

Gamble Pays Off For Tar Heels In Triple Jump

Nicole Gamble (left), one of the most successful track and field athletes in UNC history, won the triple jump in the 1999 indoor NCAA Championships with a leap of 46 feet, 1 1/4 inches. Gamble's victory was the lone individual national title for a UNC athlete in 1999.



Arceneaux, Wildcats Hand Tar Heels 1st-Round Defeat

By **AARON BEARD**
Senior Writer

SEATTLE, MARCH 15 - There were 1.2 seconds to play. Ninety-four feet stood between Brian Bersticker and a final chance for North Carolina to avoid the painful bite of the upset bug.

Weber State had led UNC throughout Thursday's second half. And though the Tar Heels were on their vintage squeeze-every-last-drop-of-the-clock comeback alert, the Wildcats tenuously held a two-point lead.

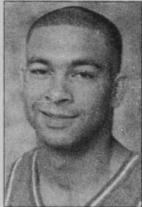
With no timeouts, UNC's only chance was to chuck the ball the length of the court and pray for a show-stopping finish. Instead, "The Show" finished the Tar Heels.

After torching UNC for 36 points, Wildcats forward Harold "The Show" Arceneaux came up with the intercep-

tion of Bersticker's heave and lifted No. 14 seed Weber State to a 76-74 shocker against the third-seeded Tar Heels in the first round of the N C A A Tournament's West Region at Key Arena.

"I told people back home all week we were going to win," WSU guard Noel Jackson said. "I don't call it an upset."

It was the first NCAA appearance for Weber State (25-7) since the Wildcats upset third-seeded Michigan State in the first round of the 1995 tournament.



Forward **Ademola Okulaja** wrapped up his UNC career with 17 points and six rebounds against the Wildcats.

When time expired, a euphoric Arceneaux - ball in hand - jumped into the arms of guard Marc Lawson as Wildcat players, fans and cheerleaders horded at midcourt for a celebration.

It was a far different reaction for the Tar Heels (24-10). When asked what went through his mind after the horn sounded, UNC's Brendan Haywood responded, "Nothing. Just total blankness."

It was understandable that the Tar Heel players were stupefied by the scenario. Not since 1980 had the Tar Heels gone winless in tourney play. That year UNC lost in the second round to Texas A&M after earning a first-round bye.

It had been 23 years since the Tar Heels lost a first-round game.

"First round," UNC senior forward Ademola Okulaja repeated to himself afterward. "For me and my honor, that's mandatory. And it didn't happen. I'm

truly hurt. We didn't play to potential."

No kidding. The Tar Heels shot 41 percent for the game and were completely unable to establish their inside-outside game against a Weber State team with no player taller than 6 foot-9.

And then there was Arceneaux, the Big Sky Conference Player of the Year. The 6-6 junior came into the game averaging 21.5 points but hit 14 of 26 shots on the night, including five 3-pointers. Behind Arceneaux, the Wildcats' offense rolled. Weber State shot 52 percent in the second half and hit 7 of 10 3-point attempts. The Wildcats hit 14 of 26 from downtown on the night.

"I thought we'd go further," Okulaja said. "I really thought we had a legitimate chance at the Final Four. I thought we'd surprise everybody."

"And we surprised everybody by losing today."



The Tar Heels were despondent after their 76-74 loss to Weber State.

Rumors Untrue: Torbush Keeps Job

By **BRIAN MURPHY**
Sports Editor

NOV. 22 - Dick Baddour ended days of speculation with a simple sentence.

"The University of North Carolina will retain Carl Torbush as the head coach of the football program," UNC's director of athletics said to open Monday's press conference.

Following the statement, Torbush's players, friends and fellow coaches stood and applauded in the Koury Natatorium's Bowles Room. Such a scene seemed impossible Friday when many local and national media reported that Torbush had been fired and would coach his final game Saturday against Duke.

But the Tar Heels' 38-0 victory and an impassioned plea from players following the contest obviously had an impact on the final decision, which Baddour said was made Sunday.

"I've been fired since Friday," Torbush said. "You all sold all those papers on Thursday and Friday. So this is probably not going to be as exciting as it was on Thursday and Friday."

But after the last few days, Torbush said he could live without any excitement. The coach, who will still work under his original five-year contract, said he was taking the next five days off.

Torbush said that when he returned from the Thanksgiving holiday he would begin critiquing his staff. He and Baddour said the composition of Torbush's staff next year was his decision.

Much of the talk concerning Torbush's staff centers on offensive coordinator Steve Marshall. But Torbush said the entire staff would be examined.

"We'll evaluate every part of the program, and we do that every year," Torbush said. "When the time comes to discuss those things, I'll be the first one to discuss it."

Torbush and his staff have been under fire much of the year. The Tar Heels began the season 1-1 and then dropped seven games in a row.

After the season's fifth game, an overtime loss to Georgia Tech, Baddour issued the coaching staff a vote of confidence. But embarrassing losses to Houston, Maryland and Division I-AA Furman seemed to change Baddour's mind. His official stance became re-evaluation after the season.

"What Dicky did after five games showed a tremendous amount of support, and if he would have said the same thing later in the season, someone would have sent him to the funny farm," said Torbush, who called the year "frustrating."

UNC dropped its next game, Homecoming, to Wake Forest 19-3 before ending the seven-game skid with a dramatic 10-6 win against N.C. State.

But late last week it seemed that victory would not be enough to get Torbush another season at UNC. The Associated Press reported Thursday that Torbush would be fired, and other papers picked up the story. Baddour did nothing to squelch the rumors linked to members of the school's Educational Foundation.

But Baddour defended the foundation Monday, saying reports concerning the group had been inaccurate.

"The references that have been made about undue influences on the Department are unfair and misguided," Baddour said. "The Educational Foundation has accomplished great things."

Now Torbush can look forward to having those boosters behind him - at least for next season. Baddour said that he and Torbush needed to help generate excitement for the program.

And Torbush thinks he can. With the late improvement and a bevy of talent coming back, Torbush said the program was on solid footing.

"The last three days have been an emotional roller coaster in a lot of ways," Torbush said. "I will be a stronger coach because of it, a stronger family member because of it, and more than anything else, I'll be a stronger person because of it."



Senior center Ryan Carfley demonstrates his support for Coach Carl Torbush after the Tar Heels defeated Duke 38-0 on Nov. 20. Contrary to a report by The Associated Press, Torbush was not fired after UNC wrapped up its 3-8 season in 1999.

Curry Done for Season After Achilles Tear

By **T. NOLAN HAYES**
Sports Saturday Editor

ATLANTA, OCT. 9 - North Carolina's offense entered play Saturday against Georgia Tech ranked seventh in the ACC, averaging 326.8 yards per game.

And now the Tar Heels will have to play the rest of the season without the man who was responsible for 65.8 percent of that output. Sophomore quarterback Ronald Curry went down with a ruptured right Achilles tendon at the 12:59 mark of the second quarter of UNC's 31-24 loss to the Yellow Jackets.

Dr. Tim Taft, director of sports medicine at UNC, performed surgery on Curry on Sunday afternoon. Curry will likely be out six months, meaning he'll probably miss the basketball season, said Steve Kirschner, director of media relations for football and men's basketball.

Curry spent the night at UNC Hospitals. His right ankle, which will be immobilized for three weeks, is in a splint but will be put into a cast

in a couple of days, Kirschner said.

"I'm all right emotionally," Curry said after the game. "I'm a strong believer that everything happens for a reason, and maybe I need this rest. I haven't had a long rest in a long time, and maybe that's what my body was telling me."

"I can't remember the last time I had a decent break. Unfortunately, this is the way I've got to take it. But things happen for a reason, and I was always taught that. I didn't shed a tear. I'm still going to have my head up high, and I'm fine."

The injury occurred on UNC's third possession. On second-and-six from the UNC 15-yard line, Curry rolled to his right on a bootleg look-



UNC quarterback **Ronald Curry** passed for 682 yards and three touchdowns in the five games he played in 1999.

ing to pass. Finding no receivers open, he was sacked by Tech defensive end Greg Gathers.

Taft said that the injury was reasonably common for men around age 40 but that it was very uncommon for athletes Curry's age. Taft said that he did not expect the injury to be career-threatening.

"The thing that he'll probably lose is a little bit of vertical-leap height," Taft said. "I would expect him to get his quickness and running speed back."

Redshirt freshman Luke Huard replaced Curry and saw the first significant playing time of his career. Huard completed 7 of 15 passes for 45 yards and one interception.

Curry's injury was the second major blow to the Tar Heels this season. Senior linebacker Brandon Spoon, a Butkus Award candidate, was lost for the season Sept. 11 with a ruptured biceps tendon in his left arm.

Spoon suffered the injury in the first quarter of UNC's second game of the season, a 42-30 victory against Indiana.

Tar Heels Top Irish For Title

The North Carolina women's soccer team captured its 15th NCAA championship by knocking off Notre Dame.

By **BRET STRELOW**
Assistant Sports Editor

SAN JOSE, Calif., DEC. 5 - Few people expected the Notre Dame women's soccer team to be squaring off against 14-time NCAA champion North Carolina in the final of the 1999 Women's College Cup.

In the third round, a Stanford penalty kick that would have tied the match hit both posts before Notre Dame cleared it away. In the next round, Notre Dame and Nebraska went to penalty kicks, and Irish keeper LaKeyia Beene stopped the final kick to help her team advance. Friday against Santa Clara, Notre Dame advanced on Ali Lovelace's goal in the 75th minute despite being dominated from a statistical standpoint.

But the Tar Heels proved Sunday that their dynasty wasn't about to be upstaged by destiny.

In front of 14,410 spectators, the Irish's luck ran out as UNC scored two second-half goals en route to a 2-0 victory against Notre Dame and its 15th NCAA crown in the last 18 years.

"It was particularly satisfying in light of our challenging season," UNC coach Anson Dorrance said. "I'm absolutely thrilled to be sitting up here a national champion."

Junior forward Meredith Florance scored the game-winning goal at 55:11, taking a Kim Patrick feed to the middle of the penalty box and bending it past Beene into the right corner of the net.

About seven minutes earlier, Florance had misplayed a Susan Bush pass all alone in front of the Notre Dame net and failed to get a shot off. But she atoned for her mistake with her second game-clinching score against the Irish (21-4-1) this year. She scored in double-overtime Sept. 3 to give UNC a 3-2 victory.

"I knew that chances weren't going to come that often - we have to finish the ones we get," Florance said. "I just had to refocus and just remember the next chance I got, I had to stick it."

UNC's lead swelled to two goals at 79:06. Bush dished to Raven McDonald on the left flank, and McDonald dribbled toward the near the post and fed Beth Sheppard, who buried the ball past Beene from five yards out.

The Tar Heels (24-2) outshot Notre Dame 17-3, but the game mirrored the Irish's contest on Friday. Santa Clara also outshot the Irish 17-3, but Lovelace scored to lift the Irish. North Carolina outshot Notre Dame 8-1 in the first half, but Irish forward Jenny Streifer got behind the UNC wall of defense on numerous occasions.

Though beaten, UNC's defensive trio of Danielle Borgman, Lorrie Fair and Lindsay Stoecker hustled back to disrupt Streifer and keep the game scoreless.

Said Stoecker: "There's nothing you can do after the game - there's no reason to let yourself down, let your teammates down. There's always a little bit more you can give."

Ford Arrested for DWI, Will Take Leave of Absence

By **EVAN MARKFIELD**
Assistant Sports Editor

SEPT. 27 - Durham police arrested North Carolina assistant men's basketball coach Phil Ford on Monday night for driving while intoxicated.

Ford, who had a blood alcohol content of .24 at the time of his arrest, was pulled over at 9:37 p.m. after failing to stop at a red light on U.S. 15-501, according to police reports.

In the wake of Ford's arrest, UNC Sports Information issued a press release stating that Ford would take an indefinite medical leave from his duties with

the team. "Coach Ford certainly regrets the incident and the embarrassment it has caused himself and the University," UNC men's basketball head coach Bill Guthridge stated in the release. "Obviously, I am concerned about Coach Ford's health and well-



UNC assistant coach **Phil Ford** had a blood alcohol content of .24 when he was pulled over on U.S. 15-501.

being and will do what I can to support him at this time."

In the release, Ford stated he would do all he could to continue to earn respect and support from the University and the men's basketball program.

"That's all I can really say right now," Ford said Tuesday in a telephone interview. "I was told not to talk about it."

The 43-year-old assistant coach was released from Durham County Jail on Monday night after posting \$2,400 bail, an official at the jail said.

According to the release, Ford has hired an attorney, who, along with Ford, would deal with any legal issues involved.

Ford is scheduled to appear in Durham County District Court on Oct. 21.

In the meantime, he will undergo a full medical evaluation to determine when he will return to his job with the basketball team.

"It's an indefinite leave of absence," said Steve Kirschner, UNC's director of media relations for football and men's basketball. "It could be a couple of days or a couple of months."

UNC Director of Athletics Dick Baddour said Tuesday night that Ford would be back from his leave of absence in time for the start of basketball season, and no replacement would be necessary.

UNC opens its regular season Nov. 22.

Baddour said he would not comment on whether granting a medical leave following Ford's arrest indicated that Ford had an ongoing alcohol problem.

"We're looking at this situation and evaluating this situation as it applies to the circumstances," Baddour said.

Ford has been a UNC men's basketball assistant since 1987. As a point guard for the Tar Heels, Ford earned National Player of the Year honors in 1978.

Assistant Sports Editor Rachel Carter and Sports Editor Brian Murphy contributed to this article.