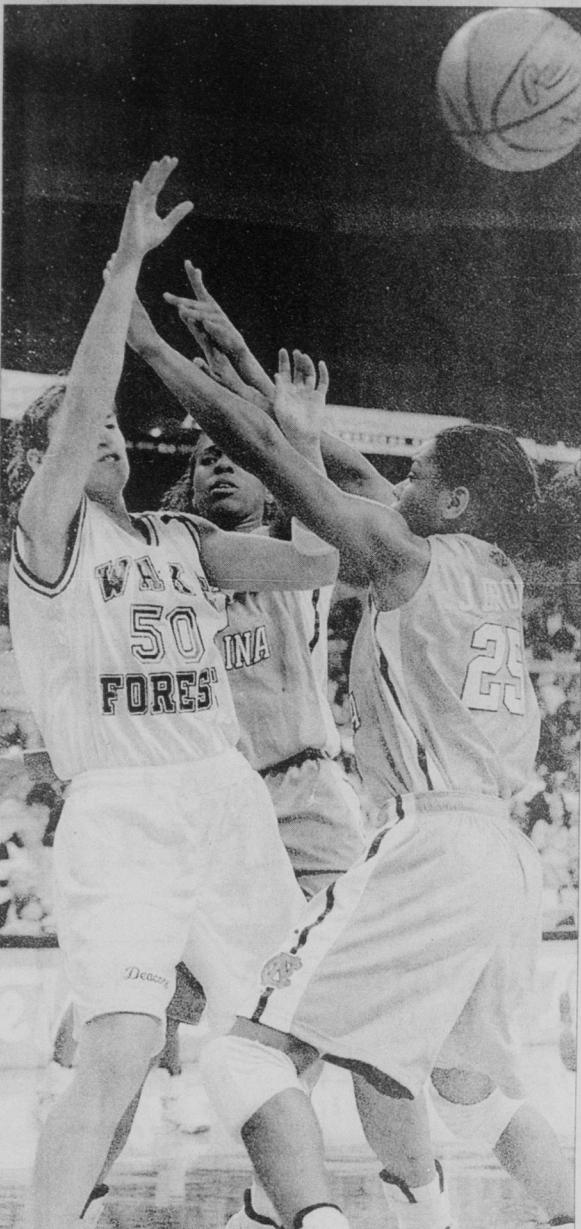


# Tar Heels Find Unfamiliar Position Tough to Handle



DH-KATHERINE LAKER

UNC's trapping defense was not enough to spark a comeback Sunday.

By **BRET STRELOW**  
Assistant Sports Editor

WINSTON-SALEM — LaQuanda Barksdale sat on the North Carolina bench with her face buried in a towel.

Two seats down, teammate Jasmyn Huntington leaned back with her hands behind her head as she stared at the ceiling of Lawrence Joel Memorial Coliseum.

Next to her, freshman Cherie Lea couldn't bear to look out at the court because in 15.2 seconds her team would walk away losers for the fifth time in a row.

But out on that court, the reality existed: Wake Forest, picked to finish last in the ACC, was almost finished handing the preseason conference favorite a 69-56 loss.

Wake Forest and North Carolina had lost a combined seven straight games entering Sunday's contest. But the Demon Deacons were the ones who stopped the bleeding and picked up a victory.

"As far as we're concerned, every day

we walk in, and we try to get a little bit better," said Wake coach Charlene Curtis, who exchanged an exuberant two-handed high-five with assistant coach Stephanie Lawrence Yelton after the game.

"It's hard when you are down, and (UNC's) not used to not winning. So I'm sure it's a struggle for them, because they're not used to being in that spot."

While UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell said she hoped the Tar Heels could find a way to win without Nikki Teasley, the formula for such a transformation has eluded UNC so far.

Teasley has missed the last four games, and in her absence North Carolina has connected on less than 30 percent of its shots.

"There's not anything wrong with us

that putting the ball in the basket won't fix," junior Leah Sharp said. "Look at the stat sheet; we shot 30 percent. We shot 24 percent last game. That's ridiculously terrible."

Since Teasley's departure, Hatchell has tinkered with her lineup in an effort to spark the struggling Tar Heels. Lea started Sunday in place of Coretta Brown, who had been occupying Teasley's old spot.

Hatchell said she was confident in Lea and Brown, who are freshmen.

But nonetheless, UNC's players still have their minds on Teasley, who led the team in assists and ranked second in scoring before taking her leave of absence.

"I think when we struggle and get down on ourselves, we think about

Nikki when we shouldn't during the game," UNC junior Jackie Higgins said.

Thinking of Teasley at least temporarily takes the players' minds off the frustration that comes with such a rapid downfall.

The frustration was most evident when Hatchell, with the game's outcome already decided, picked up a technical foul with 38 seconds left for criticizing the officials.

There wasn't enough time left for Hatchell's efforts to have an effect Sunday. But Hatchell showed that even in the gravest of circumstances, she wouldn't quit fighting for her team.

"We will return," Hatchell said. "Right now we're going through some tough times, but it's tough times like this that make you appreciate all these (conference and national title) rings we've got on. You don't take things for granted."

"We'll be back."

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## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

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going 23 of 76 (30.3 percent) from the field.

With North Carolina missing 53 shots, there were plenty of opportunities to grab offensive rebounds. UNC center Jackie Higgins did just that, snagging 10 offensive boards and 14 overall. Higgins also posted career highs in points (17) and steals (six).

While Higgins led the Tar Heels in scoring, LaQuanda Barksdale, the team's leading scorer, was frustrated by Wake's 2-1-2 zone. The Deacs limited Barksdale's opportunities, and she suffered through an abysmal 1-for-12 outing, finishing with only a deuce in the scoring column.

"We knew that she was like the glue to the team," said Wake center LaChina Robinson, who was one of the players assigned to disrupt Barksdale under the basket. "We knew that if we wanted to get into a good defensive flow and stop what they wanted to do on offense, then we had to get to her first. We tried to deny her the ball, have somebody there."

With the Deacon 'D' collapsing in the pivot, the Tar Heels were offered open looks from beyond the 3-point line. UNC attempted 26 treys — the most since a season-opening loss to UCLA —

but hit just six.

Juana Brown tossed up 24 shots — only five of which fell — and missed all eight of the 3-pointers she tried.

"They're just standing out there in a zone between you and the basket just saying 'Shoot it,'" Hatchell said.

"That's why in the first half we took 18 threes, because they were given to us. I'm not saying Wake Forest didn't play any defense, but I guess that was the strategy. Pack it back inside and make us shoot from the outside."

Guard Leah Sharp was about the only Tar Heel who liked what the Deacs pack the paint-zone gave her and rang up five triples en route to 15 points. Four of Sharp's trifectas came in a four-minute span in the second half as UNC trimmed Wake's lead to six points three different times.

The last came with 7:24 remaining when Lea dished to Sharp, who canned a trey from the left wing to cut the Wake lead to 50-44.

That was as close as the Tar Heels would get. The Deacons calmly



UNC junior forward Leah Sharp came off the bench and scored 15 points on 5-for-9 shooting from beyond the arc.

responded to the UNC surges by moving the ball around on offense, setting up layups and open jumpers.

"We were pulling it close," Sharp said, "but then when we got back on defense, we had a breakdown and they'd score an easy bucket."

### Not Coping With Changes

North Carolina has not taken change well this season.

When the clock struck midnight on Dec. 31, the Tar Heels hit a snag. UNC has failed to register a victory in five games since the calendar turned over to the year 2000.

North Carolina has also gone winless in four tries since Teasley left the team. The squad has averaged seven fewer assists and one more turnover while trying to replace its playmaker.

And, finally, UNC has been unable to scratch the 'W' column since it debuted its new uniforms and shoes on Jan. 3.

It appears that juniors Barksdale and Brown are pressing in an effort to end these dubious streaks and right UNC's sinking ship.

"I feel like probably LaQuanda and Juana are maybe trying too hard," Hatchell said. "I think maybe that's why they're missing so many open shots. Normally that wouldn't happen."

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## Wake Forest 69, UNC 56

### Box Score

UNC	22	34	56
Wake Forest	29	40	69

UNC (56)	min	fg	ft	rb	a	pf	tp
Barksdale 50	1:12	0/0	5/8	3	4	2	2
Huntington 14	1:3	0/0	0/3	1	3	3	3
Higgins 35	8:14	12/10	0/0	0	0	0	0
J. Brown 37	5:24	0/1	6/10	2	1	10	1
Lea 26	1:3	0/0	1/2	2	5	2	2
Thomas 10	0:2	2/3	2/2	1	1	2	2
Sharp 27	5:8	0/0	0/0	2	4	15	15
C. Brown 15	2:8	1/2	0/1	0	2	5	5
Allan 5	0:0	0/0	0/0	0	0	0	0
Total	200	23-76	4-8	25-42	11	25	56

Percentages — FG 30.3, FT 50.0, 3-point goals — 6-26 23% (Sharp 5-9, Huntington 1-3, J. Brown 0-8, C. Brown 0-3, Barksdale 0-2, Higgins 0-1) Team rebounds — 2 Blocked shots — 2 (Higgins, Lea) Turnovers — 14 (Barksdale 4, Higgins 4, Sharp 2, C. Brown, J. Brown, Huntington, Thomas), Steals — 12 (Higgins 6, Lea 2, C. Brown, J. Brown, Huntington, Thomas)

Wake Forest (69)	min	fg	ft	rb	a	pf	tp
Kirkpatrick 31	3:4	0/0	3/6	1	1	6	6
Whiteside 25	2:6	1/2	2/6	4	3	6	6
Robinson 29	4:9	1/3	2/6	1	4	9	9
Klopper 31	2:6	4/4	0/5	2	1	10	10
Mosley 29	6:9	11/13	5/7	3	2	24	24
Shaffer 13	1:3	0/1	0/2	1	2	2	2
Harris 15	2:7	2/2	0/0	4	1	6	6
Lustenbee 9	2:3	0/0	0/2	0	1	4	4
Borklund 10	0:0	0/0	0/0	1	0	0	0
Miller 5	1:1	0/0	1/2	0	0	2	2
Pearson 1	0:0	0/0	0/0	0	0	0	0
Rogers 1	0:0	0/2	0/0	0	0	0	0
Total	200	23-47	19-27	11-42	17	15	69

Percentages — FG 48.9, FT 70.4, 3-point goals — 4-11 36% (Klopper 2-4, Mosley 1-2, Whiteside 1-3, Harris 0-1) Team rebounds — 7 Blocked shots — 1 (Borklund), Turnovers — 20 (Kirkpatrick 5, Robinson 3, Klopper 2, Mosley 2, Miller 2, Shaffer 2, Whiteside 2, Harris, team) Steals — 6 (Borklund 2, Borklund, Harris, Kirkpatrick, Mosley)

Technical fouls — UNC (Berish), Attendance — 4,031.

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Florida Panthers	Feb. 24	7:30PM
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Atlanta Thrashers	Mar. 12	1:30PM
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