

# Barksdale to Show Off Outside Game

Forward LaQuanda Barksdale has improved her shooting and ball-handling ability to get ready for this season.

By JAMES GIZA  
Assistant Sport Saturday Editor

The naysayers began their cry last January, and LaQuanda Barksdale has had to listen to them ever since.

It was then that point guard Nikki Teasley took a seven-game leave from the North Carolina women's basketball team, sending UNC into a tailspin and dropping it out of the top 25.

Barksdale struggled in her absence. Although she still finished as the ACC leader in scoring (17.6) and rebounding (8.6), the dissidents in the stands and media had the fuel they needed.

Teasley was by far UNC's best player, they said, and the Tar Heels would go nowhere without her. It is a sentiment that many continue to believe as this season approaches. It is a sentiment that Barksdale continues to ignore.

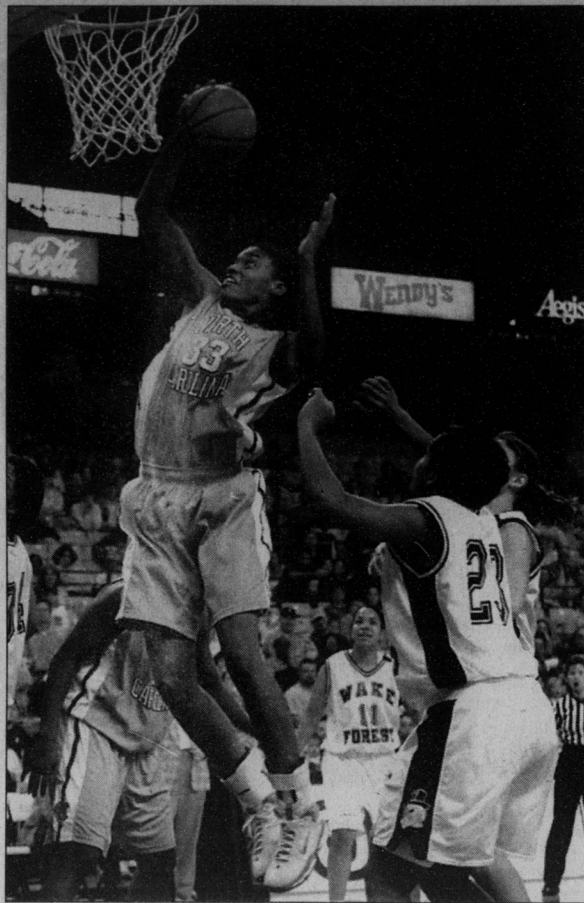
"That really didn't bother me because I don't want to brag or anything, but I was the leading scorer and rebounder in the league last year," Barksdale said. "So it really doesn't matter to me that people don't think that I am (UNC's best player) when I went out there, and I got the job done."

"So I'm not going to change anything or try to prove to people that I'm a better player. I'm just going to go out there and do what I've been doing."

Yet there's no denying that Barksdale — known as "Q" — was mired in a slump while Teasley was gone.

Although her production on the boards stayed steady, Barksdale's scoring output dropped from 20.2 to 15.3 points per game, and her field-goal percentage fell from 48 percent to 33 percent. Barksdale could no longer benefit from the passes that made Teasley one of the nation's best point guards.

"I tried to force some things and do



UNC senior forward LaQuanda Barksdale led the ACC in scoring and rebounding last season and is a preseason first-team All-ACC pick.

some things that I didn't ordinarily do," said Barksdale, a preseason candidate for the Naismith Player of the Year Award. "I think I tried to create a little too much."

Teasley is taking this season off. But Barksdale has been working to make sure there's no repeat of last year's slide. Instead of settling in the post during

games, Barksdale will have to move out to the perimeter more to create her own shot. To make that transition easier, she's been working on her ball handling and outside moves.

This added dimension to Barksdale's game would not only benefit UNC, but it would also allow her to adapt much more smoothly to playing in the WNBA, a major goal of hers.

At 5-foot-11, Barksdale can get away with playing up front on the collegiate level, but she'll have to shift up top if she wants to make it in the WNBA.

"I feel like she's making the adjustment to being an outside player," first-year UNC assistant coach Sylvia Crawley said. "And I've watched a lot of players make that adjustment — (former UNC standouts) Charlotte Smith and Tracy Reid, for example — and it's been a hard transition for them."

"Whereas I think Q has developed an outside shot, she can drive, and with those two things it makes her very dangerous. You're not quite sure how to guard her."

Crawley knows what it takes to play on the next level. She joined UNC this year after averaging 11.5 points and 6.0 rebounds per game in her first WNBA season with the Portland Fire. The 6-5 forward has matched up frequently with the Tar Heels in practice.

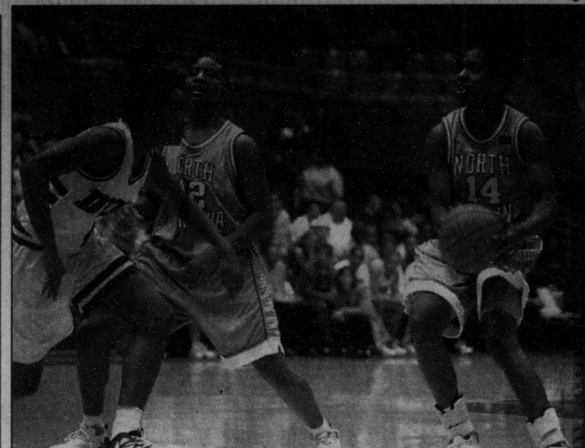
"She can just read the defense well. And you can't teach that," Crawley said. "You can teach moves, you can teach shooting, but you can't teach a natural reaction to the defense, and she has that."

"And as far as rebounding, she just has a nose for the ball. She's one of those people like Dennis Rodman."

First things first, though. Barksdale still has this season in front of her before she can get paid.

"I think by the end of the season, I will be ready," Barksdale said. "But right now I have this season to focus on, and I still have some things that I need to work on that I plan on as the season goes along — not only to make it to the next level but to help my team."

And maybe make a few people eat their words along the way.



Sophomore point guard Coretta Brown (right) will have the ball in her hands much of the time for the Tar Heels this season.

# Brown Takes Over As Floor General

By IAN GORDON  
Staff Writer

Coretta Brown has been in this position before.

She knows what it's like to be the floor general. She understands what it means to control her team's offense.

After all, Brown played point guard throughout her high school career at Southeast Bulloch High in Statesboro, Ga. More importantly, she did it last year when starter Nikki Teasley left the Tar Heels for seven games.

But it's one thing to be a replacement with few expectations. It's entirely another to be the one.

The 5-foot-8 sophomore takes over the reins of the UNC offense this year after Teasley, who would have been back for her senior season, again left the team for personal reasons. This time, however, it's for an entire season.

"I've had to step up," Brown said. "I've had to pick up my game as far as running the point position. I've had to learn a lot, but I feel comfortable with the position now. I think everything will be OK."

Brown will have to display some of the same dynamic play that Teasley showed in order for the Tar Heels to succeed this season. Teasley was especially key to UNC's scoring last year, when the team averaged 73.7 points per game with her and 61.3 without her.

Brown's teammates hope that she will learn from last year's experience at point guard, when the team struggled to a 1-6 mark without Teasley.

"Coretta has definitely made improvements since last year," senior guard Leah Sharp said. "Especially while Nikki was away, she was thrown in there as a freshman. I know that was really hard on her. She's being more of a vocal leader, which is what she had trouble with last year."

Brown continued to gain valuable experience when the team traveled to

Australia this summer to play games. She said that although she she didn't do as well as she wanted, playing with her teammates made her more comfortable.

That comfort level is especially important for a point guard, who controls the tempo of the game and her team. Conversely, her team must be assured that when the shot clock runs down, Brown will have an answer.

More often than not, Teasley possessed that sense of what to do in crunch time. A drive following a killer crossover, a long 3-pointer from the top of the arc, or a slick pass to a cutting teammate were the results of that knowledge.

Brown's teammates feel that she, too, has the ability to provide those solutions.

"I think Coretta pretty much has all the skills that Nikki had; it's just she's not 6-11," forward LaQuanda Barksdale said. "That's pretty much the difference. She's pretty much as good a ball handler as Nikki was."

"With the experience that she got, some last year and just over the summer in Australia, it's really helped her bring her game along as far as decision making."

As she grasped the mental aspect of becoming a starter, Brown also worked on her physical skills. She improved her shooting, which will help her keep defenses honest and not allow them to protect against penetration.

Brown hopes her diligence will translate into better results than last year, when she averaged 4.1 points and 1.8 assists per game.

"I think my ball handling has gotten a little better," Brown said. "(Assistant) coach (Andrew) Calder did a great job of working with me on my shot, so I feel a lot more comfortable with my shot now."

Brown will be a focal point for opposing defenses who used to have to figure out what Teasley would do next. They will try to expose the relative inexperience that Brown has at the point.

But don't expect Brown to wilt under the spotlight. She has been there before.

# Lea Goes on Offensive in Off-Season Workouts

By JOE DISNEY  
Staff Writer

When someone thinks about a training program for basketball, sitting in a chair usually doesn't come to mind.

Yet, North Carolina guard Cherie Lea spent a good portion of her summer sitting down close to the basket, working on her shooting form.

Lea's touch from the floor was a struggle in 2000.

"I was throwing the ball instead of lifting my arm up," Lea said. "By sitting in a chair, it helped me out a lot to get the L-shaped form."

If Lea can add offense to her already solid defense, she could be UNC's main weapon off the bench this season.

"Whoa! She's a great defender," UNC point guard Coretta Brown said. "I think that's enough said."

A great example of Lea's impact on a game came Feb. 22 against Florida State. In the Tar Heels' 78-74 win, Lea made a key steal of an inbound play late in the fourth quarter to help seal the victory. While she had only two points and



Sophomore guard Cherie Lea has worked on her shooting form after averaging 2.3 points per game last year.

one assist, her impact was definitely felt on the court. Lea was a workhorse for the Tar Heels, playing in all 33 of last year's games.

Lea models her all-out style of play off of two other basketball players.

One is teammate Juana Brown. Lea feels that the senior guard has an impressive style of defense.

"She leads by example," Lea said. "When she gets up there, she's all-out intensity, nonstop going after the ball. She's got her game face on when she's ready to play defense. I think I've adopted that type of style."

The other is the Portland Trailblazers' Scottie Pippen. Lea watched him play as she grew up and said she can relate to the way he plays the game.

Lea's brother Deva was one of her hardest driving influences in her basketball career. Deva played basketball himself at then Elon College.

"My brother always tells me just to come in and play, never be intimidated," Lea said. "So that's what I did last year. I played how I knew how to play."

While Lea will be one of UNC's biggest threats off the bench, she also should see considerable playing time backing up Coretta Brown at point guard.

Brown said Lea is versatile enough to play the point and other positions.

"I think Cherie is doing a great job at the guard spot," Brown said. "She's the point, the 2 and sometimes the 3. She's going to be good for us this year."

# Myers Shifts Winter Focus to Basketball

Center Jackie Myers will skip the indoor track and field season to help bolster the Tar Heels' front line.

By KELLY LUSK  
Staff Writer

The North Carolina women's basketball team will have Jackie Myers' undivided attention this season for the first time.

Last year, Myers participated in basketball and indoor track simultaneously. She plays center for the Tar Heel hoopsters and throws the shot put and the discus for the track team.

Myers will participate only in outdoor track this year because certain

indoor meets conflict with basketball games. She missed two regular-season games last season because of indoor track commitments.

"Last year was a little bit too much," Myers said. "It was really difficult — really, really difficult — to go to one practice from another every single day. If I didn't have a basketball game on the weekend, I had a track meet."

Myers said her busy schedule also



Senior center Jackie Myers converted 7-of-14 attempts from the field in 20 games last season.

had a negative impact on her grades. She changed her major from biology to English because of her time constraints.

Myers' course load is not the only thing that changed this semester. She spent her first three years on a track scholarship, but now the basketball program is footing her bill.

During the off-season, Myers played many pick-up games to improve her grasp on the game as a whole. She did not walk on to the basketball team until last season, the fall of her junior year.

"This season I can be more vocal and be a leader because I have some experience," Myers said. "We have a lot of really talented freshmen that need to learn the things that I learned last year."

Myers played in 14 games last season and averaged 1.2 points and 1.4 rebounds. She saw her peak when she played 17 minutes in UNC's season opener against UCLA and pulled down a season-high seven rebounds. This year Myers hopes to see more time on the court.

"I'm going to work hard," Myers said. "The team comes first, but I'd definitely like to see the court more."

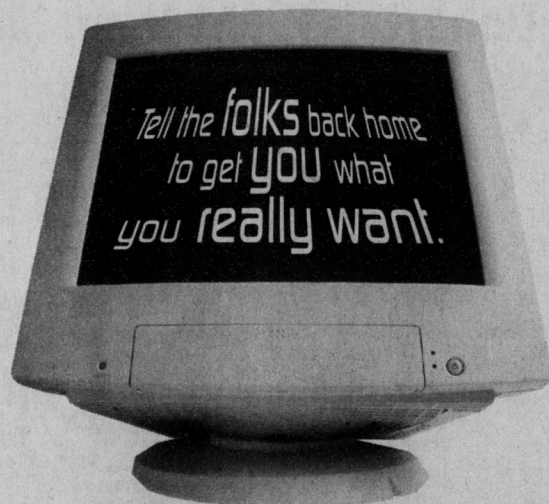
Myers said she will focus her energy on being consistent in every area. This summer she tried to play against bigger and faster players to improve her all-around skills.

"I still need to get more familiar with just playing again," Myers said. "I'm working on my offense and my post defense."

Myers could be a valuable weapon for UNC. She stands at 6-foot-4 and has the athleticism in track and field to launch the shot more than 45 feet through the air.

However she can contribute, Myers said she is satisfied with her decision to focus solely on basketball this winter season.

Said Myers, "If you have too much going on, there's no focus anywhere."



## NORTHGATE MALL online gift certificates

Sure, you love your family back home, but the useless junk they send you at school can get old quick. So just tell everybody they can get you Northgate Mall gift certificates online!

No matter where your relatives live, they can log on to our web site and purchase gift certificates for your favorite mall using our innovative and 100% secure ordering system. They receive a gift certificate voucher via e-mail, which they can either print out and send you, or simply forward to your e-mail.

Then you can trade in your printed voucher for a gift certificate at Northgate, and you're free to buy what you really want: cool clothes, stuff for your dorm room or apartment, a tasty meal at the Food Gallery, or whatever else you feel like.

Just give your family our web address, and they'll be able to give you what you really want... plus, you won't be doing anything they wouldn't want.

[www.ngatemail.com](http://www.ngatemail.com)

  
NORTHGATE MALL

**Spartacus**  
CHAPEL HILL  
A Tradition for 23 years  
Come Taste Why!  
Fine Greek/Mediterranean cuisine  
in an elegant yet casual atmosphere  
Award Winning Lunch Buffet  
Tuesday-Saturday 11am-3pm  
Sunday Buffet 12-9pm  
928-0300  
220 W. Rosemary Street • Across from Pantana Bob's  
[www.spartacusrestaurants.com](http://www.spartacusrestaurants.com) • Closed Mondays