

Sports

UNC faces rising Tide

By MARK ANDERSON

Staff Writer
If Dean Smith was searching for a pushover to help his Tar Heels recover from their Hawaii trip, he'll have to wait until Central Florida on Saturday.

Tonight at 9:30 p.m., Smith is faced with regrouping the Tar Heels against Wimp Sanderson's upset-minded Alabama squad. UNC continues to pad its early-season frequent-flier mile totals by traveling to the Coleman Coliseum in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

The Crimson Tide shocked Clemson 57-48 over Thanksgiving break to capture the San Juan Shootout title. North Carolina fell to Missouri 80-73 in the final of the Maui Classic.

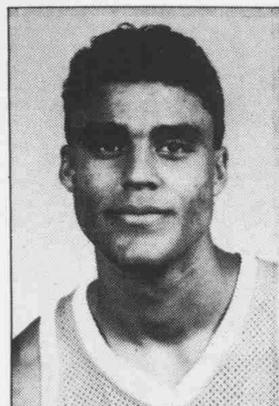
Sanderson lost his top two scorers from last year's 23-8 team, which won the SEC Tournament. However, Sanderson subscribes to the interchangeable parts theory, meaning he always relies on a deep squad. This year, he returns five players who started more than 13 games.

That depth looks even more impressive when Sanderson's bench is stocked with his top returning scorer and rebounder, David Benoit, and a member of the All-SEC Tournament team, Keith Askins.

Benoit, a 6-8 senior, scored 10.8 points and grabbed eight rebounds a game last year. Askins, a 6-6 senior, earned tournament honors after pumping in 23 points in Alabama's 72-60 upset of Florida in the 1989 SEC final. This year, he is the Tide's second-leading scorer (12.0) and leading rebounder (7.7). Askins had 18 points and eight rebounds in Alabama's season-opening 79-72 win over Western Kentucky.

After a promising freshman season, 6-9 Robert Horry is the Tide's leading scorer this season (15.0). As a starter last year, Horry pulled down 8.2 rebounds a game and has grabbed 7.7 a game this year. In the upset of Clemson, Horry had 22 points and 10 boards.

Joining Horry in the frontcourt are



Rick Fox

junior Melvin Cheatum and sophomore Marcus Webb, both 6-8. The 262-pound Cheatum, who started 20 games last year, scored 8.7 points a game in San Juan. Webb was the team's leading scorer with 13 points in the Tide's 64-61 second-round win over Eastern Michigan.

Gary Waites, the SEC assist leader last year (6.2), anchors the backcourt. The 6-2 junior is also chipping in eight points a game this year. Bryant Lancaster, a 6-3 junior, is the shooting guard (3.3 ppg).

Against the Tar Heels, Sanderson will subscribe to the same tactics he used to beat Clemson. Alabama must control the tempo and crash the boards. Despite their average height, the Tide dominated Clemson's vaunted front-line of Dale Davis and Elden Campbell.

While the Crimson Tide rolled along, UNC reeked of inconsistency in Maui. At times, they lived up to their No. 7 ranking, only to fall apart at others.

The Tar Heels opened the season by knocking off James Madison 80-79 with King Rice's desperation heave at the

buzzer. After a poor start, UNC's execution in the last four minutes was clinical. When Scott Williams returned for the second game, the Tar Heels came from behind again to beat Villanova 78-68. In the final, North Carolina gave its sloppiest performance, allowing Missouri to control the game 80-73.

Junior forward Rick Fox was named to the all-tournament team after scoring 18.3 points and grabbing 4.7 rebounds a game. However, Fox's penchant for fouls caught up with him when the Tar Heels needed him the most; he played only 24 minutes in the loss to Missouri before fouling out. He needs to contribute more (3-for-8 from three-point range) to UNC's weak outside shooting.

Kevin Madden was the most consistent Tar Heel, but he didn't produce the big numbers many observers projected. The senior forward scored 14.3 points a game, while coralling 6.7 boards and handing out 2.7 assists. Smith's search for a shooting guard led Madden to the backcourt against Missouri.

Called the most valuable element of this year's squad, Rice proved that in all three games. When he excelled (13 and 10 points in the first two games), the Tar Heels won. When he disappeared (four points against Missouri), UNC struggled. He needs to create more opportunities as the floor leader (only 3.3 assists a game).

Williams showed he wasn't back to full strength, but did chip in 13 points and nine rebounds in the final. Because of foul trouble, the senior center was limited to 25 minutes of playing time in his first start of the season. His strength on the boards and blocking shots should boost the Tar Heels' efforts in the paint.

Freshman George Lynch continued to open eyes around the nation. His poise and aggressiveness led to 10.7 points a game and instant confidence from the normally freshman-shy Smith. Los Angeles Laker general manager Jerry West named Lynch as the most impressive player at the tournament.

	UNC	Edge	Alabama
Backcourt	UNC's guards are still a large question mark. King Rice (9 ppg.), can hit the big shot (see James Madison). But the Tar Heels lack any outside shooting.	EVEN	Gary Waites (8 ppg.) led the SEC in assists last year. Bryant Lancaster (3.3 ppg) has seen limited action. Young backups have potential, but are untested.
Frontcourt	Highly-touted big men have been matched in rebounds twice already. Rick Fox (18.3 ppg.) & Kevin Madden will benefit from Scott Williams' return to strength.		Robert Horry (15 ppg., 7.7 rpg) leads 'Bama in both categories. Marcus Webb (6-8, 262) and Melvin Cheatum combine for 14.4 ppg to lead a deep backline.
Depth	Frosh George Lynch (10.7 ppg.) is all muscle down low. Pete Chilcutt (7.7 ppg, 6 rpg.) needs consistency and rest of vaunted bench has yet to contribute.		Forwards 6-6 Keith Askins (12 ppg., 7.7 rpg.) and 6-8 David Benoit (leading returning scorer and rebounder) helped destroy Clemson's frontline Sunday.
Defense	UNC yields 75.7 ppg., but shuts teams down late in the game. UNC is vulnerable to 3-point gunners, but Williams' shot-blocking bolsters lane strength.		Tide gives up just 60.3 ppg. with a controlled-pace attack. Madden and Fox should be able to go around, over and through the short Crimson Tide guards.
Coaching	Dean (God) just passed John Wooden to place 5th on all-time win list with 669 wins. UNC has finished in the Top 10 last nine years. Need we say more? Nah.		Wimp (not a good champion name) Sanderson is 195-91 in his 10th year, 0-1 against Smith. He lost to UNC's championship team in the 1982 Regionals.

—compiled by Andrew Podolsky

Love him, hate him: Vitale is the grand guru of hoops

By DOUG HOOGERVORST

Staff Writer

Some love him. Others love to hate him. He's even got a doll modeled after him. He's Dick Vitale.

The college hoops guru of ESPN and ABC has been called too vocal and overzealous by some, but the others love his enthusiasm. To the latter, Vitale has coined the melodious terms "PTPer" (Prime-Time Player), "M-n-Mer" (a miss match) and "Dipsy-Doo Dunk-a-roo." To the former, Vitale

ACC vs. Big East tickets still on sale

From wire and staff reports

GREENSBORO — Ticket sales for the ACC-Big East Challenge have picked up, but plenty of seats remain for the two days of double-headers next week in the Greensboro Coliseum.

Tom Mickle, assistant commissioner of the Atlantic Coast Conference, said about 8,000 tickets have been sold for Tuesday's games featuring Wake Forest against Seton Hall and N.C. State against St. John's. Wednesday's Clemson against Providence and Duke versus top-ranked Syracuse matchups have sold about 10,000 tickets.

The series begins Monday in Hartford, Conn., with Georgia Tech meeting Pittsburgh and Maryland facing Connecticut. It ends Thursday night, with Virginia playing Villanova and North Carolina facing Georgetown in the New Jersey Meadowlands. Georgetown and North Carolina will be meeting for the first time since the 1982 NCAA finals.

UNITAS vs. S.G. in Bud Bowl II

In what is becoming a tradition-laden, weekly event, UNITAS will face the UNC student government in a no-holds-barred football game Saturday morning at 11 a.m. on Carmichael Field No. 1.

UNITAS is a student organization promoting living and learning in UNC dorms.

The Student Government football team (1-0 on the season after cheating to beat the Daily Tar Heel football team) will be led by Gene Davis.

UNITAS has Chris Brown leading them into the bloody fray

comes across too strong.

However, no matter what one may think of his enthusiasm on the air, all must agree that Vitale is one of the best commentators in college basketball. He is always well prepared with knowledge of team's and player's strengths and weaknesses and gives insightful looks at what a team is attempting to do on the floor.

This reporter caught up to the ex-Detroit Pistons coach turned TV man on Thanksgiving. Vitale, who was flurried and in New York City for the Dodge NIT finals, spoke highly of North Carolina and examined the team's present and future.

"Carolina has a great frontcourt team," he said. "The frontcourt strength is especially deep with (Pete) Chilcutt, (Rick) Fox, Scott (Williams), (Kevin) Madden and George Lynch."

The departure of J.R. Reid to the NBA is a definite loss, but will not be felt as much as the graduation of North Carolina's starting back court, Vitale said. Both Jeff Lebo and Steve Bucknall are gone (Bucknall is playing for the Los Angeles Lakers and Lebo was recently waived by the San Antonio Spurs), leaving King Rice, Jeff Denny, Hubert Davis, Henrik Rodl and Kenny Harris.

"The big question is the backcourt consistency," he said. "King Rice is the key player after his two years down there. He's got to be their MVP. If he gets injured, there's no one backing him up with that collegiate quality."

"The closest thing to a backup is Kenny Harris. Harris is a good young player, but (playing collegiate point guard) is a huge adjustment to ask from a high school player."

Vitale didn't just blow off the departure of the NBA's fifth draft selection, because the loss of the "PTPer" Reid was leaves UNC without a definite "go-to" guy. However, Vitale remembers North Carolina didn't do so poorly with the 6-foot-9 big guy out with a broken foot last season, and he sees a couple of players emerging in Reid's place.

"North Carolina played real well without Reid last year and people forget that," he said. "Kevin Madden can be a big time scorer and Scott Williams has that kind of potential. He's got great touch, and he can be a very active post player."

However, Williams has still been recovering from his appendectomy, and freshman George Lynch has stepped in admirably. Again, Vitale was on top of the scene before it happened. Before even seeing Lynch in Carolina Blue for the first time, he said: "The freshman will make contributions, but a lot won't be expected from them. George Lynch, however, can do more than that. He's a Windex man (i.e. cleans the glass, i.e. rebounds) and he just attacks the ball."

Lynch is one of Vitale's "Diaper Dandy's." The frosh came through with a super tournament at the Maui Classic, averaging more than 10 points and more than five rebounds for the trio of games.

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