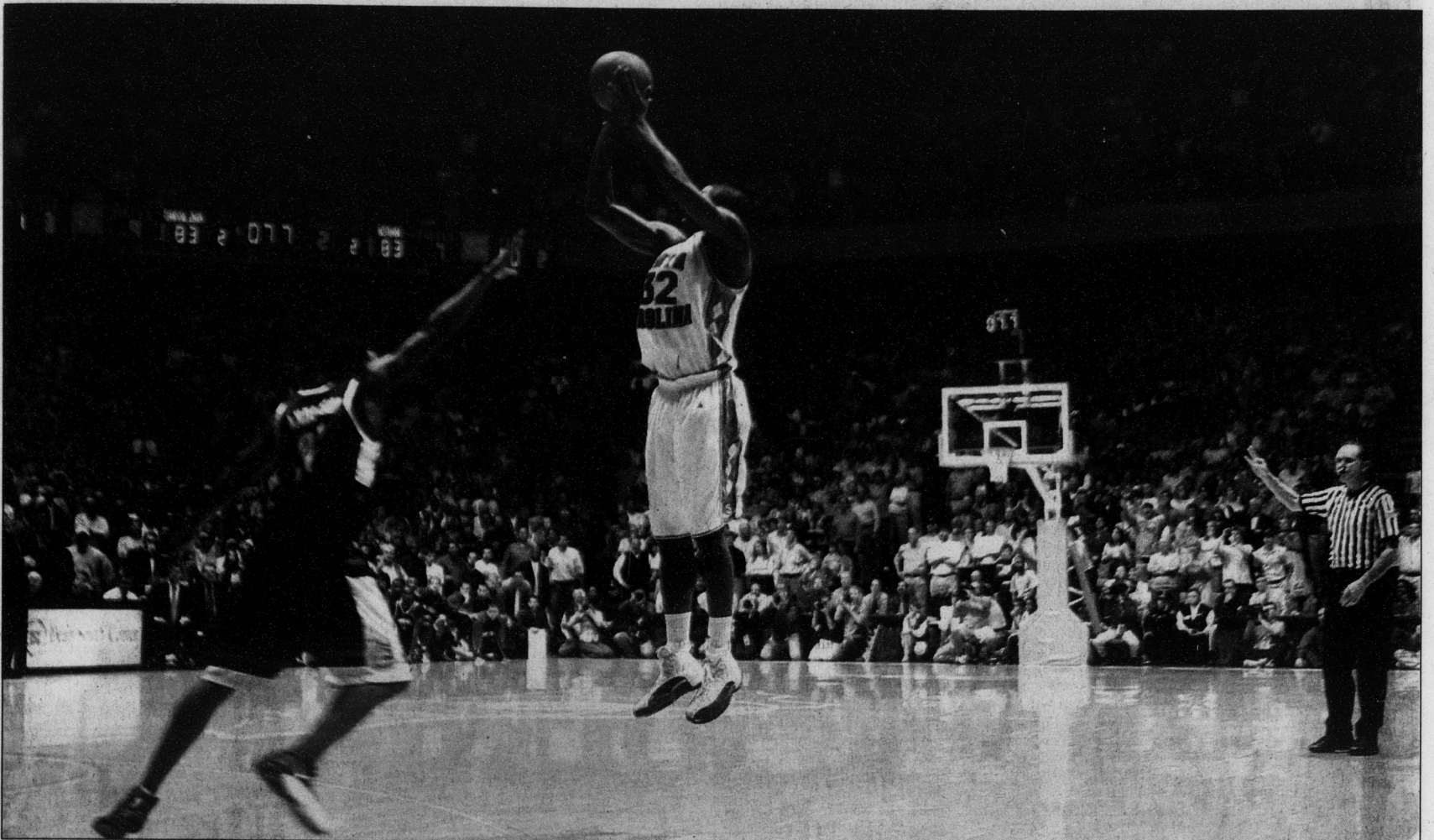
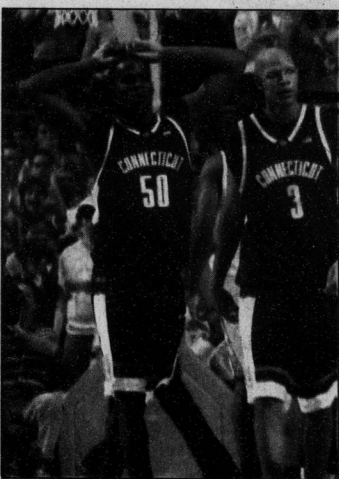


UNC 86 | UCONN 83



UNC sophomore swingman Rashad McCants (32) releases the game-winning 3-pointer over UConn guard Rashad Anderson in North Carolina's 86-83 victory against the top-ranked Huskies on Saturday at the Smith Center. DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

THE HEIGHT OF DRAMA



UConn center Emeka Okafor (50) raises his arms in frustration during the first half of Saturday's game. Okafor paced the Huskies with 29 points, 13 rebounds and six blocks. DTH/GARRETT HALL

BY JAMIE AGIN
SENIOR WRITER

Another North Carolina lead was going the way of the four-year college superstar.

And the No. 9 Tar Heels, which have been dominated inside at times this season, was being destroyed again.

The best player on the nation's best team was, in typical fashion, doing the destroying.

An Emeka Okafor baseline jumper. A dunk. A baseline turnaround. A layup. Another baseline turnaround.

All of it led to an atypical display from Roy Williams — a thrown towel, a slammed clipboard, but namely, a timeout.

And his Tar Heels did something else they have struggled with this year, pulling out a tight 86-83 thriller against No. 1 Connecticut at the Smith Center on Saturday.

"I think after I screamed and broke a clipboard and broke several blood vessels in my head, we

stopped going for the ball and then we tried to make him score over us," Williams said. "I think we did a better job."

The win, UNC's 10th all-time against top-ranked teams, resembled the losses to Wake Forest, Kentucky and Maryland, during which double-digit leads vanished.

"I do think the kids will gain a great deal from this win," Williams said. "Now we've got to be able to take that same kind of defensive intensity on the road with us."

In the first half, the Tar Heels (11-3) got physical with the taller Huskies (14-2), forcing 14 turnovers. UNC went on a 19-5 run over the last six minutes and led 50-36 at halftime.

"I thought the first half, they came in and bodychecked us and got into our stuff and wouldn't let us move, and I didn't know some of that was allowed," said a caustic

SEE MEN'S HOOPS, PAGE 13

McCants shines in crunch time

BY AARON FITT
SENIOR WRITER

Rashad McCants did not take over the end of North Carolina's 86-83 win against top-ranked Connecticut on Saturday. He wasn't the go-to guy.

Sure, the sophomore swingman scored UNC's final 10 points, including the game-tying and game-winning 3-pointers. Yes, he finished with a team-high 27 points on 10-of-16 shooting. True, he simply played brilliantly.

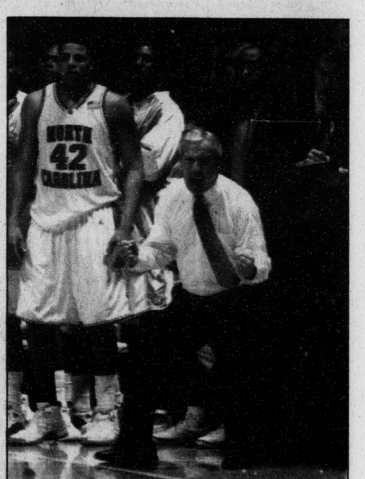
But McCants didn't take over. Just ask UNC coach Roy Williams.

"I don't think he did that," Williams said. "He ran the play I told him to run, he made the shot I told him to make — I think I took over."

"I don't believe in that stuff about go-to. Just do the stuff I tell you to do, and it'll work."

The coach paused, thought for a moment, then decided there was a little more to say.

SEE McCANTS, PAGE 13



UNC coach Roy Williams (center) said he thought his players were "feeling sorry for themselves" during the second half of the Tar Heels' upset victory against Connecticut. DTH/GARRETT HALL

Sports geeks are all show, no substance

About two months ago I was invited to have dinner at the home of a Duke family. Contrary to what you may be thinking, the couple was very hospitable and cooked a fabulous meal for their son and his friends — a mixture of Blue Devils and Tar Heels.

The dinner conversation quickly turned to ACC basketball. The Duke men tossed around their predictions for the upcoming season, while the female company fell silent.

I was rather intimidated because before I was admitted to this University two years ago, I assumed 3-point field goals sailed through goalposts, not hoops. Nonetheless, I couldn't stand perpetuating any sports-related gender stereotypes by keeping quiet.

I had little to offer except some research I had done earlier for a short preview of Maryland's roster.

Seizing a lull in the conversation, I spouted the few facts I knew: preseason ranking, recruiting class information, statistics



GABRIELLE DEROSA
SPORTS CHIC

on Jamar Smith and a quote from Gary Williams.

Cue sound of needle scratching record.

Maybe the table was shocked because I was a girl who knew something about sports. Maybe they were embarrassed because they had neglected to study up on this year's Terps.

The answer is irrelevant, but it did get me thinking.

How easy is it to parade as a sports connoisseur? All I did was flip through a media guide for an hour. How much effort did these guys put in? More importantly, why did I allow myself to feel so inferior by assuming they were

SEE SPORTS GEEKS, PAGE 11

Fencers dominate duals

BY BRANDON COWARD
STAFF WRITER

For the first time in four years, Carmichael Auditorium was filled with the sounds of sword-play as North Carolina dominated the competition at the Carolina Duals.

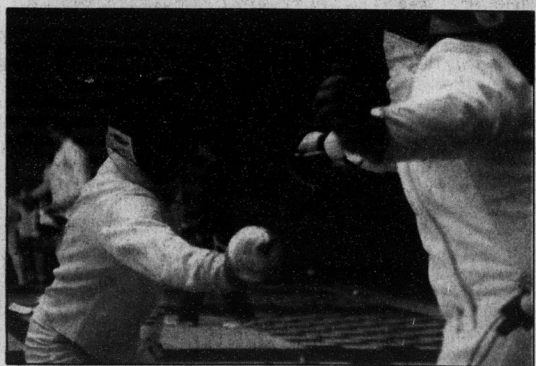
The competition consisted of club teams from N.C. State, Johns Hopkins, Maryland, Virginia, Virginia Tech, Clemson and Florida, as well as the varsity team from Haverford.

The North Carolina men swept the meet 7-0 on Saturday, improving their overall record to 15-1 (6-1 against varsity teams).

The Tar Heel women's squad was just as overpowering on Sunday, also sweeping its competition and improving to 14-3 (7-3).

The men's sabre contingent had the best performance of any of the groups, with two fencers, junior Wes Newkirk and freshman Joe Pipkin, going undefeated for the tournament.

"The men's sabre team performed relatively well," Pipkin said. "There were a couple let-downs here and there, but sometimes it's hard to stay up for club teams."



UNC senior Matt Jednak (left) fences against Virginia's Setton Smyth in an epee bout Saturday. Jednak won 5-3, one of his three wins. DTH/JESSICA RUSSELL

The women's sabre squad, comprised of seniors Liz Rainbolt, Carolyn Hack and Jen Hunt, had a strong showing. The three went 43-7 in the meet.

Their toughest match of the day came against Johns Hopkins. Six of the nine bouts they fenced against JHU were decided by one point; UNC won five of them.

"Toughness is actually something the women's sabre team has been working on," Hunt said. "We

used to be pretty sad at the pressure point, in a 4-4 bout, but I think our improvement in that area shows how much we've matured."

While the women's sabre team proved it could get a tough win, Coach Ron Miller felt the men's team had the opposite problem; they lacked strong competition.

"They won easily, but that's

SEE FENCING, PAGE 13

UNC men swim to rare draw

BY BRIANA GORMAN
STAFF WRITER

The scene looked all too familiar on Sunday to the No. 22 North Carolina men's swimming and diving team. Swimmers lined the edges of the pool in Koury

Natatorium to cheer their teammates on as the outcome of the meet came down to the last race — again.

Last weekend, the men's team lost the meet to Harvard after failing to win the final 400-yard freestyle relay.

Victory was not meant to be again Sunday, but neither was defeat as the men came away with a rare tie, 150-150, against Clemson.

The tie denied the swimming program its 500th dual meet win, yet history was made as it was the

SEE SWIMMING, PAGE 13