

Tar Heels Hold Off Wolfpack Rally

BY GAVIN OFF
Staff Writer

Halloween night started well but later provided the North Carolina volleyball team with a scare.

Before the match UNC honored it's three seniors: defensive specialists Liz Feldman and Lisa Fryer and outside hitter Casey Simpson.

Then UNC jumped all over rival N.C. State, taking a 2-0 lead in games.

But the night turned ugly. UNC quickly lost the lead and was forced into a deciding game five against the Wolfpack. But, like it began, Senior

Night ended on a positive note as the Tar Heels beat State 3-2 (15-12, 15-8, 7-15, 14-16, 15-7).

"We can really be good," UNC coach Joe Sagula said. "We just need to keep our intensity up. State did things to get us off our game and make us play awkward."

Feldman, who was one of three Tar Heels with 11 digs, led the defense.

"It's nice to play State at your last



UNC outside hitter Casey Simpson had to leave her final home match in the fifth game because of back spasms.

home game," Feldman said. "It makes you realize who's the superior school."

UNC took the first two games behind tough serving and consistent blocking, two points Sagula said the team has been stressing. UNC had 18 team blocks compared to State's nine.

But, as in past matches, UNC lost its focus. The number of unforced errors increased, and North Carolina's defense began to weaken. A similar situation happened this weekend when the Tar Heels took the first two games against Duke but were forced into a fifth game.

But it wasn't the Wolfpack's play Tuesday that caused the Tar Heels' mental collapse.

"We thought we were going to beat them easily," Feldman said. "When you play a team like State, it's hard to play at

your level. We always end up playing at their level. We just lost our focus."

State ran all over UNC to begin game three, jumping out to a 7-0 lead. The Tar Heels put up a bigger fight in game four but killed themselves with sloppy play.

"We need to be very precise with our passing and hitting," said Simpson, who left with back spasms during the fifth game. "We just weren't for part of the night."

But despite the mix-up in the middle of the match, the Tar Heels pulled out a victory for their seniors.

"I think they've been a really big part of the program for four years," Sagula said. "I'm just excited they can end on a winning note."

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UNC Faces Uphill Battle At ITA Championships

None of the Tar Heel men's tennis players are seeded in the regional tournament, which is being held at UNC.

BY OWEN A. HASSELL
Staff Writer

It won't be all strawberries and cream for the North Carolina men's tennis team this week.

UNC heads into this week's Intercollegiate Tennis Association's South Atlantic Regional Indoor Championships without a Tar Heel seeded in either the singles or doubles brackets.

But this isn't a cause for concern for UNC coach Sam Paul.

"I don't put much stock into seeds," Paul said. "They could use whatever records from the past to determine who is seeded here, so it isn't a clean-cut process."

Sponsored by Top of the Hill restaurant, the ITA Championships event has been a staple tournament of Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center since the facility's inception in 1993.

UNC's David Cheatwood, Marcio Petrone and Trystan Meniane have all earned spots in the 64-player singles draw. In the 32-team doubles bracket, automatic bids were given to the tandems of Cheatwood and Greg Archer and Petrone and Nicholas Monroe.

Paul and his Tar Heels hope to add to their tournament entries in today's qualifying rounds. Chad Riley, Max Hilkey,

Monroe and Archer will look to gain one of eight spots into the main bracket. Meniane and Riley will team up to try to qualify in doubles.

"We're just looking for some good improvement," Paul said. "We're a young team working hard this fall to meet high expectations this spring."

The hard work may pay off at home for the Tar Heels, who will be facing some of the most talented college tennis players from across the country.

Paul knows that conditioning will be a factor as well as his team heads into such stiff competition. Especially when many of his players will be in both singles and doubles action.

"A lot of the top-ranked players in the country will be in this tournament," Paul said. "Hopefully a lot of fans will come out to see some great tennis."

This year should be no different with more than 25 schools being represented this week. Although it is an individual event, the Tar Heels can also look to get a good scouting report of the ACC. The conference will showcase all nine of its member schools in the tournament.

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North Carolina senior David Cheatwood will compete in singles and doubles this week at the ITA Championships.

Tar Heels Hope Turf Energizes Ground Game

BY BRET STRELOW
Assistant Sports Editor

North Carolina football coach Carl Torbush knows some of his players aren't thrilled about traveling to Pittsburgh this weekend.

And it's not because they have become tentative in the midst of a four-game losing streak. They just aren't looking forward to trying to halt that streak on the cold artificial turf of Three Rivers Stadium.

"Because we're playing on turf for the first time, you hear some moaning and groaning other than what they're expected to do," Torbush said.

Pittsburgh is playing at Three Rivers Stadium this year after it left 74-year-old Pitt Stadium at the end of last season. A new stadium that the Panthers and the Pittsburgh Steelers will share is set to open next August.

UNC hasn't played a game on artificial turf since it defeated San Diego State in the 1998 Las Vegas Bowl.

Only six current Tar Heels were on the roster in 1996, when North Carolina played two regular-season games on artificial turf. UNC defeated Syracuse at the Carrier Dome and Houston at the Astrodome that year.

Players often put on elbow sleeves and long-sleeved shirts to avoid turf burns. But senior linebacker Brandon Spoon, who had four tackles against Houston in 1996, said playing again on turf isn't a big deal for him.

"We groan more when we have to practice on it during two-a-days," Spoon said.

Torbush said he won't move UNC's practices to the artificial turf of Henry Stadium unless poor weather conditions force him to.

"We practice on our turf quite frequently in bad weather," Torbush said.

"What we'd rather do is just go up there on the turf for the first time if the weather permits this week so we'll feel like we're faster."

UNC's three freshman tailbacks might finally get to show off their speed Saturday on the artificial turf.

Brandon Russell has started all eight games at tailback, but he has rarely gotten to show off his quickness outside the



Tar Heel freshman Brandon Russell had a 19-yard run against Marshall, the longest by a UNC tailback this year.

tackles. His 19-yard gain against Marshall is the longest run by a UNC tailback this year.

Backup Willie Parker rushed for 71 yards against Virginia last week, but Torbush said he won't announce a starter for the Pittsburgh game until Saturday.

"I think we've made some real tough runs, and I think our running game has improved a great deal," Torbush said. "But for us to get where we want to be in the running game, we've got to knock off a couple big ones, and we have not done that yet."

Torbush said that hasn't happened because backside linebackers and defensive ends have gotten their hands on Tar Heel runners before they could

break into the secondary.

"It's not like we've gotten dragged down from behind on any play that I remember," Torbush said.

Halloween Humor

Torbush said he never goes to Franklin Street to celebrate in the Halloween festivities. But if he ever did, Torbush said he knew what costume he would wear.

"I'd be the disappearing man," Torbush said. "Pretty good answer, right?"

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