

SPORTS FRIDAY

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"(Baseball) is about as racist as America generally. ... Baseball has a long way to go."
— Former baseball commissioner Fay Vincent

THE PITCH



Adam Davis
Staff Writer

Who's the best? You can't be sure with bowl system

Welcome to the 1992-93 NCAA football championship drawing. We've carefully selected 10 contestants for this year's title.

My lovely assistant is now placing the names Miami, Alabama, Florida State, Texas A&M, Notre Dame, Syracuse, Michigan, Georgia, Colorado and Washington into a giant hat. I'm sorry, Mr. Paterno, there are no preseason bids to this contest. The winner will receive this neat trophy, which can be redeemed for a Big Mac and a large fries at McDonald's. Good luck, gentlemen.

OK, maybe the situation hasn't gotten that bad, but it's getting there. Who's the last team to win the NCAA football championship? This should be one of those questions that's only worth \$100 on Jeopardy because even the accountant from Topeka knows the answer. Instead, it's a loaded question.

There are three possible answers: Washington (1991), which won last year's "McDonald's Trophy" as champion of the CNN/USA Today coaches poll; Miami (1991), which won the AP poll; or Miami (1989)—the last team to win unanimously.

Like every other self-respecting sport, college football should settle its championship on the field, not in the press box or in the coach's office.

The simple solution is a 16-team playoff. Now, before you have a seizure about the possible loss of the Federal Express Orange Bowl and the Weiser Lock Copper Bowl, please hear me out. The first step to implementing a playoff is to force all teams to complete their schedules by the end of November (yes, ABC, that includes your over-hyped SEC title game).

At that point, 16 teams would be selected: the winners of the ACC, Big East, Big 8, Big Ten, Pac 10, SEC, SWC and WAC, plus eight at-large teams chosen by a committee. These teams would play two rounds of games on the first two Saturdays in December.

Then there would be a nice break, so that the college presidents wouldn't have to fret over students missing finals.

On New Year's Day, a traditionally important day in college football, the semifinals would be held. Finally, the champion would be decided on the second Saturday in January, in a game that would be promoted almost as vigorously as NBC's Olympic "Triplecast."

A real champion would be crowned, and the bowls would not have to be excluded. The last three rounds would be played at the sites of the seven largest bowls (Cotton, Fiesta, Florida Citrus, Hall of Fame, Orange, Rose and Sugar), and they could retain their exciting names such as the Mobil Cotton Bowl. The other 11 bowls would still be played prior to New Year's Day.

Many people will claim that the almighty bowl coalition has made such a playoff unnecessary. After all, assum-

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A sizzling border rivalry: You got the right one, baby

By Steve Politi
Assistant Sports Editor

Don't talk about preseason hype with the Tar Heels anymore — especially when it comes time to play South Carolina tonight at 9 in the Diet Pepsi Tournament of Champions.

They learned their lesson two years ago.

That's when No. 4 UNC went into the Charlotte Coliseum to play the over-matched Gamecocks. The Tar Heels entered the game with a 39.5-point margin of victory in their first two contests and boasted what was dubbed the best freshman class ever to play on a college basketball team.

And, true to form, the Tar Heels totally dominated the first half and held a 12-point halftime lead.

Then something happened.

The Gamecocks got hot on offense. The Tar Heels committed 14 turnovers in the second period. The UNC players rushed their shots. And, despite a late 74-72 lead, North Carolina lost at the buzzer, 76-74.

While UNC dropped from fourth to 10th, South Carolina won the tournament and charged into the AP Top 25. The Gamecocks wavered in the mid-teens of the poll but then faded late in the season and missed the NCAA tournament.

Last year, the Gamecocks continued the slide, finishing 11-17 and last in the Southeastern Conference's Eastern Division.

The forecast for this season is not much better, as the Gamecocks return one starter from the 1991-92 team.

That one starter, unfortunately for the Tar Heels, is Elm City native Jamie Watson. The junior riddled UNC in that first-round tournament game two years ago with 10 points, four rebounds and four steals.

Weekend Action

HOME

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SWIMMING in Carolina Invitational, Koury Natatorium, Fri.-Sun. All Day

AWAY

MEN'S BASKETBALL vs. S. Carolina in Tournament of Champions, Charlotte, Fri. 9 p.m. and Texas or Princeton, Sat. 4:30 p.m. or 7 p.m.
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL at Robert Morris, Coraopolis, Pa., Fri. 7:30 p.m. and at Duquesne, Pittsburgh, Sun. 1 p.m.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S FENCING at New York University, New York, Sat. All Day

It was only his fourth career game — but it's the game that set Watson's career in motion. Now Watson is a team leader, coming off a year in which he set the school record for dunks and finished second in team assists.

"Jamie is a very experienced junior, an explosive athlete who has grown bigger and stronger over the last year," said second-year head coach Steve Newton.

"He is going to be called upon for leadership and to have an outstanding junior year with the loss of six seniors."

Watson's '91-'92 season wasn't picture-perfect. He hit 5 of 25 3-point attempts and turned the ball over 21 times in USC's final six games. But in his first game this season, he scored a career-high 27 points as the Gamecocks whipped Florida Tech in their home opener, 119-82.

Center Edmond Wilson has the dubious honor of matching up with Eric Montross, who seems primed to take charge of the North Carolina offense. Montross scored 20 points against Old Dominion. Wilson averaged just 2.3 points and 1.8 rebounds per game last year as a junior.

The other USC starters played their first games against Florida Tech. In

fact, none of the remaining three starters have any experience in the South Carolina system.

The Gamecocks will need forward Emmett Hall, a junior transfer from Cloud Community College (Kan.) to match his opening-game performance of 19 points and nine rebounds. He replaces the Gamecocks' top defensive player, Jeff Roulston.

Terry Bynum, a transfer from Anderson Junior College, and Carey Rich, a sophomore transfer from Western Carolina and the Southern Conference's Freshman of the Year, start at guard, with Rich at the point and Bynum at the shooting-guard slot. Despite their supposed positions, Rich outscored Bynum 14 to 4 in the opener.

Facing two inexperienced guards perhaps will make Dean Smith breathe a sigh of relief. Point guard Derrick Phelps' knee injury should keep him from playing, but Henrik Rödl (11 assists Tuesday) and Donald Williams (21 points) played well against Old Dominion.

Should a repeat performance of the disaster two years ago not occur, the Tar Heels will face the winner of today's 7 p.m. Texas-Princeton game for the tournament title.

The Tortoise or the Hare?

Slow Tigers meet quick 'Horns in other Diet Pepsi semifinal

By Steve Politi
Assistant Sports Editor

Liken the Texas-Princeton matchup to what you will.

The Tortoise versus the Hare. William "The Refrigerator" Perry versus Raghib "The Rocket" Ismail. Whatever.

Two styles of basketball that fall on opposite sides of the spectrum will clash in the first round of the Diet Pepsi Tournament of Champions tonight at 7. The victor takes on the winner of the UNC-South Carolina game Saturday at 7 p.m. The losers of Friday's games meet at 4:30 p.m. Saturday.

Princeton frustrates the opposition with its slow style of play — slow enough to help the Tigers claim the NCAA scoring defense title 10 times in the past 17 seasons under 26-year head coach Pete Carril.

The Tigers even managed to hold Texas to 57 points in a losing cause in



Pete Carril

last year's Pre-Season NIT. Texas went on to average more than 90 points a

game.

And the Longhorns figure to average even more this year. They exploded for 136 points in an opening-season thrashing of Oral Roberts.

Texas is led by "TNT," Guards B.J. Tyler and Terrence Rencher — touted by many as the best backcourt tandem in the nation — combined for 1,228 points last season.

So what if Princeton's backcourt tandem of Mike Brennan and Chris Yetman combined for 13 points in the Tigers' first game 65-48 win against Lafayette? It's not explosiveness that keys Princeton. It's seating up the clock, well-executed back-door plays and timely 3-pointers.

Texas lives on fast breaks; Princeton lives on stopping them.

Texas slams and jams; Princeton lulls and dells.

But it's important to remember: The Tortoise beat the Hare. It remains to be seen if The Frigate and The Rocket will ever race.

UNC vs. S. CAROLINA The Lowdown

Backcourt When a team starts two transfers at the guard spots, disaster is bound to happen. That's what South Carolina has with Carey Rich and Terry Bynum. UNC will do without Derrick Phelps again, but Henrik Rödl is a more than suitable replacement. Shooting problems? Donald Williams had 21 in the opener against Old Dominion.

Frontcourt The Gamecocks' only returning starter, Jamie Watson, had 10 points, four steals and four assists when his team upset UNC here two years ago. And he's gotten better since then, scoring a career-high 27 points in USC's opener. But his inexperienced teammates on the front line don't match up with the likes of Eric Montross and George Lynch.

Depth If South Carolina's starters are untested, its bench is really untested. Four Gamecock starters and two reserves don't return to this season's team. UNC coach Dean Smith stands behind freshman Dante Calabria, now the Tar Heels' backup point guard, although Calabria fouled out with no points or assists late in the opening-game win.

Coaching Steve Newton, the Gamecocks' second-year head coach, led Murray State to the NCAA Tournament's field of 64 three times. South Carolina counts on him to rebuild the school's faltering program. But a repeat of last year, when the Gamecocks started at 8-1 and finished at 11-17, won't help Newton's recruiting efforts.

Intangibles South Carolina's upset win two years ago has to be on the minds of players on both teams. The Gamecocks realize that an upset can get them national recognition. The Tar Heels know a loss could be devastating. But Watson is the only USC player left who had a role in that game, and Smith won't let an accident like that happen again.

Prediction: UNC 105, USC 78 —Compiled by Steve Politi

North Carolina swimmers, divers host tough field in Carolina Invite

By Rodney Cline
Staff Writer

The UNC men's and women's swimming and diving teams each look to rebound from recent losses to Georgia at this weekend's Carolina Invitational, to be held in Koury Natatorium today through Sunday.

The 10th-ranked women stand at 2-1 overall, 1-0 in the ACC, while the men, ranked 18th, are 1-1, 1-0 in the league. The competition figures to be as tough as any the Tar Heels will face this season, as all 10 teams come to Chapel Hill ranked in the nation's top 30. The men will face fifth-ranked Tennessee, sixth-ranked Florida, No. 20 Georgia, No. 21 Virginia and No. 28 South Carolina.

Meanwhile, the UNC women will compete against third-ranked Florida, seventh-ranked Georgia, No. 16 Tennessee, No. 21 Virginia and No. 22 South Carolina.

Senior Sarah Perroni leads the UNC women. Perroni won the 200-yard and 50-yard freestyle events in the Nov. 21 meet at Georgia. She also teamed with Jenny Huber, Kari Haag and Ann Hart to win the 400 medley relay.

The Tar Heel men are sparked by

senior David Monasterio, sophomore Yann deFabrique and senior William Keever, who each won two events at Georgia.

The meet will begin Friday morning with preliminaries at 10:30, while the finals are slated for 7 p.m. The same schedule will hold for Saturday, and the finals are scheduled for 1 p.m. Sunday.

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