

# The Carolina Journal

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## First two wins over San Francisco and Oregon

# 49ERS FLYIN' HIGH IN NIT

Carolina Journal photo by David Wagoner



Don Pearce (31) adds two for the 49ers against San Francisco.

## MEAN GREEN

Carolina Journal photo by David Wagoner



Some of the 600 49er fans who flocked to Madison Square Garden to see UNCC in the NIT.

By Ron Green

Before UNCC's game in the NIT against San Francisco, a man came up to 49er guard Bob Ball and wished him luck. He said he wanted Ball's team to beat the team from North Carolina because they didn't deserve to be in the tournament. They weren't good enough and didn't have any national recognition. Ball replied that he played for UNCC and the man walked away quickly.

The UNCC team that wasn't "good enough" won a thriller in Madison Square Garden Saturday night, beating San Francisco 79-74 in overtime.

In the end the chances of the 49ers rested on the shoulders of Kevin King, the lanky freshman from Lakewood, New Jersey. Trailing 69-67, with 15 seconds remaining, UNCC called time out to set their final play. When Coach Lee Rose asked who wanted to take the final shot, the 6-6 freshman responded. UNCC got the ball in play but had trouble getting it to the open man.

Lew Massey finally spotted King at the left side of the lane. King got the ball with five seconds left, quickly spun to the basket and laid the ball in over two Dons to send the game into overtime. The last-second basket sent the 450 fans from UNCC wild with excitement and provided the edge UNCC needed to win the game in the extra five minutes.

The 49ers trailed through much of the overtime but went ahead to stay when Melvin Watkins followed a Massey miss with a minute remaining. Ahead 75-74, UNCC prohibited San Francisco from scoring and regained possession with 22 seconds remaining. On the inbound play under the basket Cedric Maxwell, who played a brilliant all-around game, spotted Massey behind the San Francisco defense with a full-court pass for a lay-up.

Massey iced the game with 8 seconds to play when he made two foul shots to make the score 79-74.

The UNCC victory ran their record to 22-5 and put them in the quarter finals against Oregon. The first half saw the 49ers run up a seven point advantage by intermission. King pulled down 7 rebounds in the opening 20 minutes to help the 49ers control the boards against

the much taller Dons.

When play started in the second half, it was a different story. San Francisco played much smoother and the 49ers seemed to have a letdown. After four and a half minutes the seven point UNCC lead was gone and the score was tied at 43. Midway through the final half, San Francisco had opened up a seven point lead and UNCC seemed in danger of a quick departure from their first NIT. UNCC battled back and regained the lead 61-60 when Don Pearce hit a short jumper with seven minutes to play. San Francisco retook the lead and led by three points with less than a minute remaining in regulation, but Skip Shipman hit a jumper to make the score 68-67. San Francisco guard Sam Williams, who was a thorn in UNCC's side all night, was fouled. He made the front end of the one-and-one, but Kevin King rebounded with 15 seconds remaining to set up the last second heroics.

### UNCC vs. Oregon

As the final second ticked off in Madison Square Garden Monday night, UNCC fans were chanting "We want State, we want State". The 49ers will get NC State, but this time it won't be in Raleigh. It will be in the semi-finals of the NIT in New York City as a result of the 79-72 upset victory over Oregon in the quarter finals Thursday night.

The victory over the Ducks was not an easy one for UNCC, who has become a Cinderella team in the oldest post-season tournament in existence. Oregon put its explosive offense and lightning quick defense into action early and jumped ahead 18-9 after 10 minutes of play. The 49ers seemed in danger of being blown out early but they never lost their cool in the face of the famed Oregon "kamikaize" defense.

Trailing 28-19 with five minutes left in the first half, UNCC came untracked and outscored the Ducks 14-3 to lead 35-31 at intermission. Lew Massey and Melvin Watkins triggered the surge. Massey scored 8 points and Watkins scored 4 and forced several turnovers. Watkins had the unenviable task of trying to stop All-American Ron Lee, a 6-4 guard who can do it all for the Ducks. Lee could only manage 17 points for the game as "Wat" smothered him with outstanding defense.

When the second half opened, UNCC picked up where they had left off at intermission. They blitzed Oregon 10-2 in the first three and a half minutes of the second half to open a 43-35 advantage. The Ducks kept the margin around 8 points for most of the final 20 minutes.

Maxwell's play in the first two games of the tournament has been phenomenal. He scored 30 points and pulled down 14 rebounds against the Ducks to lead the 49ers in both categories. For the tournament, he has scored 58 points while hitting an amazing 26 of 29 freethrows.

The 49ers, 23-5, have caught the fancy of New York writers and fans but have not surprised themselves. Coach Lee Rose said, "This is a great bunch of individuals. Each knows his part. They fill the pieces of the puzzle. Max scores, Lew rebounds and the guards are unselfish. We have a commitment to hustle and perseverance. We get down and come back. We've done it all year."

As he was walking out of the fabled Gardens, Shipman put things into perspective. "That was Phase II of a masterpiece."