

Wright's trey lifts UNC past China

BY AARON BEARD SENIOR WRITER

There was no Charlotte Smith on the right wing ready to launch the 3-point shot on Sunday. This time, it was Chanel Wright.

Though the implications weren't as far-reaching as those of Smith's famous trey, Wright's 3-pointer with only one minute remaining lifted an undermanned North Carolina women's basketball team over a pesky Chinese National Team in a 78-76 win at Carmichael Auditorium.

And with only eight players suiting up for UNC, it had to be a confidence-builder.

"It was a great game for us as far as competition," UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell said. "I think defensively we're coming along. ... We've just got to learn to play together a little more and get the ball to the open people."

Trailing 74-70 with only 2:38 remaining, China's Xiang Dong-wen nailed a 3-pointer over Wright's outstretched arms to cut the Tar Heel lead to one.

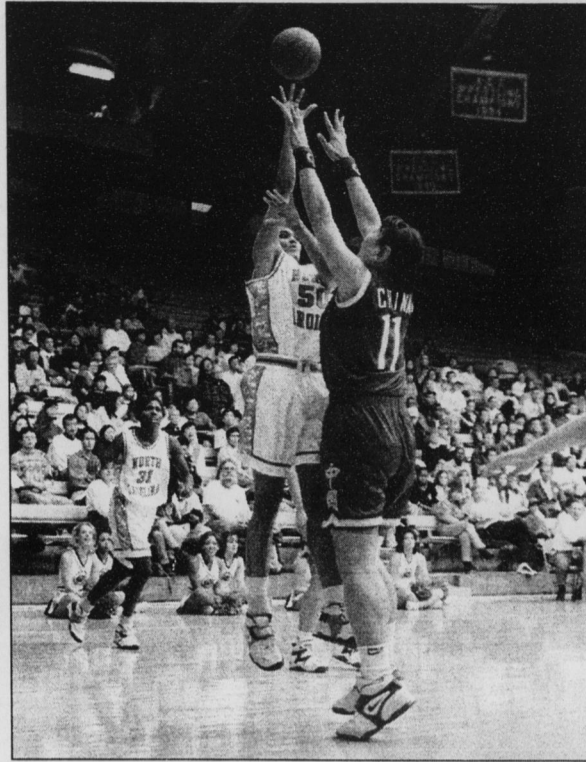
One play later, China's daunting 6-foot-8 center Zheng Mai-xai put in an easy two-footer at the 1:15 mark to put China ahead for the first time.

But the Tar Heels responded quickly. Following a UNC timeout, junior guard Marion Jones found Wright on the wing in front of the Tar Heel bench. Wright let loose with the 3, finding only the bottom of the net.

It was quite a turnaround for Wright, who had missed her last three shots.

"I wasn't going to let (the misses) get me down," Wright said.

"I knew I had missed a couple before that one, but this one was the one that



UNC sophomore Sheneika Walker (50) takes a shot Saturday in the Tar Heels' exhibition game against the Chinese National Team.

sixth steal of the game, effectively ending the contest. "When we came out of the timeout, Coach Hatchell whispered to me, 'Get the steal, Marion,'" Jones said. "We knew we had to step up our defense because they were going to get the ball to (Zheng) underneath. The ball hit off of Lori (Gear's) leg and I just took advantage of it."

At one point in the second half, China clawed to within 50-46 of UNC with 12:52 remaining. But Jones and her team-high 28 points took control. She hit a trey

from the left side and added a driving one-hander over Zheng in the lane to spark a 14-4 run that allowed the Tar Heels to outdistance China for much of the half.

The first half opened as a model of offensive efficiency for UNC, as the Tar Heels scored on their first five possessions to seize a 10-2 advantage only four minutes in.

North Carolina held tenaciously to the lead, edging ahead 14-6 with 13:15 remaining in the first half and forcing China coach Zhu Jian-Zhi to call a timeout.

China responded immediately with a run behind the inside presence of Zheng.

Zheng scored with a soft turnaround hook shot in the lane at the 11-minute mark and added a layup off a pass from Liang Xing to soften the North Carolina interior defense and close the gap to 20-12.

But with her soft shooting touch, Zheng drifted to the outside and nailed a jumper at the right elbow to cut the lead to 21-17.

With Zheng commanding so much attention, the rest of the Chinese team managed to find openings in the North Carolina defense.

A 3-pointer by Miao Bo and a Wang Fang bucket later, and China had clawed to within 23-22, forcing North Carolina to spend a timeout with only 7:20 left in the half.

But UNC responded with a 7-0 run that put the lead back to eight and kept the Chinese team at bay for the rest of the half.

UNC 78, China Nat'l Team 76 Score Box

Score box table showing statistics for UNC (78) and China Nat'l Team (76). Categories include FG, 3PT, FT, REB, and AST.

Men's soccer falls short despite plethora of shots

UNC capitalized on just 12 percent of its scoring chances this season.

BY M. LEE TAFT SENIOR WRITER

Despite the talent, despite the two all-conference selections, despite outplaying its opponent in nearly every game, the North Carolina men's soccer team completed its season with a lackluster 8-8-1 record when it lost in the first round of the ACC tournament last Thursday.

The game, like most this season, should have gone North Carolina's way — UNC had more shots and more corner kicks. But the Tar Heels couldn't come out with a win, losing in overtime for the third time this season.

"The game was very good, and I was very pleased with our effort," UNC coach Elmar Bolowich said. "But we didn't get the breaks, and they capitalized on what they could."

"Wake hung in there and made it a very entertaining game. They got the lucky breaks, and we didn't."

The Deacons scored the only goal of the game when a penalty was called on Eddie Robinson inside the UNC penalty box. Josh Timbers put the ball past Tar Heels keeper William Woodroffe for the score. The game had 37 fouls called, causing players on both teams to have complaints about the officiating throughout the entire match.

"It could have been 3-3 on penalty kicks if they had called it right," midfielder

Carey Talley said. "The refs let the big stuff go and called all the little stuff."

The loss was just the latest in a string of letdowns for UNC. After starting the season 0-2, the Tar Heels went 5-0-1 in their next six games, giving them a 5-2-1 mark halfway through their season.

Then the bottom fell out as UNC lost five of its last eight regular-season games. A 4-1 spanking from South Carolina started the bleeding for the Tar Heels, followed by an overtime loss to N.C. State in which UNC outshot the Pack 26-9. Adding insult to injury was a 1-0 loss to Radford, when the Tar Heels posted 18 shots to Radford's eight. Making things worse was the fact that all three of these losses came at home.

In each of these games, and in most games throughout the year, UNC had a much larger shot total than its opponent but few — sometimes zero — goals to show for it. North Carolina averaged over 15 shots per game on the season but managed less than two goals per contest.

"We had some games we couldn't hold, and we gave some away that we shouldn't have," Bolowich said. "Without a threatening goal scorer, it will happen."

UNC has been without a threatening goal scorer all season. For the season, the Tar Heels only scored 33 goals on 267 shots, or 12.4 percent of their scoring opportunities.

"This many shots, it's ridiculous," senior Victor Suarez said earlier this year. "Even if someone only hits one of every four or five shots, we still get three or four goals a game."

As the Tar Heels look back on their 1996 campaign, much attention should be given to their inability to capitalize on their numerous scoring opportunities and what it takes to score.

"We've been trying to figure that out for the three years I've been here," said Talley, who led the team with nine goals. "I don't know what it is."



UNC point guard MARION JONES had a steal in the final minute to seal the win.



UNC forward SUSANNAH SCHOTT scored the Tar Heels' first goal.

FIELD HOCKEY FROM PAGE 14

turned the same trick in the two teams' last meeting in October.

In that matchup, the Wahoo defense halted UNC's forwards from breaking out and away from the pack.

A Schott goal proved to be the difference, lifting UNC to a 1-0 nail-biter of a victory.

By the end of Sunday's first half, with the Tar Heels again leading by the slimmest of margins, it appeared to be the same story.

Virginia had apparently found a fool-proof way to hang with the defending champs. And it had the Tar Heels nervous.

"Normally, Kate Barber and Cindy Werley will separate themselves from their backs, but these backs stayed right with them," said UNC coach Karen Shelton, who admitted to not sleeping well the previous two nights.

With still another half of hockey to be played, both teams were already visibly exhausted.

"That was a 70-minute game of constant running at both ends," Sanders said.

At long last, UNC had some room to breathe.

But just 31 seconds later, after a UVa timeout, the Cavs impossibly answered. UNC goalie Jana Withrow stopped a point-blank Virginia bid by sweeping the

"You're bound to fatigue after a while."

Upon combatting the congested Cavalier zone with quick, one-touch passes, UNC learned how to exert pressure against the impenetrable UVa defense. Something had to give, and with 15:34 left in the game, it did.

Tar Heel midfielder Ashley Hanson slapped a bounding crossing pass in front of the Virginia net, and after Barber couldn't poke it home, Werley went to her knees to deflect it by a straddling Cusimano.

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ball from the goal's edge with her hand, grounds for a penalty stroke.

UVa's Heather Hale wristed the resulting stroke past Withrow. Again, the UNC defense was pressed into game-saving action.

But as it had done all day, the defense held up over the game's final minutes. The Cavaliers never staged a significant threat, and the Tar Heels were propelled toward their eighth straight final four by something other than their potent offense.

"The beginning of the year I'd say there's no doubt our offense is stronger than our defense," Shelton said. "But we've really grown and matured, and I think we've become an outstanding defensive team."

was better suited for the final game than for a regional final. It is unlikely UNC will face any tougher competition than the Cavaliers.

"We worked hard all summer to get ready for the season, we worked all season to get to the postseason, and then to have it come down to perhaps a national championship game in the regionals is ridiculous," Shelton said.

Two of No. 4 Virginia's three regular-season losses came against North Carolina.

The Cavaliers have only been shut out twice this year — both times by North Carolina.

The Tar Heels topped UVa, 4-0 on Sept. 21 in Chapel Hill and blanked the Wahos 1-0 on Oct. 12 in Charlottesville, Va.

Despite decent showings against the rest of their opponents, the Wahos were slated to play their conference rival once again.

"It's a little disturbing when you look at the top teams, especially when Carolina and Virginia have been in the top four all season long, playing against each other in the regional final," Sanders said.

"It just comes down to regionality and money," she said.

The NCAA grouped teams by location to cut costs. The ACC had four

teams invited to the 12-team tournament, but Virginia, Duke and UNC were placed in the same region to reduce traveling expenditures.

"It's a tough conference and the pairings were a bit unfair," Shelton said. "Until they start doing a better job with women's sports in seeding the tournaments, it's not going to get better."

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