

Freshmen Make Solid Contributions in Victories



Freshman infielder Chad Prosser went 3-for-4 with a double in game one of North Carolina's doubleheader sweep of Penn State on Sunday.

DTH/JEFF FOULAND

By JOE DISNEY
Staff Writer

In collegiate athletics, seniors are a valued commodity. Expected to lead and carry the load of the team, they are essential to a good season.

But when freshmen prove that they, too, can produce, that's invaluable.

Fortunately for Coach Mike Fox's North Carolina baseball team, ranked ninth in the nation by Collegiate Baseball, the losses of four key contributors from 1999 have been offset by solid freshman performances so far this season.

Sunday's doubleheader against Penn State was just another example.

"So far, they've played well," Fox said. "We were pleased last year with our recruiting class. We knew that we would need these young guys to step into roles."

In UNC's two victories (21-10 in the opener and 3-2 in the nightcap), several Tar Heel freshmen made contributions.

Down 2-0 to the Nittany Lions in the

bottom of the 10th inning of the second game, freshmen Sean Farrell and Russ Adams sparked a rally that led to the 3-2 UNC victory.

Both freshmen were called off the bench in a game that they were not expected to play. Farrell entered the game as a pinch runner in the eighth and began the extra-inning rally with a single to right.

Adams followed with a pinch-hit blast to the left-field wall that landed him at second base and Farrell at third.

The two scored when PSU shortstop John Richmond misplayed a grounder by UNC's Dan Moylan.

"It was just great," Tar Heel reliever Derrick DePriest said. "Those two freshmen, Sean Farrell and Russ Adams, they just came through big time. If Sean does-



Freshman infielder Russ Adams delivered a pinch-hit double in the 10th inning of UNC's 3-2 victory in game two.

n't get that hit, we probably don't win the game."

The nail-biting second game showed freshmen coming through in tough situations. The blowout in the opening game of the doubleheader allowed several other freshmen to make their Tar Heel debuts.

"The best way to find out if they are ready is to put them out there against good competition," Fox said. "So far, they have been poised."

Redshirt freshman pitcher Matt Tanner logged his first two innings for UNC in relief of starter Eric Henderson. Tanner, a native of State College, Pa., gave up five hits and four runs, but also struck out four Nittany Lions. The Tar Heel coaching staff will look to Tanner to fill in as the fifth starter.

"Matt worked very hard last year, and he's ready to step out and pitch," Fox said. "I thought he did a nice job."

Tanner's battery mate and fellow red-shirt freshman Adam Shearin made his first collegiate at bat count, getting a single against PSU's Jason McIntyre in the seventh inning.

Although he wasn't making his debut, freshman infielder Chad Prosser posted big numbers in the 21-10 victory, going 3-for-4 with two runs scored and an RBI.

"It's a good luxury to be able to move the infield around," Fox said. "Prosser can play shortstop or second base."

Probably the biggest freshman surprise, center fielder Adam Greenberg, didn't even play on Sunday. Greenberg, who sat the game out with a sore hamstring, has posted team-leading numbers. He is batting .500 through four games with seven hits, including a double and a triple, four stolen bases and no errors.

Greenberg's play is essential following the loss of second team All-ACC center fielder Jarrett Shearin.

"The freshmen stepped up," said Adam Shearin, Jarrett's younger brother. "Coach Fox plays freshmen because they can play. He has confidence in them, and they produce."

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Forte Plays Beyond His Years

Rookie guard Joseph Forte is averaging 16.0 points a game through 25 contests to lead UNC in scoring.

By BRIAN MURPHY
Senior Writer

Joseph Forte is still introduced by the Smith Center announcer as a 6-foot-4 freshman from Greenbelt, Md.

He still has to carry the team's bags on road trips, a traditional duty for North Carolina freshmen.

But in the eyes of his teammates, Forte is no longer a rookie.

"He's not a freshman anymore to me," said senior point guard Ed Cota, a graybeard on the current Tar Heel squad. "Right now, I call him a veteran. He still has some things to learn, but he's coming along very quick."

Forte's 24-point performance against Wake Forest on Saturday was just the latest indication of how far he has progressed. The sweet shooter knocked in 9-of-14 shots, including a sniper-like 6-of-8 from 3-point range.

The contest was vindication for Forte's poorest performance of the year, a 1-for-10 shooting, eight-point outing

against the Demon Deacons in Winston-Salem.

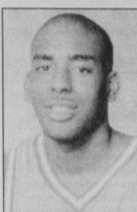
"I just reflected back. They were praising themselves about how good defensive players they were, and I kind of took that seriously," Forte said.

"I wanted to make sure that I came out and played well."

The contest, combined with his 16-point, five-rebound game against N.C. State on Wednesday, earned Forte the Rookie of the Week honors from the ACC.

Since his season-opening MVP performance at the Maui Invitational, it has been clear that Forte, an All-American at DeMatha Catholic High School, is not a typical freshman.

He led the team in scoring in his first game, exploding for 24 against Southern California. He scored 27 against Virginia. And against Duke - in his first contest with the hated Blue Devils - it was Forte who drained the game-tying 3-pointer, sending the contest into overtime.



Senior point guard Ed Cota said Joseph Forte plays like a seasoned veteran despite his freshman status.

Forte, averaging a team-best 16.0 points per game, is on pace to become the first freshman in Tar Heel history to lead his team in scoring. Only Phil Ford, at 16.4 points per contest, averaged more as a UNC newcomer.

Given all his accomplishments, it's no wonder his teammates have such high praise.

"He's the best shooter on the team," Cota said. "Once he gets going, he can score at will, so he's dangerous once he hits a couple of shots."

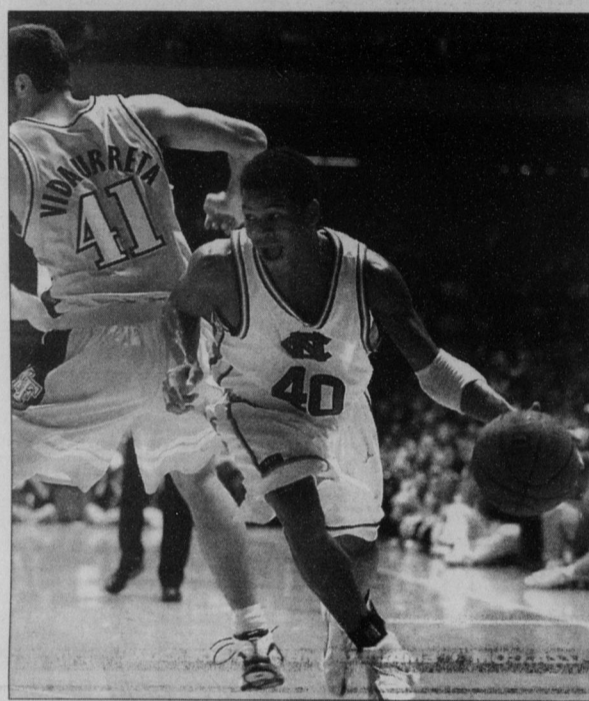
But that doesn't mean Forte is immune to rookie mistakes. It's the way he responds that make him special. Against the Deacs, North Carolina coach Bill Guthridge sat down the youngster after a reckless pass became a turnover.

Forte, after sitting just less than four minutes, returned to the game and drained treys on consecutive possessions. The second gave UNC a 46-45 lead and helped the Tar Heels begin to pull away.

"They were making a little run and were hanging with us," Forte said. "Those 3s took a little of the energy out of them."

Spoken like a true veteran.

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DTH/MILLER PEARSALL

Freshman Joseph Forte was named ACC Rookie of the Week after averaging 20.0 points and 4.5 rebounds in UNC's two wins last week. Forte has started in 24 out of North Carolina's 25 games this season.

UNC's Teasley Earns Weekly ACC Award

UNC women's basketball point guard Nikki Teasley averaged 17.7 points and 6.0 assists a game last week.

Junior point guard Nikki Teasley was named ACC women's basketball player of the week Monday after averaging 17.7 points and 6.0 assists in three games last week.

On Feb. 7, Teasley led the Tar Heels with 24 points in a 66-63 overtime win against Virginia at home.

She scored 18 points in the second half, including UNC's final 10 in regulation.

Her two free throws with 25 seconds left in regulation tied the score at 57 and sent the game into overtime.

On Feb. 10, Teasley scored 18 points, including two 3-pointers in the final 12 seconds of play, in the Tar Heels' 69-65 loss at Clemson.

On Feb. 13, Teasley scored 11 points and dished out a season-high 12 assists as UNC beat visiting Georgia Tech 85-62.

From Staff Reports



UNC point guard Nikki Teasley scored 24 points in a 66-63 overtime win against Virginia on Feb. 7.

Young Arms Provide Answers for Tar Heel Pitching Staff

Freshman pitchers Michael Parrott and Stacy Fox gave the Tar Heels pitching depth against Radford on Sunday.

By BRAD BRODERS
Staff Writer

What a difference a year makes. A season ago, the North Carolina softball pitching staff, plagued by injury and instability, was often a question mark.

Sunday against Radford, however, the Tar Heels displayed how a little depth can help propel a team to success as UNC swept the hapless Highlanders by scores of 9-1 and 6-3, respectively.

Last season, the Tar Heels had to rely heavily on the arm of junior righty Radara McHugh as expected starter Erin Joseph spent most of the campaign banged up with various ailments.

This season, Joseph has returned to near-full strength. Along with McHugh's experience, the Tar Heels now have two freshmen, Michael Parrott and Stacy Fox, entering the mix.

Parrott entered her career in Tar Heel

blue with high endorsement.

Coach Donna Papa recently said that Parrott has the potential to become one of the best pitchers in UNC history.

Parrott did little to defy Papa's praise against Radford, pitching a solid game in her collegiate debut.

The Houston native struck out six batters and yielded one hit before being replaced by Joseph in the top of the fifth inning with UNC holding a 4-1 lead.

"I just now have a job because I'm a freshman," Parrott said. "I just want to come in and show that I can be an impact on this team."

The Tar Heels knocked home five runs in the decisive fifth inning, prevailing 9-1 in the opener. And Joseph shut the door on the Highlanders, giving up no hits or runs in her two innings of relief.



UNC junior pitcher Radara McHugh allowed two earned runs and struck out five batters in the second game Sunday.

The second game of the twinbill proved more of the same for North Carolina.

McHugh, game two's starter, shook off spotty second and fifth innings but stayed focused. She withstood a late Highlander rally and finished with five strikeouts, allowing two earned runs.

Fox, the other half of the freshman pitching unit, entered in the top of the sixth.

In her only inning of action, Fox drew three groundouts to finish the deal against Radford to complete the 6-1 victory and doubleheader sweep.

Solid starting and relief pitching, a valuable commodity for any team, provides UNC not only with depth but competition as well.

"I think the pitchers have a healthy competition, no backbiting," Papa said. "All of our pitchers complement each

other with their styles."

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