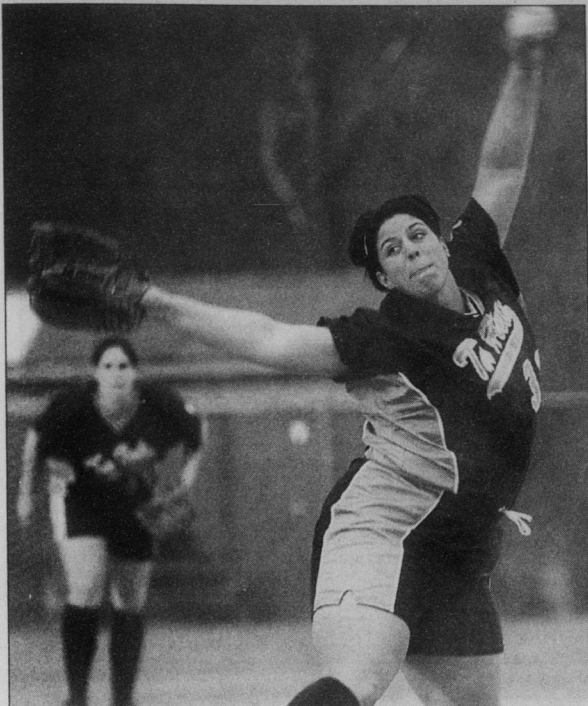


Tar Heels Tame Fightin' Christians in Double Dip



DTH/MEREDITH LEE

North Carolina pitcher Erin Joseph tossed a complete-game shutout, limiting Elon to one hit as the Tar Heels completed their sweep.

The UNC softball team held Elon to no runs and three hits as it opened its season with a doubleheader sweep.

By BRAD BROTHERS
Staff Writer

Season openers provide a fresh outlook and clean slate as teams begin the annual grind on their respective battlefields.

Start the season off strong, and confidence is built for the future.

North Carolina's softball team can certainly attest.

Unleashing near perfection on both the offensive and defensive sides of the diamond, the Tar Heels wrapped up a doubleheader sweep of Elon on Thursday with relative ease, routing the Fightin' Christians 9-0 and 8-0 at Finley Field.

Strong pitching efforts, a staple of last season, set the tone early in both games. Radara McHugh, UNC's ace a year ago, put her arm strength on display once again, striking out nine and allowing two hits in the 9-0 opening-game triumph.

Erin Joseph, while not matching McHugh's stats K for K in the second

game, certainly did her share of holding the Elon lineup in check. The junior south-paw allowed one hit and fanned two to complete the sweep.

"Our pitchers, both Radara and Erin, I thought pitched very good games," UNC coach Donna Papa said.

While UNC's pitchers did their share of damage to the Fightin' Christians (0-2), it was the Tar Heel offense that deserved a large piece of the credit.



UNC softball coach Donna Papa said she was pleased with her team's aggressiveness at the plate against Elon.

Mixing clutch hits and aggressiveness on the basepaths, North Carolina recorded three runs in the first inning and five more in the second. Third baseman Kelly Ramsey led the cause, knocking home four runs via two singles in the first two innings.

After the two-inning onslaught, the Tar Heels comfortably cruised to the opening-game victory.

"We went out very aggressively from the time of the first pitch. We scored three runs and never looked back and kept going," Papa said. "We wanted our batters to be aggressive, we wanted to take control of the plate, and our players did."

North Carolina continued to amass runs in game two of the twinbill, only in different innings.

Unlike the first game, in which the Tar Heels swarmed the basepaths early,

UNC instead wore down Elon in the late innings.

With UNC up 4-0 in the fifth inning, Natalie Anter, last season's home run leader, came close to beginning the new campaign with a roundtripper. Instead, her rocket shot caromed off the right-center field fence, scoring Michelle Semmes and Jen Klesaris to extend the advantage.

Kelly Ramsey then rifled a two-run triple to make the score 8-0, giving North Carolina the victory and sweep of the helpless Fightin' Christians.

"I think we played really well today; we can always improve, but it's early," Semmes said. "But I think we are going to get better."

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

Softball	
Elon0
UNC9
Elon0
UNC8

romance

passion

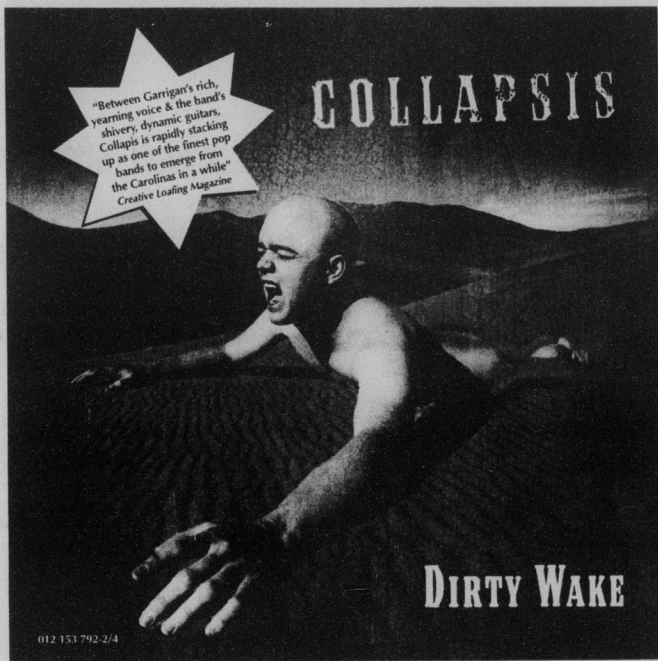
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