

Road Wins Scarce for ACC Teams

Staff Report

Cruel, yet usually creative, taunts fill the air, thousands of packed-in, bustling — and sometimes painted-on — bodies increase arena temperatures to lava-like levels and deafening noise permeates the most inner folds of each opponent's brain.

Playing in away venues has always been tough for men's basketball teams in the ACC, but road wins have proved especially elusive across the board in the conference this year.

Every school in the conference, excluding N.C. State, has on-campus arenas that are crammed with crazed, and often hostile, fans. And State proved last week against North Carolina and Duke that it can pack 'em in as tight and hyped as any other ACC team.

Maryland didn't pick up its first victory in an opponent's home arena until the Terps knocked off UNC at the Smith Center on Jan. 22. Now it is the only team in the league with a winning ACC road record of 2-1.

Duke dealt with consecutive upsets at Maryland and N.C. State in recent weeks. The formerly No. 1 and undefeated Blue Devils were only able to stop their skid down the rankings when they returned to the friendly confines of Cameron Indoor Stadium to down Georgia Tech last week.

UNC holds a 1-2 road record in conference play, while State is 1-1. Clemson, Florida State, Georgia Tech, Virginia and Wake Forest have yet to win an ACC away game.

"The ACC has the best home court venues of any league," said North Carolina coach Matt Doherty.

More proof? Six of the nine teams

THE LOWDOWN ON TODAY'S GAME

North Carolina (11-7, 2-3 ACC) vs. Georgia Tech (9-7, 2-3 ACC)

Game: North Carolina at Georgia Tech
Time: Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Location: Alexander Memorial Coliseum
Radio: 100.7 FM, WCHL-1360 AM
Television: ESPN

Keys for UNC: First and foremost, the Tar Heels need to get Bosh out of his game. It's been said at least a million times, but the truth still remains — UNC's biggest weakness is its lack of inside presence. Williams will have to put forth his best defensive effort yet to contain Bosh in the paint. Felton's knee might be feeling better, but the rest of the Tar Heels will have to drain more shots than they did against N.C. State to keep up with Ga. Tech.

Keys for Ga. Tech: Bosh — a three-time ACC Rookie of the Week honoree — needs to rebound from his miserable 0-for-2 performance against Duke and make UNC ache for a dominant big man like himself. It's quite simple: Bosh needs to post up, box out and tear it up in the paint to put UNC away.

UNC Bench: David Noel saw significant minutes against State, but he'll need to minimize his rookie mistakes against Bosh's better-than-a-freshman skills. A couple blocks from Damien Grant also will be sorely needed.

Ga. Tech Bench: As if Bosh wasn't enough, forwards Isma'il Muhammed and Ed Nelson are just waiting to give him a breather if needed.

Prediction: UNC 78, Georgia Tech 75
COMPILED BY KELLY LUSK

PROBABLE STARTERS

UNC
C: Byron Sanders, 6-9
F: Jawad Williams, 6-8 1/2
F: Rashad McCants, 6-4
G: Jackie Manuel, 6-5
G: Raymond Felton, 6-0 1/2

Georgia Tech
C: Luke Schenschler, 7-1
F: Chris Bosh, 6-10
G: B.J. Elder, 6-4
G: Marvin Lewis, 6-4
G: Jarrett Jack, 6-3

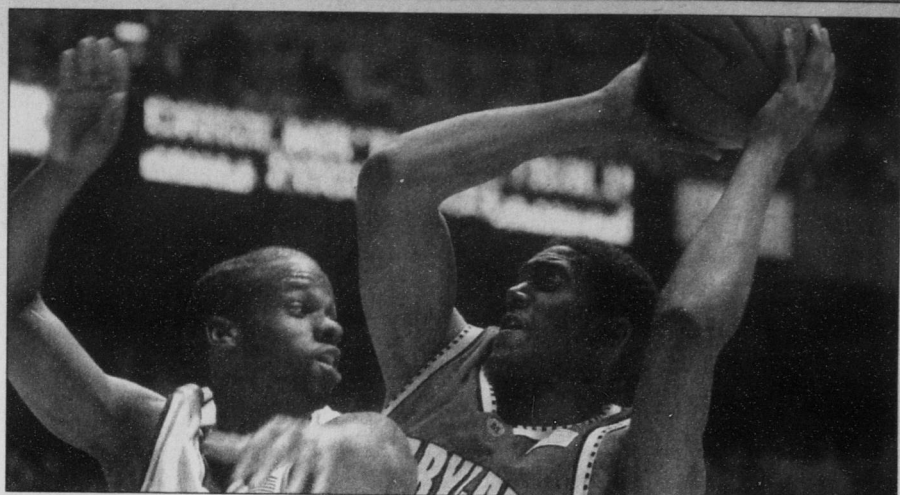
are undefeated in conference play at home.

"Everyone has great home court environments," Doherty said. "It makes it tough, because it becomes a distraction for the other team."

"This year, there is more parity (in the league), so it's played a bigger part. There are so many young players... it's tougher for them than the older guys, who can laugh at the crowds, and like to

shut them up."

— Compiled by Kelly Lusk



DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

Maryland freshman Travis Garrison (right) grabs a rebound over Tar Heel Melvin Scott. The Terrapins garnered their first conference road win of the season against North Carolina at the Smith Center on Jan. 22.

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KANGAROO JACK* Daily 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN Daily 3:45, 7:05, 9:50

GANGS OF NEW YORK Daily 4:15, 7:45

HARRY POTTER & THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS Daily 4:20, 7:30

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NATIONAL SECURITY* Daily 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30

A GUY THING* Daily 3:20, 5:25, 7:35, 9:45

ABOUT SCHMIDT* Daily 4:15, 7:00, 9:40

JUST MARRIED Daily 3:00, 5:00, 7:10, 9:15

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