

UNC women's soccer: big success in numbers

By SCOTT GOLD

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As a child, chores really stunk, didn't they?

Mowing the lawn. Yuck. Cleaning those stupid little cracks in the bathroom tile. Ugh. Those cold winter mornings with Bowzer in one hand, the family pooper-scooper in the other. Blech.

As we get older though, and chores go through a strange metamorphosis and become professions, we realize that there are dreams that go along with all of them, dreams that represent the ultimate, the pinnacle, the climax, the... whew, I'd better stop there, I'm getting excited. Even if it's just one tiny little thing that would make it all bearable.

Journalists dream about the perfect lead to their story (OK, OK, maybe next time).

Archaeologists think about finding Atlantis.

Astronauts think about landing on Pluto.

Chemists think about making a real pair of "Wonder Twins," that, when activated, can turn into such fun things as glaciers and eagles.

Football coach Mack Brown *relishes* the thought of a season consisting of 12 games against VMI.

These are obvious ones. But what do you suppose all those people who are mathematicians and statisticians think about? How can you have dreams about numbers? What could possibly be exciting in a world like that?

To have your bank account miraculously add up to Pi? To map your neighbors yard on a Cartesian Coordinate system?

No. Somehow, these just aren't as stimulating as biologists discovering a cure for puberty. Not at all in the same league.

Hey... here's an idea, and there are lots of numbers involved, too. You certainly don't have to go to Pluto. The ultimate in success, the most fun you can possibly have as a statistician, lies right here in ol' North Carolina.

I find it hard to believe some of you are still dumbfounded. It's the women's soccer team, doofusses. What could be better? Here are some primo examples, ones that stat-people would get off on for hours on end:

In their 11th year of varsity competition, the Tar Heels are 204-7-8, so they win 93.15 percent of the time. In order to lose 100 times, UNC would have to play soccer for approximately 137 more years, putting them into the year 2126. Mr. Jetson (and daughter Judy, no doubt) could come watch.

By that time, according to current schedules of victory, they would have stacked up 3,355 wins.

On the other side of the coin, if the team won only one game a year, as other UNC sports clubs have been known to do, they would have had to start the trend back in 1785 in order to amass 204 wins. I think Ronald Reagan was a spry young lad back then.

There are more streaks associated with this team than with Tammy Faye's makeup after she found out Jim had become slightly "unhinged." Since 1986, UNC has gone 93 games without a loss, including this year's not-too-bad record of 22-0-1. Fifty-four of those 93 games have been against fellow Top 20 teams, and 65 of those 93 have been won by shutouts. The current streak long ago obliterated the old record for men's and women's soccer, which was set by the Penn State men's team back in 1941, when it lost its first match in 65 tries.

North Carolina has held the na-

tion's top ranking in ISAA polls since the first week of September 1986, totaling four seasons and 40 weeks in a row. I don't know, but that's got to be some sort of a record.

You want more streaks? You know how it's a really big deal if a basketball or football team goes unbeaten in its conference? UNC has never lost a conference game. It gets worse, too.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the Tar Heels, though it is hard to pin down, is that they may be the only organized team that has never lost a game at home. Ever. Since the origin of the program, they are 97-0-2. In that

10-year span, the squad has outscored its opponents 606-33. To give that paltry 33 a little perspective, UNC has scored 40 goals at home *this season*.

The team has won seven of the last eight national championships — losing only the 1985 trophy to George Mason in the finals, 2-0. In this decade, the team has won more championships than have been produced by all six other ACC schools — not just for soccer, for all sports combined.

Here's a fun one — since the beginning of the 1986 season, UNC has been behind in a game only four times, including two weeks ago in the finals

of the ACC Tournament. The squad trailed for 3:10 in a 1986 George Mason contest, 8:05 in last year's ACC final, 5:16 against Hardin-Simmons in this season's opener and 1:14 in this year's ACC title match.

Therefore — hold on to your hat, Descartes — in 8,490 minutes of playing time, the Tar Heels have trailed for a total of 17:45. Thus, the team trails an average of (heh, heh) 0.2090605 percent of the time. Therefore, their chances of losing are approximately 478:1 — approximately, mind you. So according to statistics, they should have to play for another

21 years before they lose, if they average 23 games a year. Therefore, their undefeated streak would be at something like 575. If that held true, their winning percentage would be somewhere in the vicinity of 97.46.

Remember, all of this is in the vicinity. So, those of you who are around in 2010, when the team is scheduled to lose, who want to come hunt me down when soccer has been replaced by cosmic-hydrokinetic-extraterrestrial-handball and doesn't even exist in 2010, take it easy.

Because damn it, Jim, I'm a writer, not a mathematician.

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Sullivan commits to UNC

From staff and wire reports

On Monday, North Carolina recruited two prep All-Americans to give them three of the country's top dozen basketball prospects.

Tuesday, the Tar Heels added another Top 50 prospect when 6-8 forward Pat Sullivan of Bogota, N.J., made an oral commitment to attend UNC.

As a junior at Bogota High School, Sullivan averaged 30.7 points, eight rebounds and two assists per game and led his team to a 27-2 record. Sullivan chose UNC over Providence.

Sullivan joined what could become the North Carolina backcourt of the future — 6-3 point guard Derrick Phelps of Christ The King High in Middle Village, N.Y., and 6-6 wing guard Brian Reese of Tolentine High in Bronx, N.Y.

Phelps is rated the nation's No. 11 prospect and Reese No. 12 by recruiting analyst Bob Gibbons of All-Star Sports in Lenoir. Earlier, the Tar Heels signed the No. 10 prospect, 6-10 power forward Clifford Rozier of Bradenton, Fla.

Phelps chose North Carolina over Syracuse. Reese also considered Georgia Tech. They visited the Chapel Hill campus together last weekend.

"We talked some about playing together," Phelps said. "I think we'll fit together well. I've played against him and he's real tough. He's a good leaper and a good shooter. I can penetrate pretty well. I always look for the pass first if the man is open."

Phelps, a lefthander, averaged 11 points and eight assists last year. Christ the King coach Bob Oliva compared Phelps' playmaking abilities to former Boston Celtics star Bob Cousy. Reese, who averaged 21 points and 10.2 rebounds last season, said he simply wanted to play for Smith.

"It's one of the schools I've always dreamed about since childhood," Reese said. "Dean Smith is a great coach. He's helped many kids get to the next level — the NBA. One of my goals is to get to the NBA."

Two days remain in the early national signing period for high school prospects. Players who do not sign now must wait until April.

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