

Tar Heels Still in Hunt For Postseason Game

BY MIKE OGLE
Assistant Sports Editor

North Carolina football fans will have to take timeout from their hatred of N.C. State this Saturday.

If they want the Tar Heels to go bowling, a Wolfpack victory at Virginia would help the cause tremendously.

Although UNC (5-5, 2-5 in the ACC) can't catch the Cavaliers (5-4, 4-3) in the conference standings, UVA. will not be bowl eligible if it doesn't pick up another win.

After N.C. State, the Cavaliers head to Virginia Tech, a likely loss.

Maryland (5-5, 3-4) is also teetering on the edge of bowl dreams. But the Terrapins will have to beat Georgia Tech (7-2, 5-2) to become eligible after losing to the Tar Heels 13-10.

And despite the ugliness on the Kenan Stadium field Saturday, Micron PC Bowl representative Mike Cochran was impressed.

"I think you have a very exciting football team," Cochran said of North Carolina. "You win next week (against Duke), you're 6-5. We'd love to have you."

The Micron PC Bowl gets the fourth pick out of the ACC. A trip to Miami for the bowl formerly known as the Carquest is up for grabs between UNC, UVA., N.C. State and Maryland.

Still, any scenario involving the Tar Heels getting selected fourth out of the ACC seems unlikely. But if Virginia can't get a sixth win, UNC very well could earn the fifth slot and go to Hawaii for either the Aloha or Oahu Bowl.

Even if the Tar Heels become the sixth pick, they could go back as an at-

large selection to the Las Vegas Bowl, which they won in 1998.

Of course, it all hinges on UNC's taking care of business in Durham.

"If we win next week, I feel like we'll be very deserving of a bowl game," UNC coach Carl Torbush said. "We've shown improvement. We would have won three games in a row, and I think this football team with the marquee players that we have - the Currys and the Spoons and the Peppers - will be very deserving to go."

Parker Breaks Through

UNC tailback Willie Parker went where no Tar Heel runner has gone in three years - over 150 yards.

Parker became the first player to do so since Jonathan Linton's 199-yard game against Duke in 1997.

Parker rushed for 158 yards - 117 in the first half - on 21 attempts to top UNC's previous best performance of the season by 62 yards.

But the game wasn't all sunshine for the redshirt freshman. At the end of 61-yard sprint down the left sideline in the second quarter, Parker coughed the ball up on the Maryland 17-yard line.

"He can get in better shape," Torbush said. "It looked like one of those trucks crawled on his back on that touchdown run he had that he ended up fumbling."

He'll Lose Till November

With another Torbush squad making a rebounding act, much is being made of the coach's late-season savvy.

Torbush's UNC teams are now 7-2 in November but are 7-16 before then.

"I'll try to figure out the reason for that," the coach said.

Maybe Torbush should look closely at the schedule. The Tar Heels have picked up pairs of November wins those years courtesy of Duke, Maryland and N.C. State.

Norkus Leads UNC Despite Injury

Senior forward Caleb Norkus shook off a sprained ankle to figure in both of UNC's goals in the ACC tournament.

BY IAN GORDON
Staff Writer

WINSTON-SALEM - It couldn't have happened at a worse time for Caleb Norkus.

Just three days before his North Carolina soccer team would begin play in the ACC tournament, Norkus sprained his left ankle while vying for a head ball in practice.

"I just went up for a head ball, and I came down and my ankle rolled," Norkus said. "I couldn't walk on it Tuesday when I did it."

Despite the injury, no one really considered the sprain serious enough to keep Norkus from playing against Wake Forest on Friday.

But when the match started in the chilly night air, Norkus was keeping warm on the bench while sophomore Mike Gell was on the Spry Stadium field.

UNC coach Elmar Bolowich wanted to rest Norkus and not risk further damage to the ankle, especially against a team the Tar Heels had beaten 4-1 on Oct. 28.

The Demon Deacons, however, didn't afford UNC the luxury of resting their senior forward. Although the Tar Heels peppered Deacon goalkeeper William Hesmer with 15 first-half shots, they went into halftime deadlocked in a scoreless tie.

The score was enough to persuade Bolowich to divert from his earlier plan.

"We came into the locker room at



Forward Caleb Norkus (10), shown here Sept. 24 in UNC's 3-1 loss to Virginia, beat the Cavaliers on Sunday with an overtime goal.

half-time, and I didn't know if I was going to get a chance to play," Norkus said. "Coach wrote my name up on the board, and I was like 'Yes!' and I went and got my ankle taped up again."

"I stepped on the field, and I was like, 'Come on, guys, come on, guys.' I was just so hyped to be playing."

In the end, Norkus proved to be the difference - both in the Friday match against Wake and in Sunday's championship against Virginia.

Norkus had an immediate impact upon entering the game Friday. UNC began to play a quicker, more direct

game, and it eventually broke through the Wake defense in the 68th minute.

Midfielder Michael Bucy collected the ball on the right side of the 18-yard box before footing it left to Norkus. Norkus, ranked ninth nationally in assists before the match, then touched the ball ahead for a streaking Noz

Yamauchi. Yamauchi beat Hesmer to the near post for the game-winner. "I saw three defenders around (Norkus), and I saw an opening," Yamauchi said. "I had a hunch that it might deflect and go that way. The ball got there, and I just tried to put it on the right side of the keeper."

On Sunday, it was Norkus who broke the scoreless tie against the Cavaliers. With the ACC's player of the year, Chris Carrieri, being held in check by an active UVA. defense, Norkus turned in an MVP performance, scoring the golden goal in the 91st minute.

"Certainly our guys picked it up," Bolowich said. "It was wonderful to see for our senior class how we came through."

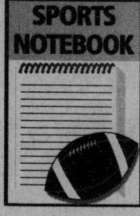
Tournament Notes

■ Bucy, Carrieri, defender David Stokes and Yamauchi were named to the all-tournament team along with Norkus, who was the tourney's MVP.

■ UNC earned the top seed in the upcoming NCAA tournament and will play William & Mary on Sunday at Fetzer Field. Game time is 1 p.m.

■ Second-team All-ACC midfielder Eddie Robinson sprained his left medial collateral ligament in the 41st minute of the championship match and likely will not play this weekend.

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



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