealth by seven strokes and Duke by eight after Saturday's first round of the Tar Heel Invitational, but Blue Devil John Karcher's final round of 66 on Sunday helped catapult Duke into the top spot. North Carolina's third-place finish out of 13 teams marked the first time since 1982 that the Tar Heels did not win the tournament, held annually at Finley Golf Course.

The tournament was originally scheduled for Friday and Saturday, but rain on Friday pushed the schedule back one day. Although the rain continued intermittently on Saturday, the players were able to finish 18 holes.

"It's disappointing to lose — certainly at home," 12th-year UNC coach Devon Brouse said. "You've got to congratulate the Duke team for really a fine effort today, and John Karcher's 66 out there in the conditions is an outstanding round."

In the first round, Tar Heel sophomore Neal Sullivan posted a team-leading 70, two strokes back of first-round individual leader Jon Hurst of Old Dominion. After shooting a 77 in the first round, freshman Pat Moore rebounded to post a team-best score of 71 in the final round.

Sullivan's results were nearly opposite of Moore's, as Sullivan shined on Saturday but scored a 77 on Sunday, seven strokes behind his first-round effort. On Sunday, Sullivan played in the threesome with Duke's Karcher.

Sullivan could only stand back and watch as Karcher avoided even a single bogey in the round for his tournament-best 66. Combined with his 71 on Saturday, Karcher's two-day total of 137 earned him top individual honors

for the tournament. "To have (Karcher) play so well is exciting," Duke coach Rod Myers said. "He's been really working probably harder than any player I've ever had at Duke. He's a little on the high-strung side, and he worries about extra things, so it was really nice to see that flow together."

Myers' Blue Devil squad needed an impressive final round to win, and Karcher's effort — along with Bruce Kenerson's 71 and Peter O'Brien's 72 — was enough to give Duke a nine-stroke margin over second-place N.C. State. Third-place UNC finished one stroke behind the Wolfpack and Virginia Commonwealth finished fourth. In individual results, Karcher, Hurst and Rex Kuramoto of East Tennessee State finished in the top three spots.

"When I came over here today, I really wasn't expecting to win," Myers said. "I was just hoping that we could play solid, because I didn't think Carolina would play as poorly as they did. I thought they played better yesterday (Saturday) than I thought they could under those conditions."

Tar Heel senior Jim Sowerwine's two-day total of 146 was the lowest score among UNC golfers.

UNC's next action will be the three-day ACC tournament at the Northgreen Country Club in Rocky Mount next weekend.

"Wake's ranked third right now, so they're the team to beat obviously," Brouse said. "Clemson has proven that they've got a great team, being first-ranked early in the spring. Georgia Tech is our third-best ranked team at 10th. We've been ranked 15th, and now Duke and State seem to be playing better. Virginia played great last week, so it should be an outstanding tournament next week."



Junior shortstop Ron Maurer, who knocked in the Tar Heels' winning run, grounds to third