

# SPORTS MONDAY

Monday, October 19, 1998

The Daily Tar Heel



## Women's Soccer Keeps Rolling Along

The Tar Heels beat No. 7 Portland and St. Mary's during the weekend to stay unbeaten. Forward Raven McDonald (left) led UNC with two goals on Friday. See Page 11.

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T. NOLAN HAYES  
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

## Hoops Lockout Needs to End For NBA's Sake

The NBA has long been the best league in professional sports.

It was the first to launch a massive advertising campaign that marketed its star players to the public. It introduced innovations such as the draft lottery and fun-filled All-Star Weekend. It has become so popular that cult status is now awarded for the simple art of flushing a ball through a hoop.

In short, the NBA has been at the top among pro leagues in providing entertainment for its fans.

No more. With the current lockout threatening to eliminate the entire 1998-99 season, the NBA is in trouble.

Major League Baseball battled a work stoppage in 1994 and lost. Fans realized their lives went on without the Boys of Summer, and they didn't come flooding back in 1995.

Baseball didn't make its comeback until this season, and a number of events had to happen for the rebirth to be possible.

Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa broke the home run record, Cal Ripken Jr. ended his consecutive-games streak and the Yankees fell just two games shy of the all-time season wins record.

Such a renaissance would be highly unlikely for the NBA, which lacks baseball's rich tradition.

With ticket prices already soaring higher than Michael Jordan and a noticeable drop occurring in the league's overall level of play due to expansion, the NBA is not in good position to absorb the fallout from a lockout.

The league has seen its profits drop during each of the past four years, and though the numbers aren't in yet, commissioner David Stern believes the NBA might have been unprofitable as a whole last season.

Economics aside, the NBA has been struggling in other areas. The league has suffered several black eyes during the past few years in public relations.

Latrell Sprewell choked coach P.J. Carlesimo at practice last season in an incident the whole nation heard about. In addition, Sports Illustrated ran a cover story about children fathered out of wedlock by NBA players.

The list doesn't stop there. Stories citing players for drug possession and in domestic violence situations have become common, littering America's sports pages on a near-daily basis.

Fans don't like this type of behavior. Many are forming an image of the league as a group of young thugs running around with their shorts too long and their egos too big.

With stars like Jordan, Charles Barkley and Karl Malone nearing retirement, adults are starting to lose their identification with the league.

And watching Isaiah Rider talk smack during the course of a 3-for-13 shooting night just doesn't provide much appeal. Especially when people have to watch it from a \$60 seat.

The NBA needs to act fast. All is not lost, at least not yet.

The fact is that the NBA season is extremely long. Including training camp, the 82 regular-season games and the playoffs, the season spans nine months. Losing two weeks of regular-season action isn't a death sentence.

But that doesn't change the urgency of the situation.

Fans can forgive missed games in the early going, but they don't soon forget championship games that fail to happen. Just ask baseball players and owners what happened after they failed to produce a World Series in '94.

The league must get a labor agreement hammered out one way or another. Fans don't really care if the Larry Bird exception is abolished or whether the salary cap becomes "harder."

They just want to see the greatest athletes in the world run up and down the floor and play basketball.

They want the NBA to become the world's greatest league again.

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## Field Hockey Falters at Virginia

The loss is the Tar Heels' third consecutive defeat, giving UNC its longest losing skid in 16 years.

Staff Report

The road has not been kind to North Carolina's field hockey team the past two weekends.

One week after falling from the top of the national polls following defeats at

James Madison and Maryland, the fourth-ranked Tar Heels dropped another road contest Sunday, this time to No. 6 Virginia, 2-1.

Cavalier forward Meredith Thorpe, the ACC's all-time leading scorer, notched three points on one goal and one assist in the victory.

Thorpe got the scoring underway with her 95th career goal at the 14:20 mark of the first half. Michelle Vizzuo

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and Laura Lindsay assisted on the goal, which came off a Virginia penalty corner.

UNC turned to its biggest weapons to tie the game.

Nancy Pelligreen scored the Tar Heels' only goal of the game on a penalty corner from Jana Toepel at the 11:45 mark of the first period.

But the Cavaliers answered back, as Meredith Elwell scored off an assist from Thorpe with 1:47 to go that gave UVa. the winning margin.

The two teams went scoreless

through the second half.

UNC outshot Virginia 9-6 and had a 10-4 advantage in penalty corners for the contest.

Virginia improved to 11-3 on the season and is now 2-0 in the ACC. The win was the Cavaliers' 12th in a row and 19th-consecutive win in the month of October. Both win marks are school records.

For the Tar Heels (9-4, 1-2 in the ACC), the loss marks their third-consecutive defeat. It is UNC's longest losing skid since 1982.



DTH/AARON BEARD

Renovations have added a state-of-the-art football center and nearly 8,000 seats to 71-year-old Kenan Stadium, which now seats 60,000 spectators.

## Home Improvements

### ACC Schools Race to Upgrade Football Facilities in the '90s

By JOHN ZHU  
Staff Writer

While ACC football teams battle for supremacy on the gridiron, a different race is taking place off the field, and this contest doesn't involve pads or helmets.

Instead, the equipment includes concrete, heavy machinery and a lot of money.

ACC football stadiums have undergone a plethora of major renovations in

the past decade. Every team in the conference either has done major renovations in the last 10 years or is planning to do so in the near future.

Virginia Associate Athletics Director Mark Fletcher, who is in charge of the school's athletics-related construction projects, said the renovations signify football's growing popularity.

"In general, the conference has changed from being a dominant basketball conference," he said. "Football has

stepped up."

Fletcher attributed the renovations in part to the 1992 addition of Florida State to the conference. He said the other teams are improving their football stadiums to help them achieve FSU's status as a perennial football power.

"For the other schools in the conference, you're trying to beat the best, and you want to be like the best," Fletcher said.

FSU, ironically, has done the least

amount of football-related construction in the ACC this decade, the only extravagance being a new scoreboard in 1992.

The year after FSU joined the ACC, Georgia Tech built a new athletics and academic center behind the west stands of 85-year-old Bobby Dodd Stadium.

From 1990-95, Maryland erected Tyser Tower, which serves as a press box, and added 300 luxury suites to

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## Men's Hoops Faces Questions As Preseason Practice Begins

The Tar Heels must replace four players who accounted for 73.7 percent of the team's scoring last season.

By DAVE ALEXANDER  
SportSaturday Editor

North Carolina coach Bill Guthridge knows his task this season is more difficult than it was a year ago.

And he has a minor request for UNC basketball fans this season.

"The fans need to be more patient," Guthridge said at UNC's preseason media day Sunday. "But I'm not expecting it. There's no way for us to have close to the team we had last year."

That's not surprising considering the Tar Heels lost four starters from last season's Final Four participant, which finished the season 34-4 and ranked No. 1 in the final regular-season AP poll.

Seniors Makhtar Ndiaye and Shammond Williams graduated, and juniors Vince Carter and Antawn Jamison opted to forego their senior seasons in favor of the NBA.

What remains is a collection of skilled but inexperienced players and more questions than are posed in a round of Jeopardy.

First and foremost — who will score?

The departed quartet accounted for 60.4 points per game last season, a staggering 73.7 percent of UNC's scoring output.

The Tar Heels' leading returning scorer is its junior point guard, Ed Cota, who chipped in 8.1 ppg a year ago and will be charged with picking up some of the scoring slack.

But there is concern that focusing too much on putting points on the board could hamper Cota's ability to lead the team, which he did last season with an ACC-best 7.4 assists per game.

"I'm thrilled to death to have Ed Cota back," Guthridge said. "But if Ed has to score all the points, we won't be that good of a team."

Joining Cota as a returning starter is senior Ademola Okulaja, who ranked fifth in scoring for the Tar Heels last season with 8.0 ppg.

Beyond that, little is certain. Seven-foot sophomore Brendan



UNC coach Bill Guthridge enters his second season with only two returning starters.

Haywood, who saw action in all 38 of North Carolina's games in 1998, should see time in the middle. So should 6-11 sophomore Brian Bersticker.

Bulky forward Vasco Evtimov returns after serving a year in the French army and could help up front.

Senior Brad Frederick and sophomores Michael Brooker and Max Owens could provide UNC with a secondary scoring threat from the outside.

Freshmen Kris Lang, Jason Capel and Ronald Curry, who will join the team full-time following football season, could also fit into the equation.

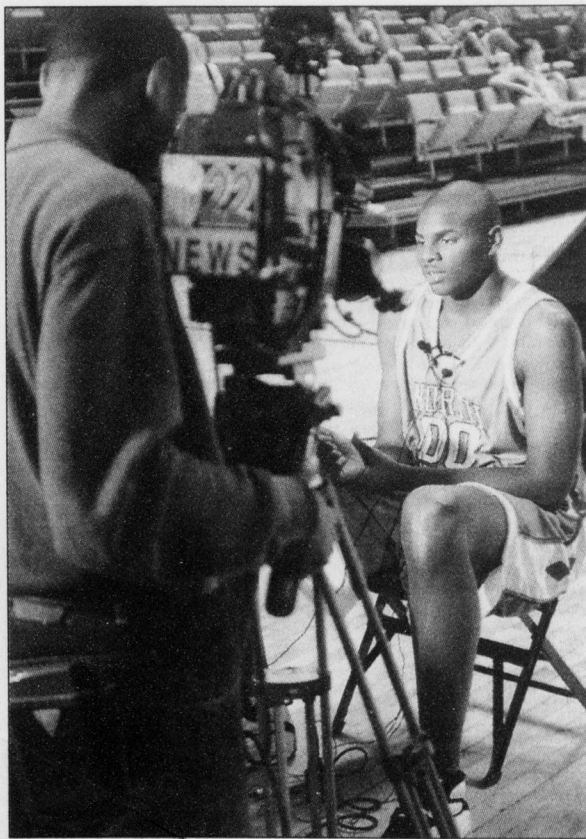
"We have a lot of capable people," Brooker said. "If somebody's off, somebody else can come in and pick it up."

That remains to be seen. But one thing is obvious — the "wills" of recent campaigns have been replaced with "coulds" and "shoulds." And Guthridge is doing his part to temper expectations.

"It will be a real challenge for the team and the coaching staff to get it all together," Guthridge said. "The expectations are always high around here."

"I think it's very important for this year's team not to put pressure on themselves. The results take care of themselves."

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DTH/MICHAEL KANAREK

UNC sophomore center Brendan Haywood (sitting) talks to the media during Sunday's basketball media day at the Smith Center.

## Volleyball Win Streak Ends at 14

UNC lost to Wake Forest on Friday but rebounded to post a 3-1 victory against Notre Dame on Sunday.

By HUGH PRESSLEY  
Assistant SportSaturday Editor

North Carolina's volleyball team had a stark realization during fall break: winning can mask many sins.

Although UNC (19-4, 7-1 in the ACC) has ripped through foes this season with ease, it's been winning despite suffering from service errors, mental lapses and let-downs.

After UNC took a break from its winning ways on Friday against Wake Forest in a 3-1 road loss that snapped its 14-match winning streak, the Tar Heels did some psychoanalysis.

The prognosis: The Tar Heels can't go through the rest of 1998 merely thinking they can win. They have to prove it.

So when No. 24 UNC took on Notre Dame (7-9) on Sunday at Carmichael Auditorium, the Tar Heels knew they'd have to give a 100-percent effort to befuddle the Fighting Irish and return to top form.

Mission accomplished.

UNC outshutled Notre Dame to a 15-10, 15-13, 9-15, 15-8 win on Sunday, improving the Tar Heels' record at Carmichael to 12-0 in 1998.

"We really wanted to just get back to the way we were playing in the beginning of the season (against Notre Dame)," outside hitter Maya Starks said.

The Tar Heels won game one the way they've won many games this season — sheer offense.

UNC jumped out to a 9-2 lead behind kills by five different Tar Heels, including Tar Heel sophomore Casey Simpson's five kills.

After a brief Fighting Irish comeback try, the Tar Heels thwarted Notre Dame's efforts with three-consecutive

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## Volleyball

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UNC setter Erin Berg tallied 82 assists during Sunday's 3-1 win against Notre Dame.