

# Men's, women's track take aim at ACC title

## Lack of depth a challenge for UNC

BY MARY DUBY  
STAFF WRITER

The North Carolina men's and women's track and field teams hope to run full speed into the indoor season Saturday as they host the Carolina Big 12 meet in the Eddie Smith Field House.

Saturday's meet will start the Tar Heels' race toward ACC indoor titles. The women have won 14 of the last 17 championships, including the 2003 title, and hope to defend their legacy.

"We have the mindset that we should win, but we don't take it for granted," said head coach Dennis Craddock. "We know it's going to

take hard work."

The women will be led by senior Alice Schmidt. Schmidt is a nine-time All-American and two-time outdoor NCAA champion in the 800-meter run.

"A national champion in the 800 and the distance medley relay, she's certainly a force to be reckoned with," Craddock said.

Her vast experience did not go unnoticed by her teammates, as they elected her captain along with senior hurdler Tiffany Flomo, senior pole vaulter Terri Matthews and senior thrower Amy Parulis.

Craddock is counting on the throwers and the middle-distance runners to contribute significantly to the team effort.

"That's a strength area because we have a lot of depth," Craddock said. "We're weak in the horizontal

jumps, the long jump, triple jump."

Junior Laura Gerraughty will attempt to build on the success she enjoyed during the 2003 season. She earned the title of NCAA indoor champion in the shot put. Gerraughty should repeatedly challenge the UNC indoor shot put record that she set last year.

Sorely missed by the women will be senior Shalane Flanagan, who is red-shirting this season to train for July's Olympic trials in the 5,000-meter run.

Having last won the title in 1999, the men's team looks to return to the top of the podium.

"I think we've got a good enough team up front to challenge Clemson and Florida State," Craddock said. "This is the best men's team I've had in a few years."

Senior jumper Daniel Harris,



Senior captain Alice Schmidt twice has won the national championship in the outdoor 800-meter run.

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DENNIS CRADDOCK, UNC INDOOR TRACK COACH

best high school hammer thrower in the country last year and also will be participating in the weight throw for the Tar Heels.

Team strength also arises in the horizontal jumps, as Harris placed third in both the long and triple jumps at last year's ACC indoor championship. Freshmen Britt Taylor and Lazaris Evans will back Harris up in the jumps.

Difficulties on the men's side will arise from its lack of depth.

"We don't have three or four in every event," Craddock said. "We've

got one or two." On Saturday, Craddock will test the young athletes to see if he can find a new source of depth, while still keeping his team focused on the task at hand.

"I don't think any of the teams here are looking to try to qualify anyone for nationals or set school records," Craddock said. "It's really just where are you right now on January the 10th."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

# Surging Tech faces ACC test

## Elder, Jack lead improved squad

BY AARON FITT  
SENIOR WRITER

When Georgia Tech takes the Smith Center court Sunday night, North Carolina fans might be reminded of a previous edition of their own team.

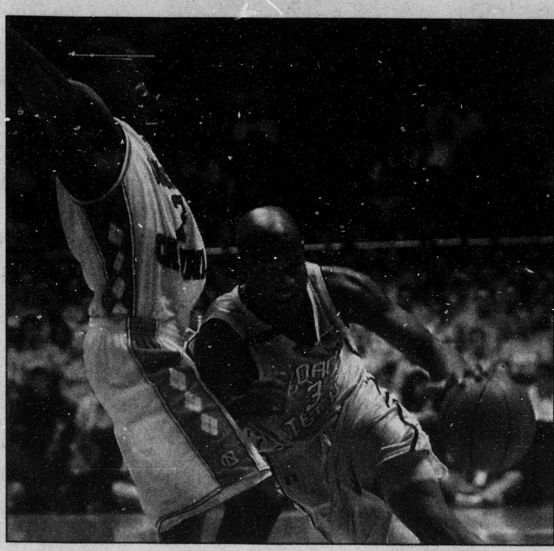
Like the 2002-03 UNC team, this year's Georgia Tech squad burst onto the national scene with a Preseason NIT title.

But unlike last year's Tar Heels, these Yellow Jackets don't figure to fade late in the season and have to settle for the postseason NIT.

The Yellow Jackets, off to a program-best 12-1 start, bear little resemblance to Matt Doherty's final UNC team, beyond the early-season prowess.

For one thing, Tech isn't coached by Doherty, whose volatility proved to have negative effects on his young players. Yellow Jacket coach Paul Hewitt has a much firmer grip on his team.

A second major difference is simply that Tech isn't relying on a flock of freshmen to keep it afloat.



Georgia Tech guard Jarrett Jack (3) drives past Raymond Felton on March 1 at the Smith Center. Jack and Felton will be major factors again Sunday.

The Jackets have plenty of experienced sophomores and juniors that should be able to withstand the rigors of the ACC schedule.

Of course, the major reason UNC faltered down the stretch a year ago was the injury of center Sean May. A serious injury to B.J. Elder or Jarrett Jack could similarly derail Georgia Tech, but probably not as badly. This is a balanced team that does not rely too heavily on any one player.

"They're very athletic, very skilled on the perimeter," said UNC forward David Noel. "They have good post players. It should be a good game."

Rashad McCants offered an equally complimentary analysis of the Yellow Jackets, although he said UNC should have an advantage inside.

"I know they're real fast, athletic, they like to shoot the ball a lot, and they're a great defensive team," he said. "I think we match up pretty well. I don't think they match up too well in the post with us. But their guards are very good, very fast, and I think it's going to be a real good game."

But if Georgia Tech comes up short Sunday, don't expect the wheels to come off its season.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

## THE LOWDOWN ON SUNDAY'S GAME

**No. 8 Ga. Tech (12-1, 0-0 ACC)**  
at  
**No. 12 UNC (9-2, 0-1 ACC)**

### PROBABLE STARTERS

**Georgia Tech**  
C: Luke Schenscher, 7-1  
F: Anthony McHenry, 6-7  
F: Marvin Lewis, 6-4  
G: B.J. Elder, 6-4  
G: Jarrett Jack, 6-3

**UNC**  
C: Sean May, 6-9  
F: Rashad Williams, 6-9  
F: Rashad McCants, 6-4  
G: Melvin Scott, 6-2  
G: Raymond Felton, 6-1

COMPILED BY AARON FITT

# Relay champion Gainey hopes to go out on top

## UNC senior to compete in 3 events

BY ALICIA JONES  
STAFF WRITER

The long wait is finally over.

On Saturday at the Carolina Big 12 meet, North Carolina senior sprinter Amissa Gainey will get to see if all of her hard work has paid off.

Middle-distance and long-distance runners get a chance to compete during the cross country season, but sprinters have no indicator of their abilities until the start of the indoor season.

Gainey is simply focused on improving on her past performances.

Her years as a sprinter have been successful, so it is likely her final season will be a strong finish to a storied career.

That career began when Gainey was a freshman at Clayton High School. She was the team's MVP for three years, and the 1999 State Championship MVP.

She held the state title in the 100-meter dash for three consecutive years, and she also won titles in the 200 and long jump events.

She had an outstanding freshman season at North Carolina, capturing 10 top-five finishes. She finished fifth in the ACC in the 200 and fourth in the long jump.

Gainey's distance medley relay team set an American record her sophomore year at the ACC Championships with a time of 10 minutes, 59.76 seconds.

In the 2003 season, Gainey

earned a national title in the distance medley relay. She also was the anchor leg of the 4x400-meter relay team that broke an 11-year-old school record.

She plans to compete in the 60, 200 and 400 in the indoor season, with a focus on the 200. She also hopes for a repeat performance in the distance medley relay.

Her personal best in the 60 is 7.49 seconds. She plans to shoot for a qualifying time of 23.9 seconds in the 200 at the Big 12 meet, but nothing record-breaking — yet.

Coach Dennis Craddock isn't expecting many breakthrough performances at tomorrow's competition.

The meet will host many smaller schools but will include big name schools such as Duke and N.C. State as well.

The first competition can be nerve-wracking for an athlete who hasn't competed in months. For an athlete who hasn't trained properly, disappointment can come in the form of a loss or even an injury.

Gainey hasn't experienced many serious injuries, but she admits the first meet can be mentally challenging.

"You have to make sure you stay in shape over the summer so you won't get beat at the first meet," she said. "So yes, it's kind of men-

tal, but we've been training since August so we've had enough time to train for it."

Gainey was recruited by about 20 other schools to run track, but she says being a Tar Heel was always a childhood dream.

She plans to enter graduate school after North Carolina and study sports marketing.

As for her track career, she plans to take a break for a few years after she graduates, but she says it won't be goodbye.

"Everyone thinks I should run, and I do want to run, so I probably will run in the future," she said. "I just love track, I couldn't see myself in any other sport, definitely."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

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