

SPORTS MONDAY

Monday, March 20, 2000

The Daily Tar Heel

Women's Basketball Battles Rice Tonight For Trip to Sweet 16



LaQuanda Barksdale and the Tar Heels take on the Owls in Santa Barbara, Calif., at midnight. Thirteenth-seeded Rice ousted No. 4 UC-Santa Barbara 67-64. The game will be televised by ESPN. Due to the late start, the results will appear in The Daily Tar Heel on Wednesday.

12



BRIAN MURPHY PLAYER TO BE NAMED LATER

UNC Enjoying New Underdog Role in NCAAs

These are unfamiliar times for North Carolina. A damaged national reputation. A No. 8 seed. Lucky to be in the tournament.

But after beating Missouri and top-seeded Stanford, the Tar Heels are beginning to like their underdog role.

"If people are counting us out, that's when we're the most dangerous," center Brendan Haywood said before the Tar Heels dropped Stanford.

UNC is definitely dangerous.

For much of the season, the mighty Tar Heels have looked downright ordinary. Highly touted during the pre-season, UNC struggled to finish tied for third in the ACC.

But something magical has happened since Wake Forest bounced the Tar Heels in the first round of the ACC Tournament.

The team adopted an Us vs. The World mentality.

"Everyone's been criticized from the coaches on down to the managers," Jason Capel said.

So they're playing for each other, with more emotion and a greater sense of purpose. The team is looser, having more fun and diving around the gym like little kids.

They're believing in themselves and taking a cue from their maligned coach.

After all, the same things The World was saying about the team, it was saying about the coach.

Lucky to be here. On his way out. Where's Roy Williams?

And even though at 62 years old, Bill Guthridge is old enough to be the grandfather of some of his players, he's connected with his team. Normally docile and mild mannered, he's showing more emotion and being more active on the sidelines.

He even disrupted the Carolina Way by mixing up practice. He changed the order of the drills, added some and dropped others.

Little things, he calls them. Little things that have meant a lot to his players. Little things that have the Tar Heels playing and thinking like world beaters.

"Everyone says this is an upset, but we knew coming in we were capable of coming in here and winning two games," senior point guard Ed Cota said.

And suddenly the cheers are louder than the boos. The calls for Guthridge's head have subsided, for now. And with the top three seeds gone from the South region, North Carolina suddenly looks very dangerous.

But the Tar Heels aren't paying any attention. They still feel like the underdog, still feel like they have something to prove.

"When we left, the papers said, 'Pack light,'" Capel said. "Well, we didn't, and we're packing again."

Packing for Texas and the Sweet 16. And UNC's not done yet. The World isn't convinced.

"We haven't done what we wanted to do, yet," Julius Peppers said. "When that happens, we'll do some talking."

"That's the fun of being an underdog; no one expects you to win, and when you do it's great."

The Tar Heels should know.

Brian Murphy can be reached at bmurphy@email.unc.edu.

Tar Heel Freshmen Flourish in Victory

By T. NOLAN HAYES
Sports Editor

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. - Nikki Teasley didn't like what she was seeing.

The scoreboard at the Thunderdome showed that North Carolina was trailing Maine 24-20 at halftime in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

But that wasn't all that irked UNC's point guard. Teasley saw her freshman teammates not playing as well as they could, not competing as fiercely as the Tar Heels needed them to.

So she spoke up at halftime before the coaches arrived in the locker room.

"I just basically told them, 'It's tournament time,'" Teasley said. "You've got to step up and take the pressure; it's not time to back down now."

The message was received. Loud and clear. Coretta Brown, Cherie Lea and Jennifer Thomas put aside the range of emotions they were feeling in their first NCAA Tournament game and played key roles as the Tar Heels rallied past the Black Bears in the second half.

The three players, who combined for no points, no assists and one rebound in the first half, registered nine points, six assists and six boards after the break.

Brown - following Teasley's lead -

began penetrating Maine's 2-3 zone to find open teammates. She even tossed in a floater of her own, cutting the Black Bears' lead to 37-30 with 14:47 remaining.

Brown said that in addition to Teasley's challenge, individual meetings that each player had with the coaches before the ACC Tournament helped her and the other freshmen raise their level of play.

"The meetings kind of gave us a perspective as to what our roles are with the team and what we need to do in order for this team to be successful," Brown said.

Lea made her mark in the second half, blocking a shot on Maine's last possession to secure the victory and making a steal and layup for a three-point play to cap UNC's 22-7 second-half spurt.

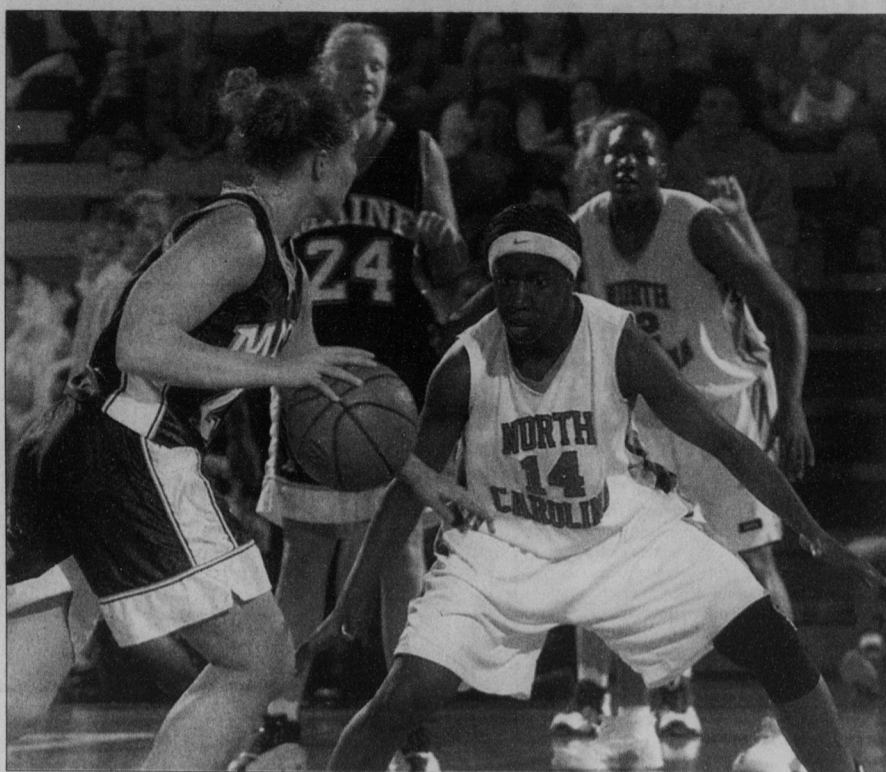
"I really don't keep up with how much time I play, but I was just out there playing really hard defense," Lea said. "I was out there trying to help the team win."

Thomas had the same attitude. She made her only field goal attempt, giving UNC a 48-44 lead at the 8:05 mark.

"Even though I wasn't in there that much, just to come in and be able to do something - I felt good about that."

So did Teasley.

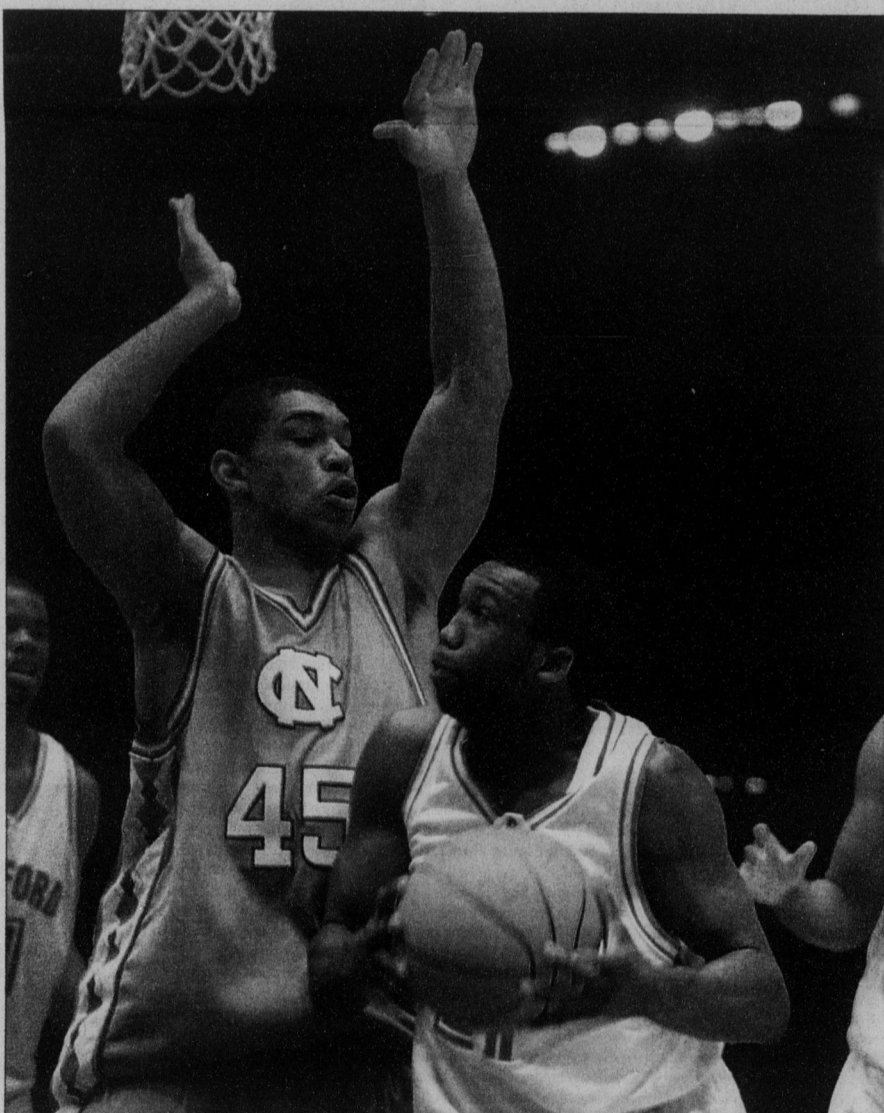
The Sports Editor can be reached at sports@unc.edu.



COURTESY OF JASON SCHOCK/UCSB DAILY NEXUS

North Carolina freshman guard Coretta Brown focuses on shutting down Maine's offensive attack in UNC's first-round win. The trio of Brown, Cherie Lea and Jennifer Thomas contributed nine points in the second half.

Big Men Muscle Way Into Sweet 16



UNC forward Julius Peppers hovers over Stanford's David Moseley on the block. The freshman reserve scored six points, grabbed three rebounds, blocked three shots and made two steals in 24 minutes of floor time.

Brendan Haywood, Kris Lang and Julius Peppers limited Stanford's starting front line to 18 points Sunday.

By EVAN MARKFIELD
Senior Writer

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - North Carolina forward Julius Peppers has proven in the past that he excels when the style of play is banging, bruising and throwing people around.

Of course that was in the fall, and Peppers was decked out in a helmet and full pads, playing defensive end for the UNC football team.

But the reserve forward and his front-court mates proved that the physical game suited them just fine on the basketball court as they pounded away on the large Stanford front line in UNC's 60-53 second-round NCAA Tournament win.

"That's what I was looking forward to, the banging down low," Peppers said.

"We were trying to push them away from the basket."

When Peppers came off the bench, he had the task of guarding Cardinal forward Mark Madsen, who came in averaging 12.5 points and 9.4 rebounds per game. But the Stanford senior was held to just five points, and Peppers blocked him twice.

Peppers, junior center Brendan Haywood and sophomore forward Kris Lang limited the starting Cardinal front-court to 18 points in perhaps the most physical encounter the Tar Heels have had all season.

"It was a battle out there today on the inside," Madsen said. "Brendan Haywood battled the whole game. He can simply wear people down."

"It was one of the most intense games I've ever played in."

Haywood put up 12 points, eight rebounds and four rejections as the encore performance to his best game of the season, which came in the Tar Heels' first-round win against Missouri on Friday.

Against the smaller Tigers, Haywood

took over, racking up a season-high 28 points and corraling 15 rebounds. The Tar Heels also pounded Missouri on the boards, coming up with a 55-30 advantage.

But Haywood said he preferred to battle teams like Stanford, a team the Tar Heels were not expected to dominate up front.

"I'd rather go in with a challenge," Haywood said.

"When they're as big as you, people don't expect as much, and that's when you can do more damage."

As if the damage Haywood and Peppers did wasn't enough, Lang had 10 points on 5-of-10 shooting despite suffering chest pains and leaving the floor 2:13 into the second half.

"I thought I was having a little heart attack or something," Lang said. "I was nervous."

But Lang returned a few minutes later after being diagnosed with chest cramps and got back into the game for the Tar Heels, who are now 12-3 when Lang scores in double figures.

In addition to the scoring and defending, the biggest battle for UNC was on the boards.

Stanford outrebounded its opponents by an average of 10 per game this season and was plus-eight on UNC at the break.

But the Tar Heels limited Stanford to four offensive boards in the second half despite being outrebounded 38-32 overall.

"It was going to be a big war," Lang said. "We knew it was going to be that way - a dogfight inside."

Good thing for Peppers. After all, he'll be missing a bit of spring football practice as the Tar Heels head to Texas for the Sweet 16.

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



The Tar Heels are 12-3 when forward Kris Lang scores double digits. He had 10 points against the Cardinal.

Tar Heel Baseball Returns Home Riding Different Streak - 3 Losses

Staff Report

After starting the season with a 21-game winning streak, the North Carolina baseball team dropped its first three ACC games to conference foe Georgia Tech.

The Yellow Jackets scored an unearned run in the bottom of the ninth inning on Sunday to take an 8-7 win against UNC and gain a sweep of the series in Atlanta.

With the score tied at 7-7, Brad

Stockton led off the bottom of the ninth with a ground ball to UNC first baseman Ryan Earey.

Earey, who had to go to his right for the ball, threw wildly to senior pitcher Derrick DePriest, who was covering first base on

Baseball	
Georgia Tech . . .	8
UNC	7
Georgia Tech . . .	16
UNC	3
Georgia Tech . . .	5
UNC	4

the play.

The ball went into the Tech dugout to advance Stockton to second. After a strikeout and an intentional walk to Mark Teixeira, Bryan Prince singled to right. Stockton stumbled rounding third and pulled up, but UNC right fielder Matt McCay's throw skidded by catcher Dan Moylan, and Stockton was able to score easily.

Jeff Watchko (2-0) picked up the win after giving up one run in 3 and 1/3 innings of relief. DePriest (1-1) suffered

the loss in relief. He came on in the fourth and gave up three runs, just one earned, on 12 hits while striking out seven.

Earey led UNC at the plate by going 2-5 in the game with four RBI. Jason Basil and Stockton had three hits apiece for Tech.

UNC (21-3, 0-3 ACC) lost 16-3 to the Yellow Jackets (16-6, 3-0) on Saturday and 5-4 on Friday.

The Tar Heels took a 3-1 lead Saturday before the Yellow Jackets

scored three in the third on three singles, two walks and an error on UNC pitcher Eric Henderson.

The Yellow Jackets scored six runs in the fifth inning and five more runs in the bottom of the seventh.

Chad Prosser was 3-4 at the plate for UNC, while Adam Greenberg and Tyrell Godwin had two hits apiece.

On Friday, Georgia Tech pitcher Cory Vance matched a career high with 14 strikeouts as Georgia Tech handed UNC, which defeated Pace 10-0 on

Tuesday, its first loss of the season by a score of 5-4.

Vance allowed three runs and four hits over eight innings of work.

UNC got on the board first with a two-run home run in the fourth by Godwin.

Georgia Tech answered in the bottom half of the inning with two runs of its own, and freshman Tyler Parker blasted a two-run home run off North Carolina starter Ryan Snare in the bottom of the fifth to give the Jackets the lead for good.