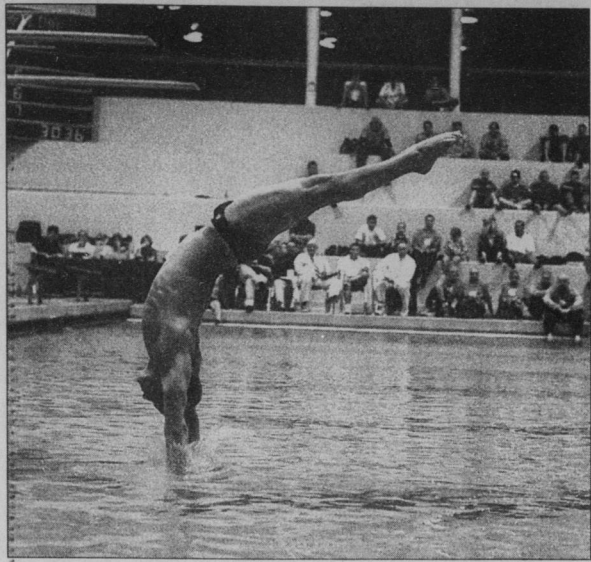


Strong Effort Lands Men's Swimming in 2nd Place



DTH/KATE MELLNIK

North Carolina freshman Stephen Krebs finished fifth in the one-meter diving event with a score of 434.65 in Thursday's ACC Championships.

By IAN GORDON
Staff Writer

On the first day of the ACC Men's Swimming and Diving Championships, 17 of the 20 North Carolina swimmers who competed scored career-best times. Unfortunately for the Tar Heels, Virginia didn't do too poorly itself.

Ninth-ranked UVA. raced to an early lead in its pursuit of a second-straight conference title, breaking two ACC meet records in the process. The Cavaliers finished the night with 242 points, while No. 21 North Carolina tallied 201.5 points.

"Even if we came in last, how could I be upset with our performance?" UNC coach Frank Comfort said.

No. 22 Florida State is third with 162 points, while No. 23 N.C. State ended the night fourth with 151.

The Cavaliers started their charge for the lead at the first individual event of the night, the 500-yard freestyle. In the race's championship heat, Virginia swimmers filled half of the eight lanes.

UVA's Austin Ramirez, who had won the event at the past three ACC Championships, swam in lane four. He

wasted no time in winning his fourth straight, clocking in with a time of 4:18.61, a new conference meet record.

UNC's Brad Kline finished second at 4:23.61, while UVA's Jamie Grimes touched third.

In the next event, the 200-yard individual medley, the Cavalier tandem of Chris Moussetis and Doak Finch placed ahead of UNC's Chris Helin, who came in third.

Trailing by 48 points before the 50-



UNC senior Christian Zuburg earned a score of 481.90 to place third in the one-meter diving event.

yard freestyle, the Tar Heels needed a big performance from sophomore sprinter Kevin Erndl.

Erndl led the race at the 25-yard turn, but was touched-out by N.C. State's Greg Solt and ended in a dead heat for second with Clemson's Will Rogers.

"It's got to be second nature to hit everything right," Erndl said. "I didn't hold my turn a little bit, but I'm not one to search for excuses."

Then, in the sole diving event of the night, the one-meter, UNC's Christian Zuburg and Stephen Krebs placed third and fifth, further closing the gap between the Tar Heels and the Cavaliers.

"It was a big boost," Zuburg said. "Diving has been sort of a sore spot for the last couple of years. (My teammates) were really happy to see Stephen and

myself do well."

In the final event of the night, though, UVA. showed why it has many believing it will win its third conference title.

The Cavaliers' 400-yard medley relay team of Finch, Troy Johnson, Ed Moses and Moussetis turned in an ACC meet record time of 3:11.60, finishing nearly four seconds ahead of second place Maryland. UNC's entry into the race placed fifth.

Despite their 40.5-point deficit, the Tar Heels are looking forward to Friday.

"We've got some big, big swims and a lot of big swimmers in those races," Erndl said. "We'll try to fill in the gaps with our big races and see how things unfold."

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

Panthers Sign UNC Alum

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE — The Carolina Panthers added depth to their secondary Thursday by signing cornerback Jimmy Hitchcock, an unrestricted free agent from the Minnesota Vikings.

Hitchcock, a fifth-year pro from North Carolina, had seven interceptions in 1998 and two last season.

He will challenge Eric Davis and Doug Evans, Carolina's starting cornerbacks, coach George Seifert said. Carolina was ranked 23rd in the NFL in pass defense last year.

"Jimmy Hitchcock has been an effective player in the NFL for the last five years," Seifert said, "and we look forward to him being a part of our secondary and adding to what should be a very competitive situation."

Hitchcock said the contract was a four-year deal, but he, his agent and the Panthers declined to reveal the financial terms.

Hitchcock, a third-round pick by

New England in 1995, was traded to the Vikings in 1998. He has started the last 47 regular-season games and has 278 tackles, 13 interceptions and four touchdowns as a pro.

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CHOOSE
Next DTH Editor
The Daily Tar Heel is seeking students to serve on the panel that will choose the editor of the DTH for the 2000-2001 school year.
Applications for the seven at-large positions on the DTH Editor Selection Board are available at the DTH Office, the Carolina Union info desk kiosk.
Applicants must be available for an orientation meeting from 5-6pm Wednesday, April 5 and from approximately 8:30am-4pm Saturday, April 8 to conduct interviews and make the selection.
All students may apply for at-large positions except current DTH news staff members. If you have any questions about the process, please contact Rob Nelson (962-4086, melson@email.unc.edu) or Janet Gallagher-Cassel (962-0520, jgcassel@email.unc.edu).

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