

SPORTS BRIEFS

Sampras survives Becker to win ATP championship

HANOVER, Germany — Overcoming a roaring, wave-happy crowd and bullet serves from his opponent, Pete Sampras beat Boris Becker in five sets Sunday to win the ATP Tour World Championship.

Becker pelted 32 aces in the four-hour match but was unable to retain his title in this season-ending event, losing 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-4), 6-7 (11-13), 6-4.

The two exhausted rivals hugged at the net at the finish.

When asked if he had ever played a more dramatic match, Sampras said, "I don't think so."

Added Becker: "I tried my best, but it was not to be."

Sampras avenged two straight losses to Becker in Germany, the last three days ago in a round-robin match of this \$3.3 million tournament, which featured the world's top eight players.

Becker played excellent tennis, enjoying the noisy support of 15,000 fans and saving two match points in the fourth set.

In nine finals this year, Sampras lost only once — to Becker in Stuttgart one month ago.

This victory gave Sampras a tour-high eight titles this year, including the U.S. Open.

Sampras was playing his fourth final in seven appearances at the championship, which he won in 1991 and 1994.

Sampras owns a 10-7 career record against Becker.

The outcome was a repeat of the 1994 championship, when Becker also beat Sampras in the round-robin stage, only to lose the final.

It was one of the biggest paydays in tennis, with Sampras collecting \$1.34 million and Becker earning \$640,000.

Becker, ranked sixth in the world and the reigning Australian Open champion, was playing the eighth final of the year-end event.

He won the 1988 Masters, and twice more (1992, 1995) after the event became the World Championship and moved to Germany.

California accepts invite

HONOLULU — The California Golden Bears will be spending their Christmas vacation in Hawaii.

Cal, despite a 42-21 loss Saturday to arch-rival Stanford, have accepted an invitation to play in the Aloha Bowl on Christmas Day.

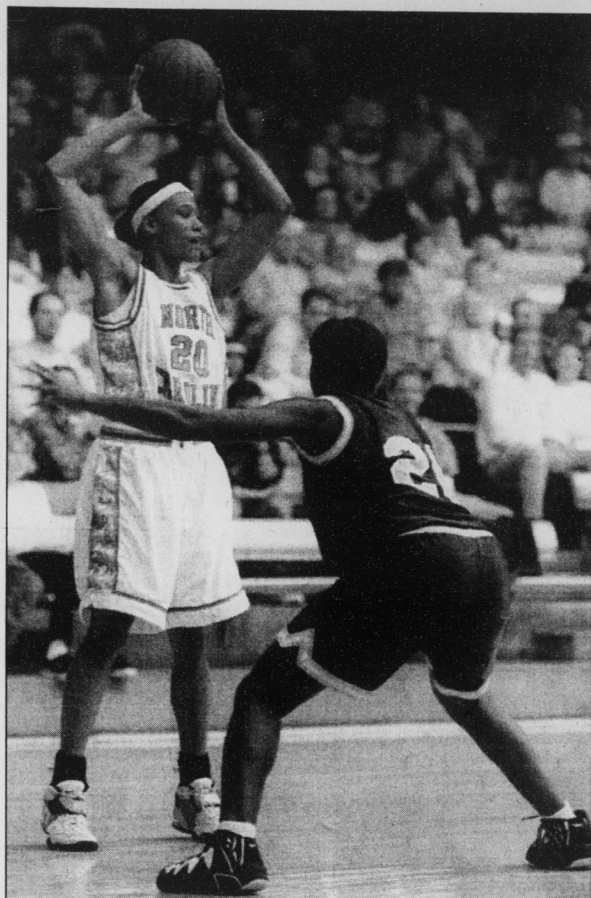
The Golden Bears (6-5) are expected to face Texas A&M.

Marcia Klompus, the Aloha Bowl's executive director, said officials wanted a team with an exciting offense.

Pass-happy Cal fits the bill, with quarterback Pat Barnes throwing for 3,416 yards and 31 touchdowns this season.

First-year coach Steve Mariucci, who took over a Cal team that was 3-8 last year, said the bowl bid was a tremendous first step for the program he is building.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



DTH/BRAD SMITH

North Carolina point guard Marion Jones (20) looks for an open teammate in the Tar Heels' win on Saturday. Jones finished the game with four assists.

Jones sparks defensive dominance as Tar Heel women trounce Tribe

BY M. LEE TAFT
SENIOR WRITER

If there were any doubts about Marion Jones' playing ability after missing a year, all questions were answered Saturday.

Jones led all players with 23 points, as North Carolina crushed William & Mary 78-37 before a crowd of 839 at Carmichael Auditorium.

Women's Basketball
William & Mary ... 37
UNC 78

The regular-season game was Jones' first since facing Stanford in the 1995 NCAA tournament, but she is picking up right where she left off.

"I personally think she's better than when she left," UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell said. "She's quicker. She's shooting the ball well. Players across the ACC have said to back off Marion because she can't shoot the ball from outside. Well, we're gonna see. In this game and the two exhibition games, she's shot well."

UNC never trailed in the game, taking the lead just four seconds in on a Lori Gear layup. The Tar Heels jumped to a 6-0 lead before allowing the Tribe to score.

The Tar Heels' swarming man-to-man defense engulfed the William & Mary passing lanes, forcing 34 turnovers for the game and limiting the Tribe's leading scorer, Julie Sommer, to just seven points. Meanwhile, guards Jones and Jessica Gaspar each had four of UNC's 15 steals.

"I feel like I'm able to let loose now," Jones said. "I was so restricted last year. I'm just trying to make the most of it now."

The Tar Heels only dressed eight players, as Tracy Reid, Tracy Sadler and Laquanda Dawkins sat out for violating team rules. Forward Yanick Clay missed the game with a broken jaw.



UNC center SHENEIKA WALKER left Saturday's game with a head injury.

UNC worked the full-court press on some plays, and the Tribe buckled under the pressure, failing to bring the ball across half-court on occasion. In the second half, due to fatigue and low substitutes, UNC successfully used a zone and allowed only 16 second-half points.

"I know that Marion Jones plays like three people," Tribe coach Trina Thomas Patterson said. "She's quick enough and she covers enough ground and puts enough pressure on the point guard that she makes the other players look better. With her hanging around and putting a lot of pressure on the point guard, she sets people up for steals."

On the offensive end, UNC had its way with the Tribe. The Tar Heel motion offense ran circles around William & Mary, opening the passing lanes for easy baskets. Three times, Gaspar rifled pass in to a streaking Jones for backdoor layups. For their first regular-season game together, the duo seemed like they had been playing together for years.

"I think it's more of a practice thing,"

Gaspar said. "The more we play the more we'll know how each other plays. Today put the icing on the cake with the communication and eye contact. I know how she plays and I know her moves and what she likes to do. ... I like playing with Marion. She's quick and it's different when she's on the floor."

Sophomore Chanel Wright added 13 points and five boards before leaving the game with an injury, and freshman Melissa Johnson had a double-double of 12 points and ten rebounds in her first collegiate game.

The Tar Heels were cruising through the game until the 12-minute mark in the first half. When wrestling for a ball, junior Sheneika Walker fell and smacked her head on the floor. She stayed down for several minutes before being carried to the locker room and didn't return.

The already depleted Tar Heel bench took another blow in the second half, as Wright was hit in the head and had to leave the game. Both Wright and Walker were taken to the hospital for precautionary measures. UNC finished the game with only six players.

With the bench being so shallow, Hatchell was forced to play her players longer than she had expected. The extra playing time gave Johnson much needed time to adapt to the college game.

"Melissa's young, just like everyone else was last year," Hatchell said. "She just needs some experience. She's a big body in there, and she's smart. She had a couple of nice shots, but she just needs to get some experience."

Volleyball falls in ACC semifinals, awaits possible tourney invitation

BY AARON BEARD
SENIOR WRITER

It's time to play the waiting game.

The game began in the closing moments of fifth-seeded North Carolina's 15-11, 12-15, 10-15, 6-15 loss to top-seeded Maryland in the semifinals of the ACC volleyball tournament in Atlanta on Saturday.

It concludes on Sunday, when the NCAA selection committee names the 48 teams that will participate in this year's NCAA tournament.

And in between, a lot of anxiety.

"There are so many excellent teams in Division I volleyball, we're gonna have a tough battle," UNC coach Joe Sagula said in a phone interview Sunday. "... Whether it happens or not, we made a run for it, and I'm really proud of that."

UNC (20-12) came into the tourney winning six of its final eight matches.

On Friday, UNC knocked off fourth-seeded Clemson 15-13, 15-7, 13-15, 13-15, 15-8 in an ACC quarterfinal slugfest.

"Going into the fifth game, I felt pretty relaxed, knowing ... we would be okay," Sagula said. "... We've proven ourselves in five game matches over the year, win-

ning (six) out of (eight) of them coming into this."

Behind the power of freshman Tori Seibert (18 kills and 13 digs) and sophomore Maya Starks (19 kills and 14 digs), the Tar Heels jumped out to a two-game lead, only to watch the Tigers slip back into a match that was all but won.

But in the fifth game, UNC jumped out to a 3-1 lead and never looked back.

With the rally scoring system used in fifth games, UNC's postseason hopes were teetering perilously on the edge of disaster. With a couple of bad breaks, a potential NCAA berth could fade away.

But Sagula said that pressure is typical of any ACC tournament.

"The first round of the tournament is always the most pressure for any team," Sagula said. "Everybody wants to get by the first match. But we came out playing some of the best volleyball I've seen us play this year."

On Saturday, UNC continued that strong play, taking the first game against the Terps (25-4) in the four-game loss. Starks tallied 24 kills and 23 digs while Seibert added 14 kills. Senior Amber Wilbey contributed eight kills in what may have been her final match at UNC.

Wrestlers garner 9 top-six finishes

STAFF REPORT

Nine members of the North Carolina wrestling team placed in the top six for their respective weight classes at the East Stroudsburg Open in East Stroudsburg, Pa., on Saturday.

Senior Khalil Abdul-Malik and redshirt freshman Tom Bogan garnered the highest finishes for UNC. Abdul-Malik, who jumped from the 134 lb. class to 142 since last season, fell to Penn State's Clint Musser 9-3 in the final round. Bogan lost to Ed Moseley of Harvard in the finals of the 158 lb. division 7-5.

Bogan is battling senior Jason Driggers to replace the graduated Mike Chase, who won the ACC championship a year ago.

Senior Justin Hartly, who is only the fourth Tar Heel to be a three-time All-American, finished fourth in the heavyweight class



UNC heavyweight JUSTIN HARTLY forfeited because of medical reasons.

after falling to East Stroudsburg's Angelo Borzio by a medical forfeit.

Four other UNC grapplers nabbed third place for the event. Sophomore Frank Nocito (118 lbs.), sophomore Jason LaMotta (134 lbs.), junior Robert Lord (158 lbs.) and junior Scott Stay (190 lbs.) all won their consolation matches.

Senior Louis Pelang took fourth at 177 lbs., while freshman Ryan Tate notched sixth in the 134 lb. division.

The tournament marked the beginning of UNC coach Bill Lam's 24th season at the helm of North Carolina's squad.

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