



Woods Tops Furyk on 7th Playoff

Tiger Woods (left) finished with a birdie to defeat Jim Furyk on their seventh playoff hole to win the NEC Invitational. See Page 9

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UNC Learns Important Life Lessons

John Bunting has been saying for quite a while now, "If you want to beat the best, you've got to play the best," using this reasoning for taking on the awesome challenge of playing defending national champion Oklahoma in his first game as coach at North Carolina.



RACHEL CARTER
THROWS LIKE A GIRL

Good call. Sure, North Carolina did not upset and stun the Sooners, finishing the game on the bad side of a 41-27 score. But the Tar Heels answered some very important questions that had been plaguing them before the season's start.

First, and maybe foremost, there is life beyond Ronald Curry. During UNC's media day, when asked about his backups, Curry said, "hopefully," there would not be any need for them.

But Saturday was not Curry's day, and the decision to pull him in the third quarter was a sound one. Backup Darian Durant needed to take snaps in a live game, not just some scrimmage against the rest of the Tar Heels.

Durant gave UNC hope, and in the fourth quarter threw a pair of touchdown passes to two unlikely candidates — backup wideout Chesley Borders and tailback-turned-wide receiver Brandon Russell. He also led the Tar Heels so close to a eight-point deficit, you could almost sense the heart attacks on Oklahoma's sidelines.

Curry is UNC's quarterback, but at least Bunting can sleep better at night knowing that if Curry goes down, the rest of the season doesn't go with him.

Durant was 12 for 26 for 152 yards in a quarter-plus worth of action. He mounted the offensive drive culminating in Borders' 26-yard touchdown. UNC has to feel good about that.

UNC also has to feel good about itself. Down 24-0 in the blink of an eye, they did not give up. Julius Peppers took advantage of an inexperienced quarterback to put UNC on the board, and when ESPN panned to the sidelines, the team's excitement was palpable.

Bunting was hyped. The players jumped up and down screaming. They might have been in a hole, but there was still fight in them. That is new.

In recent years, Florida State has slapped UNC every which way early on, so it's not like OU's lead was anything new. But when it's your own fault and not Peter Warrick that put you far behind, it's harder to bounce back.

The Tar Heels' drive chart went like this in the first quarter — fumble, punt, fumble, punt, fumble, punt, touchdown. By comparison, Oklahoma's was field goal, touchdown, touchdown, punt, touchdown, interception, touchdown.

Immediately after Peppers picked off Nate Hybl, Antwone Savage returned a kickoff 88 yards for a touchdown. That's just the sort of thing that should have killed UNC.

It did not, and Bunting has to feel good about that. Down 41-14 at the half, the Tar Heels looked so far out of the game, it seemed like they were in Oklahoma City.

To be a fly on the wall during that halftime would have been fascinating. Curry's evening had only gotten worse from his fumble on the second down of UNC's first series. Bunting got a view of how poorly the Tar Heels — who finished 113th in the nation last season in turnovers — could play. The only things UNC had going for it was Peppers' interception and a kickoff return for a TD by Michael Waddell, who fumbled earlier at the UNC 33 after being hit by the Sooners' punter.

Still, they came back. They cut back on stupid mental errors. The defense did not let Oklahoma score in the second half. And in the fourth, a redshirt freshman without a lick of college experience cut OU's lead nearly in half.

True, the Tar Heels learned there's still plenty of problems too. The running game looked terrible. Turnovers dug UNC in insurmountable hole. And Curry was sacked three times.

But after game one, UNC learned that it has character, and that might be the most important lesson of all.

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Lack of Fitness Leads to Women's Soccer Loss

The top-ranked Tar Heels struggled to keep up with the No. 5 Cornhuskers in their first exhibition game.

By **KELLY LUSK**
Assistant Sports Editor

Certain members of the North Carolina women's soccer team spent too much time this summer sitting on their couches eating bonbons, said UNC coach Anson Dorrance.

And in the top-ranked, defending national champion Tar Heels' 1-0 loss to No. 5 Nebraska, UNC's lack of fitness was apparent and crippling.

"One of the things we weren't happy with coming into the preseason was our fitness base," Dorrance said. "They exposed that."

UNC's lack of conditioning was most detrimental in the 71st minute when the Tar Heel defense attempted to clear the ball but instead served it to freshman Cornhusker Jenna Cooper. Cooper lofted a shot from 25 yards out that barely grazed UNC goalkeeper Jenni Branam's fingertips and went in.

"We got the ball in some dangerous positions and made some very poor decisions with it," Dorrance said. "Their speed of play and pressure disrupted our ability to make good decisions and play with composure."

Neither team had much composure at the start of the match. Both squads struggled to connect passes and find

their offensive rhythm. Senior midfielder Jena Kluegel, who played with the U.S. National Team this summer, attempted four of UNC's six shots on goal in the first half.

One of her tries was the closest the Tar Heels came to scoring. In the 21st minute, Kluegel made a break down the left side of the field and booted the ball at Cornhusker goalkeeper Erin Miller. Miller barely got her left hand on the ball and tipped it over the crossbar.

"We had our chances, and now we just need to work on sticking them," Kluegel said.

She agreed the team's intensity is not up to par, and that was the biggest reason for the loss.

"We need to be able to play hard for 90 minutes," Kluegel said. "We need to come out and play every game like it's our last. That's a characteristic of last year's team throughout the NCAA Tournament that we're missing right now."

It's not as if the Tar Heels didn't try to See **WOMEN'S SOCCER**, Page 9

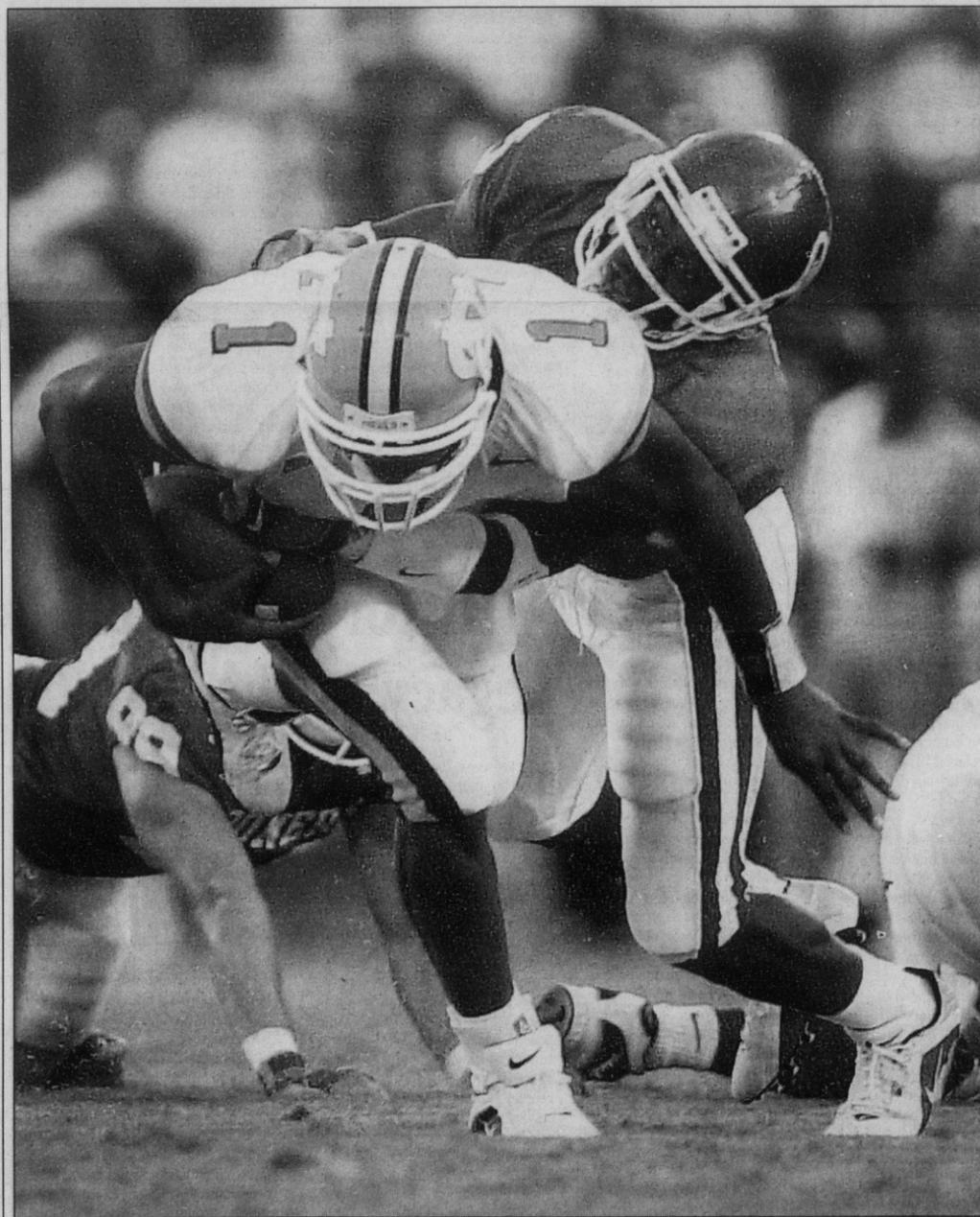


Senior midfielder Jena Kluegel attempted four of North Carolina's six shots on goal in the first half.



North Carolina freshman forward Anne Morrell tries to keep the ball from Nebraska's Danica Carey during Friday's game at Fetzer Field.

Durant Shines in Debut As Curry Falters



Oklahoma's Brandon Shelby sacks North Carolina's Ronald Curry (1) during the second half Saturday in Norman, Okla.

UNC coach John Bunting said Ronald Curry is the quarterback, but redshirt freshman Darian Durant had a better night in Norman.

By **JAMES GIZA**
SportSaturday Editor

NORMAN, Okla. — Quarterback controversy? Could be a bit premature.

Quarterback intrigue? That sounds more like it. The speculation about the starting quarterback job for the North Carolina football team officially began in the Tar Heels' 41-27 loss to No. 3 Oklahoma on Saturday night.

In one corner: Ronald Curry, senior.

In the other: Darian Durant, redshirt freshman. After Durant replaced Curry toward the end of the third quarter and guided the Tar Heels to their only two touchdown drives of the game, what seemed an absolute certainty heading into the season — Curry as permanent starter — suddenly was tinged with a bit of doubt.

But UNC coach John Bunting made the status of the position clear after the game.

"Ronald Curry's my quarterback right now," Bunting said. "But Darian's going to play some football for us this year, there's no doubt about it. He's a playmaker."

Incumbent starter Curry, who came to UNC four years ago as one of the most heralded freshmen in the nation, looked like the same Curry of the past few seasons, missing his receivers badly and generally appearing uncomfortable.

With about four minutes left in the third quarter, Oklahoma linebacker Rocky Calmus sacked Curry on the last play of the quarterback's final series, leaving him 5-of-14 for 74 yards with an interception that was returned for a touchdown.

"I don't think I played well," said Curry, who was picked off by Oklahoma cornerback Derrick Strait in the second quarter.

"I think that Darian came in and did an excellent job. I feel like if I would have played the way Darian played, then we probably would have won the game."

Durant, after a three-and-out on his first series, guided the Tar Heels on a six-play, 86-yard touchdown drive that cut OU's lead to 41-21 with 14:09 left in the game. He was 3-of-5 for 49 yards for the series, broke off a 19-yard run and capped the drive with a 26-yard strike to Chesley Borders.

On UNC's next possession, Durant hit wideout Kory Bailey for a 42-yard gain on fourth-and-10, setting up a 1-yard TD pass to Brandon Russell. He finished 12 of 26 for 152 yards and also led the team with 41 yards rushing.

"Ever since high school, I've been able to make plays," said Durant, who, like Curry, has a strong arm and good mobility.

"And that was my goal, just to go out there and make a couple plays. And it turned out that I had a pretty good game."

But Durant also played down any possible controversy. "Ronald's still the man," Durant said.

"And my job is just to come and relieve him from time to time and get a little bit of experience right now. So he's still the man."

"There's no kind of controversy whatsoever."

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Field Hockey, Men's Soccer Score Road Victories

The No. 2 North Carolina field hockey team shut out Connecticut to earn its first win of the 2001 season.

Staff Report

The North Carolina field hockey team opened its season Saturday afternoon with a 4-0 win against Connecticut in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

The game was a homecoming for UNC senior midfielder Abby Martin,

this weekend ON THE ROAD

who is from Saratoga Springs. She scored the Tar Heels' first goal 26:02 into the first half. Martin, a third-team All-American, scored on a penalty stroke.

Senior Abbey Woolley scored the second goal on an assist from freshman Charlotte Plugge with 8:03 left in the first half.

At 27:35 of the second half, freshman Kelsey Keeran tallied the Tar Heels' third goal with another assist from Plugge. Senior back Susan Hayes added a fourth goal with 11:10 left in the second half. The goal the first in Hayes' career.

UNC opens its home season Saturday and Sunday against Penn State and Virginia Commonwealth at Henry Stadium.

Men's Soccer Tops UMass

The fifth-ranked North Carolina

men's soccer team beat Massachusetts 2-0 on Saturday night in Chicopee, Mass., in its first exhibition game of the 2001 season.

The Tar Heels got on the board early with goals from Mike Gell in the second minute of the contest and Ryan Kneipper in the 10th minute.



UNC senior Abby Martin scored a goal in her homecoming against UConn on Saturday.

Gell's goal came after UMass junior Bryan O'Quinn stopped a Noz Yamauchi shot. Gell hit a shot in the top corner off the rebound. Kneipper's tally came just eight minutes later, and freshman Tim Merritt assisted on the play.

"I don't think we were ready to play in the first 10 minutes," UMass coach Sam Koch said. "They scored two great goals early, but I think we settled down after the second one."

North Carolina will begin regular-season play next weekend when they host East Carolina and Appalachian State on Friday and Monday evenings.