

Green golf team shoots for top 20

Youthful women aim to burn up links with balanced attack

By BETHANY LITTON

Staff Writer

Knowing that a fire can't get started without a spark, members of the UNC women's golf team hope they can ignite this spring.

The three seniors who graduated last year - Donna Andrews, Suzy McGuire and Katie Peterson - were among the best women ever to play golf at UNC, and the team spent much of the fall part of the season adjusting to their absence.

"As a team, what we need to do is to start proving to ourselves that we can do it," sophomore Tara Hipp said. "We need to start playing good to-

gether, start lighting a fire a little bit, so that when we come into next fall, we can say, 'Remember last spring, when we did this? We can do it again.'"

With five freshmen and three sophomores, the team is extremely young, and this youth showed in the first five tournaments of the season, played in the fall. While the 1988-89 team won first place in four out of its five spring tournaments, the present group did not place higher than seventh in any of its fall competitions.

Head coach Dot Gunnells said the women were nervous during the fall tournaments, missing the leadership

of the seniors, but their true potential will be realized this spring.

"They've got the potential to be just as good, if not better, than the ones I lost," Gunnells said. "They just haven't had the experience. But we're better prepared than we've ever been going into the spring season."

The loss of the three team stars served as a built-in excuse in the fall, Hipp said, and that attitude affected the Tar Heels' play. Qualifying scores for the first spring tournament, how-

ever, were excellent, evidence of a new determination that was lacking a few months ago.

There is no ACC or regional tournament for women's golf, but the top 17 teams in the country qualify for the national tournament on the basis of the top 50 percent of scores shot throughout the season. Because the fall scores were relatively high, Coach Gunnells said, it is improbable that UNC will go to nationals as a team this year, although individual golfers

can also qualify.

"Our goal is to make the top 20," she said. "I don't know that we'll make it to nationals this year, but I guarantee we will the next three years."

Hipp added: "At this point we have to be realistic, and to get to nationals, we have to play great every time we tee off this spring. That's not likely."

The women's first tournament will

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DTH file photo

Junior Amber Marsh is an elder statesman on a young women's golf squad

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