

UNC Looks for Better Luck Against 'Pack

N.C. State's Monica Bates made four 3-pointers in the Wolfpack's 79-72 win against the Tar Heels on Jan. 3.

By BRET STRELOW
Assistant Sports Editor

The North Carolina women's basketball team is entrenched in a game of Russian roulette.

As the Tar Heels develop a strategy to defend N.C. State, the smart money rests on stopping Wolfpack center Summer Erb, last year's ACC Player of the Year and this season's pick to repeat.

But therein lies the slim chance that such a plan could backfire and allow the Wolfpack's wing players to enjoy a field day from behind the arc.

Earlier this year, the bullet landed in the fatal chamber — the right hand of N.C. State junior Monica Bates.

Bates drilled 4-of-8 shots from behind the arc and finished with 19 points in the Wolfpack's 79-72 victory against the Tar Heels on Jan. 3.

Bates has hit 27 percent of her 3-point tries this season and averages 5.3 points a game.

In nine ACC games, she has made 7-of-28 attempts from beyond the arc and is scoring 4.7 points a contest.

"Last time, we did a pretty good job on Erb," UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell said. "It was the ones that normally don't score a whole lot, like Bates, that made the difference."

While the Wolfpack (16-4, 7-2 in the ACC) connected on 10-of-20 trifectas, Erb was held to 13 points.

She has since picked up her level of play, though. Erb scored 25 points in Monday's victory against Wake Forest and is averaging 21.4 points in N.C. State's last five games.



DTH-CARA BRICKMAN

N.C. State center Summer Erb, shown here against UNC last year, is averaging 15.4 points and 8.0 rebounds a game through 20 games.

The Tar Heels (11-9, 3-6) are worried about containing Erb, but the Wolfpack's outside shooting has somewhat altered their defensive strategy.

"We're going to try to front her, get in front of her, try to make sure she doesn't get the ball," said UNC forward LaQuanda Barksdale, who leads the ACC in scoring with 17.5 points a game.

and that left the 3-point shooters open."

The Tar Heels are working to make changes at the offensive end, too.

UNC is shooting 38.8 percent from the field, tied for last in the conference. Against ACC teams, the Tar Heels' percentage drops to 34.5.

Those numbers don't bode well for North Carolina. N.C. State owns a 15-2 record this year when it holds opponents to less than 45-percent shooting from the field.

Hatchell said junior point guard Nikki Teasley's return has given the Tar Heels a newfound confidence on the offensive end.

"They all know they're better players with Nikki because, first of all, the defense has got to play Nikki," Hatchell said. "They concentrate on Nikki a lot, which draws the defense away from them. Nikki's able to get them the basketball."

Teasley Dispels Rumors

There has been much speculation surrounding the leave of absence Teasley took before the team's Jan. 6 meeting with Virginia.

Wednesday after practice, Teasley sat down with reporters and dispelled some of the rumors that had been floating around.

"There's a lot of rumors going on about me possibly being pregnant, or sick, on drugs or something like that," Teasley said. "That's not the case at all. I'm perfectly fine."

Teasley also called any talk of a possible fight with Hatchell at practice "crazy."

She said that she wasn't ready to discuss the details of her absence yet but added that she would do so in the near future.

Hatchell said Teasley will not start against the Wolfpack.

Teasley played 31 minutes against Maryland, her first action since the loss to N.C. State.

Teasley struggled to an 0-for-5 shooting performance in the first half but finished the game with 11 points and five assists.

"In practice, she's getting better and starting to look like her old self," Hatchell said.

"She's not going to come back and play great right away. Hopefully a game like State will motivate her."

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

Coming Attractions

North Carolina football coach Carl Torbush announced the Tar Heels' signings Wednesday, National Letter of Intent Day. UNC signed 18 high school student-athletes for next season.

2000 UNC Football National Letter of Intent Signees

Name	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.	Hometown	High School
Jermicus Banks	6-5	235	DL	Raleigh	Millbrook
Justin Barton	6-6	290	OL	Voorhees, N.J.	Eastern Regional
Devlin Bullard	6-1	215	LB	Red Springs	Purnell-Swett
Jason Crawford	6-2	215	RB	Forestville, Md.	Parkdale
Darian Durant	6-1	215	QB	Florence, S.C.	Wilson
Blake Ferguson	6-0	170	P/PK	Broken Arrow, Okla.	Bixby
Clarence Gaddy	6-4	210	DL/LB	Bunn Level	Western Harnett
Madison Hedgecock	6-3	235	ATH	Kernersville	Ledford
Lawrence Jessup	6-6	230	DL	Miami, Fla.	Miami Country Day
Kitwana Jones	6-0	220	LB	Wilmington	Laney/Fork Union
Aaron Leak	6-3	215	QB	Durham	Riverside
JoVon Lewis	6-1	175	DB	Greensboro	Ragsdale
Bryant Macklin	6-0	195	DB	Elm City	Fike
Isaac Montgomery	6-5	285	DL	Princeton, W.Va.	Princeton Senior
Brandon Russell	5-11	185	RB	Atlanta, Ga.	Marist
Skip Seagraves	6-5	250	OL	Burlington	Williams
Jonas Seawright	6-6	290	DL	Orangeburg, S.C.	Orangeburg Wilkinson
Andre' Williams	6-0	215	RB	Durham	Northern

SOURCE: UNC SPORTS INFORMATION

Torbush Announces 2000 Recruiting Class

By MIKE OGLE
Assistant Sports Editor

Following a season of uncertainty at quarterback, North Carolina football coach Carl Torbush announced a 2000 recruiting class Wednesday that includes two QBs.

"I don't think there's any doubt that (signing quarterbacks) was the most important," Torbush said. "To not be able to sign one last year, as everybody saw, it about caught up with us."

Aaron Leak, a 6-foot-3, 215-pound USA Today All-America honorable-mention selection from Durham Riverside, threw for 1,593 yards and 23 touchdowns as a senior.

"He's got outstanding athletic skills," Torbush said. "He's a basketball player, baseball player. I don't believe he's even close to reaching his potential yet."

The Tar Heels also signed quarterback Darian Durant (6-1, 215 pounds) out of Florence, S.C. Despite missing six games last year with a broken leg, Durant set school records by throwing for 2,446 yards and 25 TDs. He also earned USA Today All-America honorable-mention honors.

With the losses of Brian Schmitz and Josh McGee, Torbush said newcomer

Blake Ferguson would have a quicker opportunity to play than the rest of his class. The Oklahoma native averaged 42 yards a punt last year and made field goals of 57 and 51 yards.

Torbush also said he was excited about a pair of defensive linemen: Isaac Montgomery (6-5, 285) and Jonas Seawright (6-6, 290).

Another area of question for UNC has been at running back. With a surprise announcement Wednesday morning from Forestville, Md., native Jason Crawford (6-2, 215), the Tar Heels will bring in three new runners next year.

Crawford joins USA Today All-America honorable-mention picks Andre' Williams (6-0, 215) of Durham and Brandon Russell (5-11, 185) of Atlanta.

"I like athletes. That's one thing I like about most of these guys," Torbush said. "If you look down the list, probably two-thirds of them are basketball players and also either run track or play baseball."

"Quite honestly, I'd rather have that than a pure football player who's already been lifting weights for four or five years and is probably just about maxed out."

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

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