

SPORTS MONDAY

Monday, January 31, 2000

The Daily Tar Heel

UNC Baseball Rolls Through Disney World

North Carolina hurler Chris Elmore (left) pitched the Tar Heels past No. 5 Miami (Fla.) on Sunday to give UNC its third win in a row to start the year. See Page 9.



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BRIAN MURPHY
PLAYER TO BE NAMED LATER

UNC Students Unlikely to See Better Seating

Thursday night provided a glimpse of the past for supporters of the North Carolina men's basketball team. Unfortunately for the students and the players, it almost certainly did not provide a glimpse of the future.

Thanks to a snowstorm, which will probably be one of those things all of us tell our children and grandchildren about, the Department of Athletics made the wise decision to allow students into UNC's game with Maryland simply by showing a UNC ONE Card.

The result: a completely filled lower deck and a true home-court advantage. The crowd cheered before the game — an occurrence usually impossible because in order to cheer before the game, the crowd must actually be in the building before the game. The students showed up early and stayed until the end.

There was no mass exodus with five minutes remaining. The students jumped up and down in their seats. They screamed and yelled for the team, the cheerleaders, that amazing guy who does all those flips. When it was over, they flooded the court, trapping Maryland assistant coach Billy Hahn on the Terrapins' bench.

The kids wanted a chance to show that they could make the Smith Center rock. And rock it did, just like good ole Carmichael Auditorium rocked.

Carmichael fits 10,000 fans like a Volkswagen bug fits eight passengers, but the noise produced in that place can be deafening. All those games Dean Smith won happened somewhere, you know. Not to say Jordan and Worthy and Ford would have lost those games in the Smith Center, but playing in Carmichael surely didn't hurt.

The fact is, the Tar Heels have already suffered through three home losses this season. They may have lost these games even with every seat in the arena filled by 18- to 22-year-olds screaming their heads off, but I doubt it.

Lonny Baxter, Maryland's center, doesn't miss four consecutive free throws in the second half in a quiet gym without a thousand people screaming and waving their arms.

College basketball is something special. And it's made special not by the basketball part, but by the college part. College means emotion; it means energy; it means making mistakes; it means learning and growing.

That's the difference between college basketball and the NBA. The players on this level have emotion and energy. They make mistakes; they learn and grow.

In order for college basketball to be truly special, the college part must be emphasized. And that means college students in the lower-level seats, where they can cheer their peers on to victory.

Now comes the unfortunate part. The people in the athletics department are not dumb. They realize the enormous competitive advantage of having students outside.

They also realize the economic disadvantage of doing so. The department is in economic peril, trying to support 28 programs and build facilities to allow those teams to compete nationally. Season ticket holders (read: rich alumni) pay full price for their seats. They pay to park. They buy more hot dogs and sodas than college kids.

In other words, they're better economically.

And as much as fans and sports writers hate to admit it: College athletics also means the bottom line.

So unless Mother Nature provides UNC students with another chance to move downstairs, Thursday's game will remain another one of those things to tell your children and grandchildren about.

The Sports Editor can be reached at sports@unc.edu.

Haywood's 2nd-Half Spurt Leaves Georgia Tech Stung

UNC's Brendan Haywood tallied six points and three blocks in the first four minutes of the second half.

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — North Carolina is showing signs of turning its season around. Georgia Tech looks every bit like a program in turmoil.

Brendan Haywood, who played only six minutes in the first half because of foul trouble, dominated at the start of the second to carry the Tar Heels to a 70-53 rout Saturday against cold-shooting Georgia Tech.

North Carolina (13-8, 4-3 in the ACC) has won two straight since a four-game losing streak, putting together another strong performance after a 75-63 victory against No. 22 Maryland on Thursday.

"We had a good win against Maryland, and that gave us some confidence," UNC coach Bill Guthridge said. "We have a long way to go, but I like

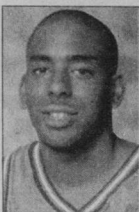
this team. I like our attitude. I like our hard work. It's starting to pay off."

Georgia Tech (9-10, 2-5) mimicked the icy conditions in Atlanta, shooting only 27 percent (20-of-73) from the field. Coach Bobby Cremins is clearly on the hot seat after the Yellow Jackets endured their second straight blowout loss at home.

"What's killing us right now is our shooting," he said. "I don't know if we're trying too hard or it's all the negative stuff around the program. We just need to put the ball in the basket."

Georgia Tech, once among the nation's elite programs, seems likely to miss the NCAA Tournament for the sixth time in seven years. Nevertheless, Cremins said he's not concerned about his job status.

"I live my life," he said. "All the crap on the outside is meaningless to me. I've just got to make sure I meet my respon-



UNC point guard Ed Cota did not start Saturday but still played 36 minutes and had six assists.

sibilities every day. It's a good story. The press is having a good time with it right now. That's fine. I just want to see us play some good basketball."

Despite having to make a 6 1/2-hour bus trip Friday when inclement weather prevented their flight to Atlanta, the Tar Heels looked like the rested team.

Georgia Tech, which was tied 28-28 at halftime, made only 9-of-41 (22 percent) field goals in the second half and finished with its worst shooting performance since a 24-percent effort against Kentucky on Dec. 19, 1998.

At least the Yellow Jackets scored more points than their previous game — a 60-46 loss to Wake Forest — but their shooting percentage for the year dipped to a miserable 40.8 percent.

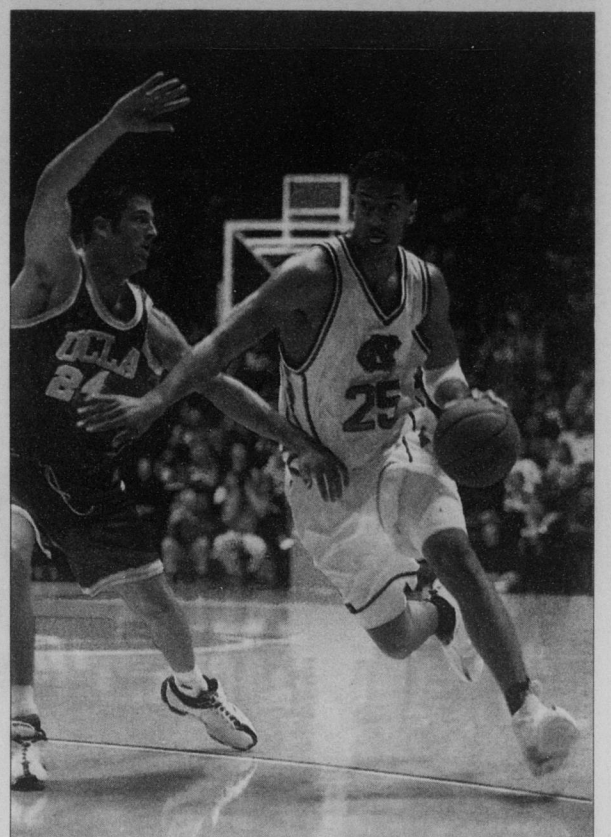
"In order to win, you've got to put the ball in the basket," Cremins said. "I don't know what it is."

Sophomore forward Jason Capel led the Tar Heels with 20 points, and freshman guard Joseph Forte added 15.

But it was Haywood who turned the tide.

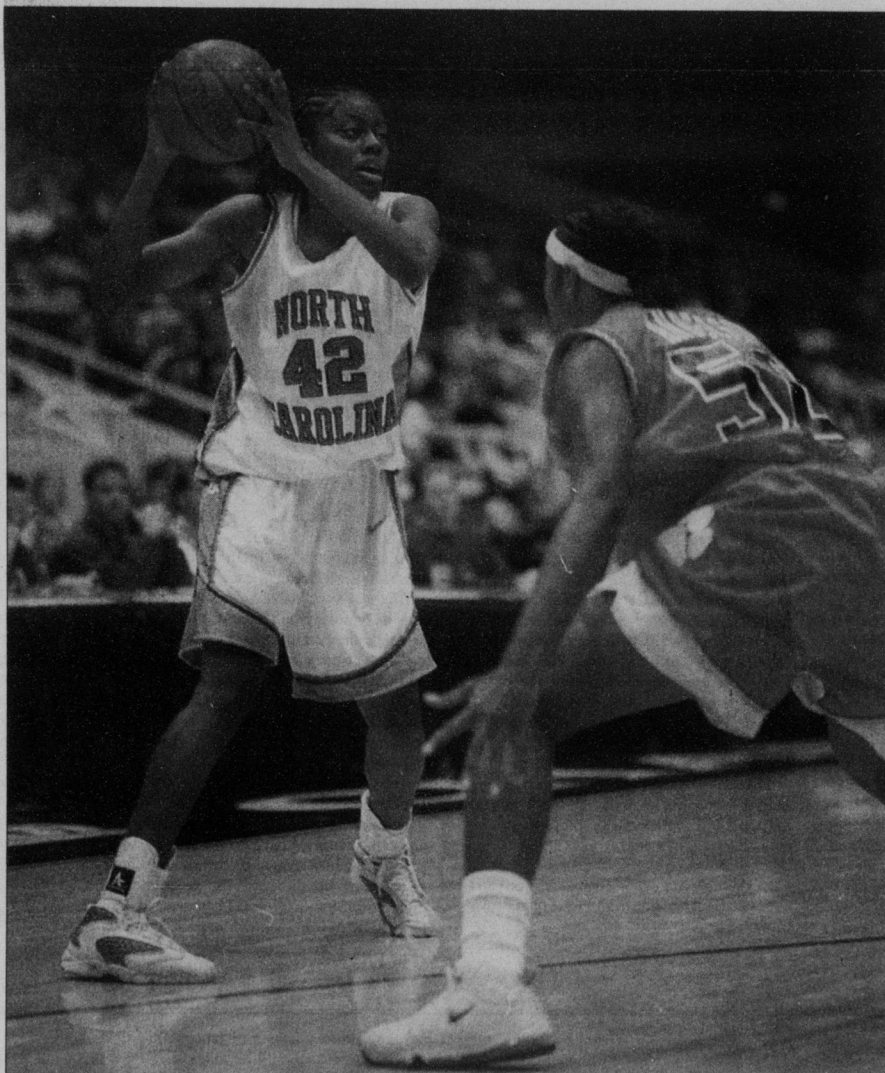
The 7-foot center picked up his third foul less than eight minutes into the game and spent the remainder of the first half on the bench. Haywood

See MEN'S BASKETBALL, Page 9



UNC forward Jason Capel, shown here against UCLA on Jan. 15, poured in a team-leading 20 points in the Tar Heels' win against Georgia Tech.

UNC Tops Terps in Teasley's Return



North Carolina point guard Nikki Teasley, shown here in last year's ACC Tournament, returned to the Tar Heel lineup Sunday after a seven-game hiatus. Teasley scored 11 points in the Tar Heels' victory against Maryland.

Hustle Helps Tar Heels Overcome Bad Shooting

By WILL KIMMEY
Assistant Sports Editor

The North Carolina women's basketball team is attempting to put its season back together piece by piece.

While UNC is still working on rectifying its shooting woes and regaining some confidence, it got a very important piece back Sunday. Junior point guard Nikki Teasley returned to the court for the first time in seven games.

Teasley and forward LaQuanda Barksdale proved to be the difference down the stretch Sunday against Maryland, combining for 21 points after intermission to rally the Tar Heels past the Terrapins.

Teasley's Return Keys UNC Rally Against Maryland. See Page 9

Barksdale finished with a team-high 18 points and grabbed nine rebounds.

UNC (11-9, 3-6 in the ACC) won despite shooting 34.8 percent from the field and committing 16 turnovers.

"It's nice to have a win," said UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell, whose team had lost seven of eight. "We're not satisfied at all because if we just shoot a good percentage, we play a really good game."

The same wasn't true for Maryland (12-8, 3-6). The Terrapins took a four-point lead into halftime and then shot nearly 53 percent in the second stanza.

Most of Maryland's problems were due to its ball-handling, or lack thereof. The Terps committed 18 second-half turnovers as they blew a nine-point lead.

As Maryland offered the rock up for grabs, the Tar Heels pounced on every

loose ball. The game's key moment came on one such play.

With 11:19 remaining, an errant Terp pass was swatted to the floor and a mad scramble for the ball ensued. At least three Tar Heel players had their hands on the ball before UNC came away with it.

"The players were diving on the floor and trying to go after it," Hatchell said. "I felt like after that we went to another level as far as the way we were playing and our confidence."

That type of hustle exemplified the Tar Heels' play. They dominated the boards, snagging 45 rebounds while holding the Terps to 27 (three offensive).

Juana Brown's hustle helped her atone for her poor shooting. With UNC trailing by two, Barksdale missed a pair of free throws, but Brown was there. She missed the putback but again grabbed the rebound.

The Tar Heels reset their offense, and Brown canned a 3-pointer from the left wing to give North Carolina the lead for good at 46-45.

UNC asserted itself defensively as well, holding Maryland to a dozen points during the game's final 13 minutes.

"For a while Maryland had it going — they were shooting pretty well, and we weren't getting defensive stops," Teasley said. "We tried to pick it up with our defense and get some easy scores. It just kind of carried over, and it was exciting."

The win was vindication for St. Louis. See SUPER BOWL, Page 7



UNC center Jackie Higgins ripped down a team-leading 11 rebounds and added 12 points.

Jones, Rams Hold on to Thwart Titan Comeback

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The St. Louis Rams rediscovered their offensive firepower just in time, and the Tennessee Titans came up just 1 yard short.

Super Bowl XXXIV
St. Louis23
Tennessee16

Kurt Warner's 73-yard touchdown pass to Isaac Bruce with 1 minute, 54 seconds

left gave the Rams their first Super Bowl win Sunday after they had blown a 16-0 lead in the final 19 minutes.

The TD capped an improbable season for St. Louis, which was 3-13 a year ago. The Rams went 13-3 in 1999 and scored 526 points, third best in NFL history.

But they struggled all the way, and Steve McNair and Eddie George almost



led Tennessee to another miracle finish.

On the game's final play with six seconds left, McNair's pass was caught by Kevin Dyson at the Rams 5. He scrambled for the end zone only to be stopped just short by Mike Jones, Dyson's outstretched arm holding the ball toward the goal line in vain.

Dyson was the hero in the miracle finish that beat Buffalo in the wild-card game, taking a lateral and going 75 yards for a touchdown on a kickoff

return with three seconds left.

The Rams dominated for much of the game but had to settle for three field goals to take a 9-0 lead before finally scoring a touchdown.

St. Louis seemed to have put the game away when Warner, the Super Bowl MVP, threw a 9-yard pass to Torry Holt with 3:59 left in the third quarter to take a 16-0 lead.

But suddenly the Titans' offense came to life and the St. Louis defense began to

wear down behind the battering of George and short passes from McNair.

Tennessee scored on its next two possessions, both on 1-yard runs by George to make it 16-13 with 7:21 left. It would have been 16-14, but the Titans chose to go for two points on their first TD and failed.

Then Al Del Greco's 43-yard field goal tied it with 2:12 left.

The win was vindication for St. Louis. See SUPER BOWL, Page 7