

Minus Mejia, UNC Wins 4th Straight

By JAMES GIZA
Staff Writer

With top player Marlene Mejia nursing tendinitis in her knee, the North Carolina women's tennis team had to make a few seeding adjustments Wednesday against Virginia Commonwealth.

The hole left by Mejia forced UNC coach Roland Thornqvist to bump up every singles player in the lineup.

No Mejia? No matter. The Tar Heels captured four of six singles matches, then clinched their fourth straight win with a doubles victory from Jessica Zaganczyk and Courtney Zalinski to drop the Rams 5-2 at Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center.

Women's Tennis	
VCU 2
UNC 5

"I'm really proud of my kids because we went out today and played the 27th-ranked team in the country without our No. 1 player, and everybody stepped up and played awfully, awfully hard," Thornqvist said.



UNC junior Courtney Zalinski picked up victories at No. 3 singles and No. 2 doubles in the Tar Heels' win.

For the first time in three matches, UNC had to play doubles. Just as they did March 26 in a 5-4 win against Georgia Tech, Zaganczyk and Zalinski stepped on the court together with a chance to claim the victory.

After the duo broke Lyudmyla Teterina's serve, Zalinski - who won singles earlier 6-2, 6-2 - held to give them a 7-5 lead and put them four points away from taking the eight-game pro set.

But the Rams' Ukrainian connection fought back. Kate Vasylyeva held serve, and Zaganczyk unforced errors and three deuces later, the score was knotted

at seven. Both teams failed to hold, and at 8-8, it was tiebreaker time.

"I just wanted us to win so much at that position, so we wouldn't have to stay out there and keep playing," Zaganczyk said.

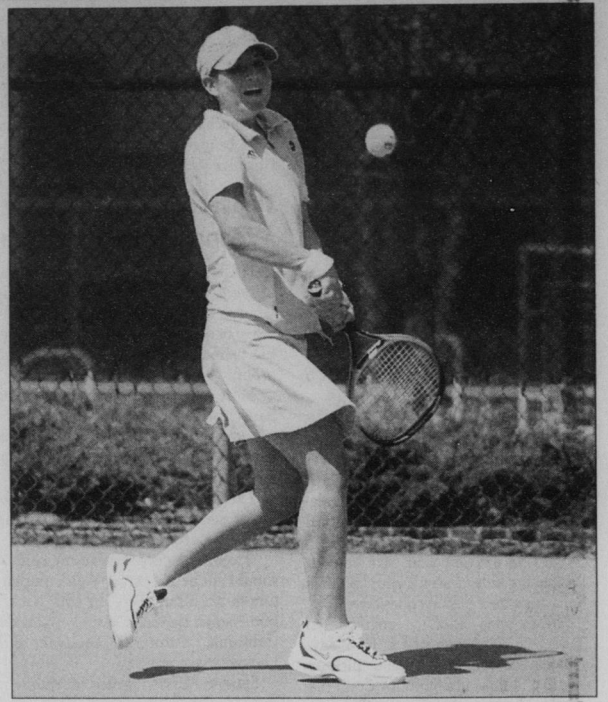
The Tar Heels (9-8) went up 5-2, but the Rams closed within two. However, Vasylyeva netted a forehand, and Zalinski put away a forehand volley on the next point to end it.

"They were not as calm today as they were last week, but they know what to do in that situation," Thornqvist said. "They seem to handle the pressure better than their opponents, and as a coach, that's really good to see."

There was almost no need for doubles for the third straight match.

UNC's Caroline Hill, playing No. 2 singles for the first time this season, came back and was within striking distance of Raluca Ciulei before falling 6-4, 6-7, 6-4 in an extremely intense match.

"I didn't know the score of the match, so I was assuming I needed to win the match to win the overall match," Hill said. "I've been in a slump lately, so I was trying to work through that."



DTH/KATE MELLNIK

North Carolina sophomore Caroline Hill, shown here against Indiana, lost in three sets to Virginia Commonwealth's Raluca Ciulei at No. 2.

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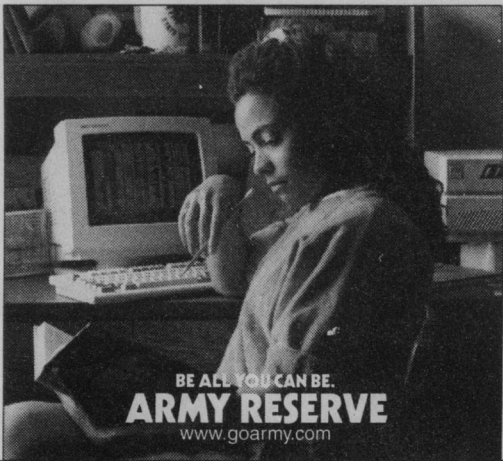
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New Court Date Awaits Tar Heels' Cota, Newby

Associated Press

North Carolina guards Ed Cota and Terrence Newby have a new court day to face assault charges.

The Tar Heel seniors, fresh off a trip to the Final Four, and two other defendants are due in an Orange County court April 27.

Their trial on charges stemming from a brawl Halloween night has been postponed four times since December.

Their attorney requested the last court day to be changed because it conflicted with the national championship game, which took place Monday at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis.

North Carolina made an improbable run to get to the Final Four after finishing the regular season 18-13.

But the Tar Heels fell one game short of Monday's championship, losing 71-59 to Florida on Saturday in the national semifinals.

Cota and Newby are charged with three counts each of assault inflicting serious injury and two counts of simple assault. They deny involvement in the fight that broke out between students.

The players were suspended from the basketball team in November following reports of the brawl, but UNC coach Bill Guthridge reinstated them 10 days later.



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