

SPORTS MONDAY

Monday, February 14, 2000

The Daily Tar Heel

Grapplers Split Matches At Home

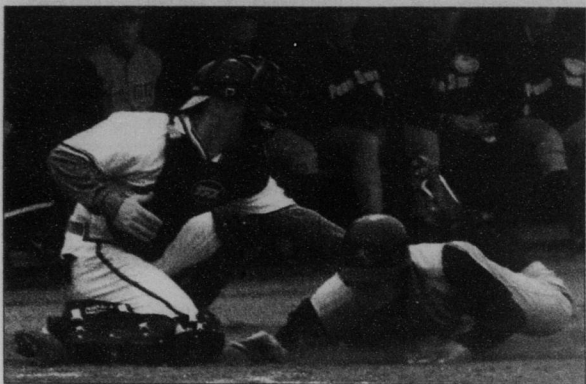


North Carolina junior Corey Bell (left) won his match Sunday, but the Tar Heels lost to Ohio at Carmichael Auditorium. UNC defeated Navy on Saturday. See Page 10.

INSIDE:

- Men's tennis beats Purdue, loses to Texas. Page 11
- UNC gymnasts lose to Alabama. Page 11
- Track and field competes at Virginia Tech. Page 11

16



North Carolina catcher Adam Shearin tags out Penn State's Michael Campo at the plate in the seventh inning of UNC's 21-10 victory Sunday.

Baseball Sweeps Wild Double Dip

By WILL KIMMEY
Assistant Sports Editor

February baseball is a weird concept in and of itself.

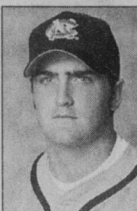
It comes complete with cold weather and because it's early in the season, games tend to be a bit sloppy.

But things got even stranger Sunday when North Carolina and Penn State got together for a doubleheader.

Baseball	
Penn State	10
UNC	21
Penn State	2
UNC	3

The Tar Heels (6-0) won both games, but in very different fashions.

UNC posted eight first-inning runs to pound out a 21-10 win in the opener. The second tilt was scoreless for nine innings before the Tar Heels pulled out a 3-2 come-from-behind victory in the 10th.



UNC first baseman Ryan Earey tallied a career-high seven RBI in the first game against Penn State.

"That shows you the uniqueness of this game," UNC coach Mike Fox said. "I was sitting there thinking, 'What two different, contrasting games.'"

While the first game was basically over after the first inning, the nightcap came down to the final at bat.

Penn State (0-2) drew first blood in the top of the 10th, notching two runs — one unearned — off UNC closer Derrick DePriest. "It happens — he's not perfect," said infielder Chad Prosser, whose throwing error allowed one of the runs to score. "You've just got to keep playing."

And UNC did just that, staging a one-out rally in the bottom of the frame.

Catcher Dan Moylan chopped a ball up the middle that PSU shortstop John Richmond couldn't handle. Two runs crossed the plate to tie the score. Two batters later, first baseman Ryan Earey stepped to the plate with the bases loaded in the midst of an 0-for-4 game.

Earey missed the first two pitches, taking huge swings. "I was just trying to put it in the air so the guy on third could score," he said.

PSU hurler Shawn Fagan tried to get the next pitch in on Earey, but it sailed a bit too tight and hit Earey in the arm.

See BASEBALL, Page 10

Tar Heels Show Balance, Beat Down Deacs

The North Carolina men's basketball team shot 65.4 percent in the second half to roll past Wake Forest on Saturday afternoon.

By T. NOLAN HAYES
Sports Editor

Ed Cota has said it all season long: North Carolina can score on anybody.

So when the Tar Heels went scoreless for the final 5:35 of the first half against Wake Forest on Saturday, they must have spent halftime trying to figure out what went wrong offensively, right?

Nope. Showing their desire to be known as a team that can do more than just score, the Tar Heels instead focused on improving their defensive effort.

"We just talked about our defense mainly," Cota said. "We gave them a lot of transition baskets, and they hit a lot of outside shots on us. In the second half we just wanted to take that away from them."

The result was that UNC forced the Demon Deacons to shoot 29.7 percent in the second half, including an 0-for-7 effort on 3-point attempts.

And offensively? The Tar Heels put up 54 points after halftime to complete one of their most balanced efforts of the season and pull away for an 87-64 victory before a sellout crowd at the Smith Center.

"I think we played well today, but I'm not sure it was our best overall performance," said UNC forward Jason Capel, whose 12 points and 13 rebounds made him one of three Tar Heels with double-doubles. "We played good defense, rebounded and then converted on the other end."

Converting, usually a given in UNC's efficient halfcourt offense, was a major problem for one-fourth of the game. The Tar Heels (16-9, 7-4 in the ACC) put just four points on the board during a 9:40 span that comprised the fruitless final 5:35 of the first half and the opening four minutes of the second.

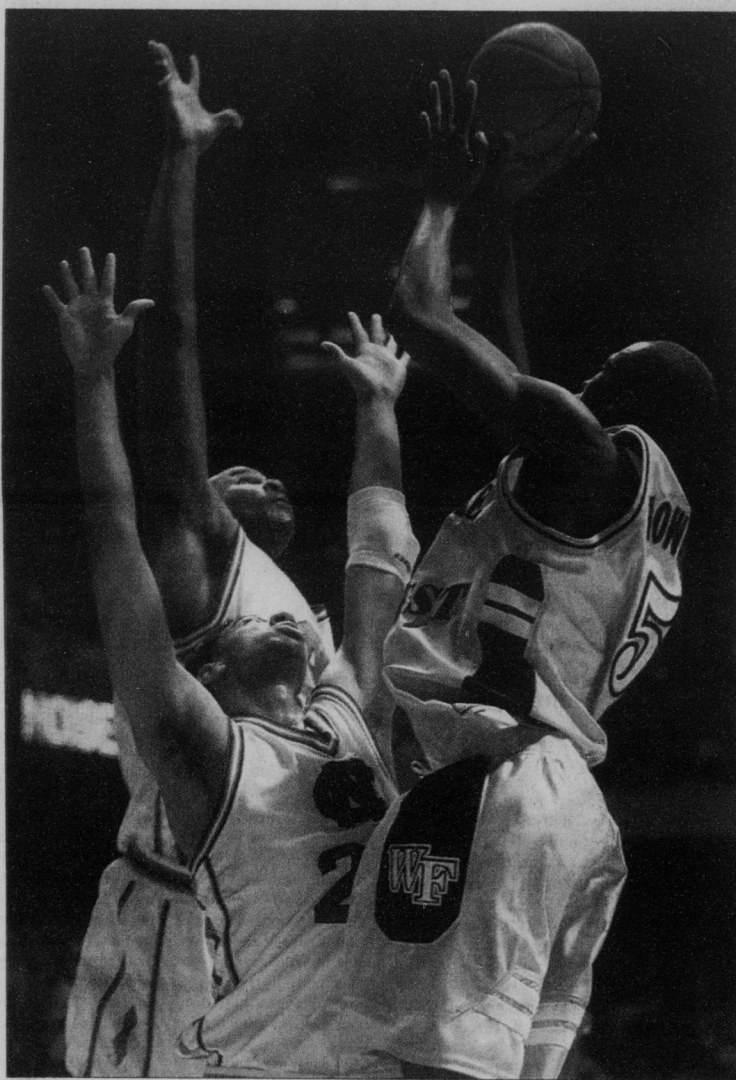
The drought opened the door for Wake Forest, which trailed 33-24 before UNC's dry spell. The Demon Deacons (13-11, 4-7) closed the first half on an 8-0 run and forged ahead 41-37 on a jumper by Josh Shoemaker with 16:05 remaining in the game.

Then the rains came — a slight drizzle followed by an outright downpour that resulted in 65.4-percent shooting in the second half for UNC. The Tar Heels scored on 21 of their next 26 possessions — a pace cold-shooting Wake Forest could not match — to blow the game open.

"At some point we didn't hit that many shots, and they hit almost every single shot they took," Wake Forest center Rafael Vidaurreta said. "We lost confidence, then the crowd got into it, and it was just like showtime for them."

See MEN'S BASKETBALL, Page 13

Men's Basketball	
Wake Forest	64
UNC	87



Wake Forest forward Josh Howard attempts a shot over UNC's Jason Capel (front) and Brendan Haywood. The Tar Heels held the Demon Deacons to 36.2-percent shooting Saturday.

Streaking Tar Heels Turn Naysayers Into Believers

By BRIAN MURPHY
Senior Writer

Suddenly, the critics have vanished. Just three weeks after fans and media had begun to write off North Carolina's men's basketball team, the Tar Heels are playing their best ball of the season.

Gone are the naysayers. Here come the yeasayers.

"We've always been a good basketball team — it's just taken time for us to come together. When you have so many pieces, it takes time for everybody to bond together and learn how to play together," UNC forward Jason Capel said.

"I think now we've learned how to do that. We have a lot of confidence and most importantly, we're having fun."

It's easy to enjoy yourself when you're scoring on seemingly every possession. It's easy to have fun when five players score in double figures and three record double-doubles. And it's easy to have a good time when the Blue team plays the final minutes of a blowout win.

The Tar Heels enjoyed all that in Saturday's 87-64 win against Wake Forest. The Tar Heels, the only team in the country that starts five McDonald's All-Americans, have finally figured out how to use all of their weapons.

It begins in the middle with center Brendan Haywood. Much was expected of the junior when the season started, and now he is delivering. He put Wake in early foul trouble and opened up the outside for UNC's shooters.

"The thing that makes it really hard right now for other teams is Haywood is playing at a level that, unfairly I think, was expected of him to do from the outset," Wake coach Dave Odom said.

Haywood's dominance (20 points, 10 rebounds) in the paint forced Odom to abandon his strategy of defending him straight up and forced Wake to bring

other defenders to collapse.

The move freed UNC's wing players — Capel, Joseph Forte and Max Owens — for jumpers. Capel delivered 12 points and 13 boards. Forte rebounded from his dismal 1-for-10 performance against the Deacs in Winston-Salem to score a game-high 24.

And Owens, who is adjusting well to his reserve role, chipped in 10 points. "When they're as big as they are inside and as talented and as knowledgeable about spacing on the court offensively as they are, they make you guard them at every position," Odom said.

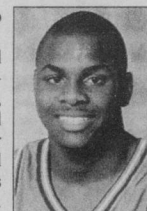
With Ed Cota, whom Odom called "the most creative college passing point guard in my memory," as the catalyst, UNC's offensive juggernaut takes off.

"Ed Cota had another Ed Cota game," said UNC coach Bill Guthridge of Cota's 10-point, 13-assist performance. "He just ran the club — no one could do any better."

But can the Tar Heels get better? Are they — like the 1997 squad that reached the Final Four after losing its first three ACC games — peaking at the right time? Or is UNC just toying with the fans, who expected so much after the season-opening dominance at the Maui Invitational?

Odom said it's the former. "How good are they right now?" he asked himself. "They're good enough to make a run at the championship."

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



UNC junior center Brendan Haywood tallied 20 points and 10 rebounds in 36 minutes against Wake Forest.

Hot-Shooting UNC Routs Georgia Tech

The UNC women's basketball team hit 18-of-26 first-half shots to race out to a 47-25 lead at halftime Sunday.

By MIKE OGLE
Assistant Sports Editor

All Georgia Tech women's basketball coach Agnus Berenato could have done to stop North Carolina in the first half on Sunday was call the fire department. The Tar Heels were burning down the net.

UNC notched 10 points before the Yellow Jackets could get a single shot to drop and jumped out to a 25-6 advantage. The Tar Heels (13-11, 5-8 in the ACC) went on to an 85-62 win in Carmichael Auditorium after withstanding a second-half Tech backdraft.

UNC shot just 31.9 percent from the floor in its loss at Clemson on Thursday but scorched the Jackets (12-10, 5-7) early, hitting a blistering 69.2 percent of its first-half attempts. The Tar Heels finished with a season-high 56.9 field goal percentage.

Women's Basketball	
Georgia Tech	62
UNC	85

"They really came out firing," Berenato said. "They literally were stroking it. They were feeling it."

Everything was working for the Tar Heels. With 11:03 remaining in the first half, point guard Nikki Teasley pulled up at the right elbow for a jumper that at first looked to have little hope of going in. But Teasley's shot took two bounces off the rim and one off the glass before falling through for two of her 11 points.

The bucket came on Georgia Tech's first man-to-man defensive set, which it switched to because of the match-up zone's lack of success.

Teasley thrived against both defenses, helping her teammates spread the heat by getting them the ball at opportune times. She handed out a season-high 12 assists on the afternoon with no turnovers.

"It makes me happy to see that I can

See WOMEN'S BASKETBALL, Page 13



UNC junior guard Leah Sharp scored nine points on 3-of-5 shooting from behind the 3-point stripe.

Barksdale Ends Offensive Woes With Stellar Half Against Tech

By JAMES GIZA
Staff Writer

For most of the first half of her team's win Sunday against Georgia Tech, North Carolina forward LaQuanda Barksdale had to watch while her teammates scored at will on the stingless Yellow Jackets.

Barksdale, the ACC's top scorer and rebounder, had struggled from the field in the Tar Heels' last two games against Clemson and Virginia. Sunday's game was beginning to look like no exception.

But Barksdale couldn't resist joining in on the fun.

Thirteen of her game-high 20 points came after intermission, and Barksdale proved pivotal in deflating Tech's fruitless attempt at a comeback.

"Second half, we just didn't do a good job on Barksdale, but she's a very nice player, and I guess you just have to pick your poison," Yellow Jackets coach Agnus Berenato said. "They were shoot-

ing the 3s rather well in the first half, so we tended to go ahead and say, 'OK let's go ahead and get out on the 3s' and Barksdale stepped up for them."

Barksdale was all over the place in the second stanza. She stroked a jumper from the top of the key just inside the 3-point line 18 seconds after play resumed, igniting her second-half surge.

After Georgia Tech's Alex Stewart netted two free throws with 4:03 left, the Yellow Jackets had whittled the Tar Heel lead, which was once as high as 30, down to 14. But Barksdale had the

See BARKSDALE, Page 13



UNC junior forward LaQuanda Barksdale recorded team bests with her 20 points and eight rebounds.



UNC point guard Nikki Teasley scored 11 points and dished out a season-high 12 assists in Sunday's 85-62 win against Georgia Tech.