

# Blame Can't Rest Solely on Center

Imagine being 20 years old and having people who don't even know you scrutinizing your every move.

You'd probably want to hide, to seclude yourself from the public eye. But when you are 7 feet tall and wear an NC across your chest, the hiding places are few and far between.

That's what it's like to be Brendan Haywood, who is easily the most criticized player in college basketball. When UNC loses, the Greensboro native usually catches much of the flak. Goheels.com even has a special feature, called "The Brendan Watch," that evaluates his performance in every game.

Even when he has a solid game and UNC wins, people say, "You're 7 feet tall. That's what you're supposed to do." But it's easy to criticize Haywood, who has often produced the least when his team needed him the most.

Who can forget his miserable performance against Weber State last season? When the going gets tough, Haywood plays softer than the Pillsbury Doughboy.

And he doesn't help his own cause either. Take one look at the North Carolina media guide and you will find that the person in history Haywood would most like to meet is magician Harry Houdini. Think that guy knows any good disappearing acts? C'mon, Brendan, this joke is too easy.

But, while Haywood has struggled this season, all the blame for the Tar Heels' poor start shouldn't fall on him.



**WILL KIMMEY**  
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Haywood shouldn't even be held completely responsible for his own up-and-down play, let alone the team's.

Take UNC coach Bill Guthridge, for example. Guthridge has been the Tar Heels' big man coach for years and has consistently turned big stiffs into quality players. Did you ever think that Kevin Salvadori, Matt Wenstrom or Serge Zwikker would wind up in NBA arenas without purchasing tickets?

Give Guthridge a guy with some physical skills (Brad Daugherty, Rasheed Wallace) and you've got yourself a first-round pick.

So maybe Haywood isn't on the same level as Daugherty and Wallace, but you know he's a better athlete than Matt "I-started-one-career-game-at-UNC-and-then-played-for-the-Celtics" Wenstrom.

What's going on, Bill? You've got plenty to work with here — you might just need to work a little harder at it.

Haywood tries to catch passes into the post with one hand, where a defender can easily slap the ball away.

If he used two hands and stepped to meet the pass rather than reaching for it, he'd be in a great position to score instead of standing in the paint waiting for an entry pass.

Why doesn't Guthridge get Haywood out at practice every day with Kris Lang fronting him and Julius Peppers bumping bodies with him and toss old double zero a few thousand passes?

Defensively, Haywood has had trouble with allowing weakside rebounds. When an opponent drives to the hole on the opposite side from him,

Haywood often leaves his post to make a late attempt to block the shot, and he rarely gets there in time to make the rejection. But when he vacates his side of the glass, he allows smaller players to grab offensive boards and convert them into second-chance baskets.

While the team needs its center to be a force in the paint, Guthridge must stress to Haywood the importance of positioning in defense and rebounding. Flailing wildly after every shot only leaves the defense more vulnerable.

If Guthridge can turn Serge into a second-round pick, he should certainly be able to patch up a few holes in Haywood's game.

To continue laying the blame, let's move on to Ed Cota. Cota is billed as the ACC's best point guard and one of the best in all of college hoops. And while he is averaging more than eight assists per game, he is still having trouble getting the ball into the low post.

It's true that teams have double-teamed Haywood a lot and collapsed down on him in stingy zones, but isn't a point guard's job to penetrate, draw defenders and dish to the open man? Cota has looked frustrated and, at times, hapless against the zone and has had trouble in beating his man one-on-one.

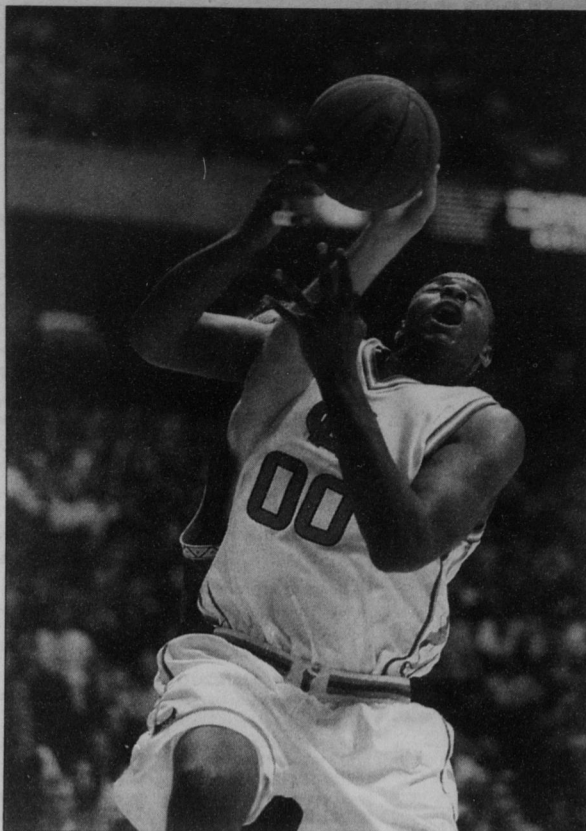
Seems like Cota might have had it too easy during his first two seasons at UNC when he had the luxury of pitching the rock to the agile, sure-handed Antawn Jamison and the high-flying Vince Carter. Just throw it in their vicinity, and run back on defense as either one of those guys adds an assist to your career stats.

But still, some of the blame must come down on Haywood. To improve his overall game, he simply needs to do two things — try a bit harder and play a bit smarter. And these are things that anyone can do — if they want to. Haywood just has to want to get better.

If he can just assert himself more and get a little help from Guthridge and Cota, maybe Haywood could become a force down low and silence those critics. Maybe they would stop saying that he disappears in big games.

And just maybe Haywood can take another trick from Houdini's repertoire and help UNC perform a great escape act — getting the team out of its sinking ship of a season and back into the top 25.

Will Kimmey can be reached at [kimmey@email.unc.edu](mailto:kimmey@email.unc.edu).



DTH/MILLER PEARSALL

UNC center Brendan Haywood has received much of the criticism for his team's woes. The 7-footer is averaging 12.8 points and 6.5 rebounds.

# Tar Heels Drop From Top 25 for First Time in 10 Seasons

By BRIAN MURPHY  
Senior Writer

In what could be the first of many streak-breakers in a trying season, one long-running streak ended for the North Carolina men's basketball team on Monday.

The Tar Heels fell from The Associated Press Top 25 when the poll was released Monday afternoon. It marked the first time since the final poll

of the 1989-90 season that UNC was not ranked. The Tar Heels reached the NCAA Sweet 16 before losing to Arkansas 96-73 and finished that season 21-13.

The streak of 172 consecutive polls is the second longest in history. The streak is second behind UCLA's 221 consecutive-week run. The Tar Heels also have the third-longest streak in history, with 171 weeks from Dec. 5, 1972, to Dec. 14, 1982.

UNC, which began this season ranked fifth and reached as high as No. 2, received just seven votes, placing it behind notable basketball powers Dayton, Kent and Southern Methodist in the "others receiving votes" category.

"Carolina's not used to this and we're not going to settle for it," center Brendan Haywood said. "We're going to bounce back. A lot of people don't believe in us — and probably right now they shouldn't — but we're going to come back."

UNC was ranked No. 21 last week but has since dropped conference games to Virginia and Florida State.

North Carolina (11-8, 2-3 in the ACC), which has lost four consecutive games, hosts No. 22 Maryland (13-5, 2-3) at 7 p.m. Wednesday hoping to avoid its first five-game skid since 1951-52.

"One of the bad things is that losing is contagious. I think we need to feel we can win. I know the players want to win very badly and so do the coaches,"

UNC coach Bill Guthridge said.

"We've had times like this in the past, and you just have to overcome it. It's the same thing with winning — winning is contagious, too. We'd certainly like to get back to where we expect winning."

### Closer to Full Strength

Point guard Ed Cota, who missed Saturday's game with an upper respiratory virus, and forward Kris Lang, who was limited to 23 minutes by a stomach

illness, both practiced Monday.

Senior Terrence Newby and freshman Jonathan Holmes played for the ailing Cota against FSU. Lang scored eight points on 4-of-9 shooting and grabbed two rebounds.

Team trainer Marc Davis said he expected Cota and Lang to play against Maryland.

The Sports Editor can be reached at [sports@unc.edu](mailto:sports@unc.edu).

# Teasley Returns From Leave, Will Sit Thursday vs. Duke

Staff Report

North Carolina women's basketball player Nikki Teasley will not play Thursday against Duke, UNC Sports Information contact Dana Gelin said Monday.

Teasley, a point guard who took a leave of absence from the Tar Heels on Jan. 5, was scheduled to rejoin the team Monday in a limited capacity. UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell announced that Teasley would watch practice Monday but added that the time of Teasley's return to game action was undetermined.

Hatchell closed practiced to the media Monday afternoon, and Gelin said practice would probably remain closed until at least Thursday.

Teasley, a 6-foot junior from Washington, D.C., started eight of North Carolina's first 12 games this season and averaged 14.0 points per contest. She began the season in fifth place on UNC's all-time assist list.

The Tar Heels (10-8, 2-5 in the ACC) have gone 9-3 in games that Teasley has

played in this year. In ACC games without its point guard, UNC is 1-5.

The Tar Heels play at Duke at 7 p.m. Thursday.

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Carrboro/Job #116-05

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**HUMAN RESOURCE AIDE**  
Van Driver  
Carrboro/Job #42-27

Individual will be responsible for transporting members of Club Nova, a psychosocial rehabilitation program. Must have a High School diploma; demonstrated ability to transport members safely and efficiently; and ability to relate to members and follow directions accurately. This position can be considered for two separate candidates, one morning and one evening shift. Schedules are as follows:

Morning: M-F 7:30-9:00AM; Sat. 9:30-11:00AM  
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A valid NC driver's license with driving record acceptable to OPC insurance carrier is required, as is need to pass physical examination prior to employment. EOE

**Summer 2000 at TAXCO, MEXICO**  
Universidad Nacional Autónoma De México

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**Eligibility:** Sophomores, juniors, and seniors are eligible for the program, which is open to both UNC-CH and non-UNC students with a 2.5 GPA or better. There is no language prerequisite, but at least two semesters of college-level Spanish or the equivalent is recommended.

Summer 2000 students will be accompanied by Amy McNichols, a Ph.D. candidate in Latin American literature from the UNC-CH Department of Romance Languages & Literatures. While on-site, Ms. McNichols will advise and tutor students, as well as serve as the Resident Coordinator in Taxco during the program.

A group flight will be available, and the orientation will take place in Mexico City prior to the beginning of courses in Taxco.

**The dates:** The summer 2000 program runs from June 16 to August 4, 2000.

**The cost:** Total billed cost \$1,451.

**For further information about this program:** Please contact the Study Abroad Office in 12 Caldwell Hall, or the program leader, Amy McNichols, in 114 Dey Hall.

**APPLICATIONS ARE DUE February 15, 2000.**

**NO LATE APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

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