



BRANDON PARKER
GOT THE J-U-ICE

Fan loyalty not only geographic

I realized it when I was 3 years old. My family and I were attending a Redskins-Eagles game on a warm Sunday in September of 1987. The Redskins — still in their glory days — had just scored a touchdown to put the game out of reach.

Those Eagles fans that had made the trek to Washington, D.C., were not happy. Neither was my 6-year-old brother.

As he passionately booed the Redskins, the Eagles fans, who had created a sea of green and white paraphernalia around our family, became amused with who they thought to be a fellow fan.

"Hey kid, who's your favorite team?" said a man in a Randall Cunningham jersey.

"THE DALLAS COWBOYS!" my brother exclaimed.

The Philly fans looked at one another with frowns of surprise.

Not only was my brother booing his successful "hometown" team, but he had the audacity to take a liking to the Redskins' main nemesis.

Knowing how hostile Philadelphia sports die-hards can get, my father quickly dispelled the statement by smiling nervously and blurting out, "Oh, he doesn't know any better."

Since that day I've realized that there's an expectation among fans that everyone ought to support their local professional teams, especially if they're playing well.

I don't see why. I'm a proud product of the state of Virginia, but I'll be the first to express my dislike of the Redskins and instead root for Randy Moss and the Minnesota Vikings.

However, for some reason, many of my friends view me as a "sellout" for abandoning the most expensive disappointment during the past decade.

But the thing that really gets me is that a number of these supposed devoted fans are the ones that cheer for their state's squad when it's convenient, or, in other words, when the team is winning.

Let's take the Carolina Panthers, for example.

Since September, the number of Panthers' fans has grown from an amount I could count on my fingers and toes to the entire southern part of the East Coast.

Sure, there's nothing wrong with taking pride in those hometown teams, and every fan has to start somewhere when it comes to creating a loyalty to a sports squad, but don't come running back home with your arms wide open after taking seven other stops in your bandwagon trip.

As a member of a state without an official sports team, maybe I've been disillusioned. But it takes the fun and democracy out of being a fan if you can't pick any squad you want to support, regardless of where the team plays its home games.

Maybe this team was playing when you first watched the sport. Maybe a player from this team inspired you to pick up a ball.

Or maybe, in a girl's case, you cheer for a certain player just because he's good-looking.

Whatever it may be, I'm here to tell out-of-state fans that you have done no wrong.

Some local sports teams just aren't the right match for their native sons and daughters.

Now that the legendary Joe Gibbs has returned to try and tame the monster that Redskins owner Daniel Snyder has created in the nation's capital, some ask me if I can find it in my heart to show some love and support for the home team.

After seeing me shake my head, laugh and respond with a resounding "never," people often give me the same looks that those Philly fans relayed to my older brother.

The difference is, I know better.

Contact Brandon Parker
at bcparker@email.unc.edu.

Little leads Tar Heels past 'Noles

UNC survives 23 turnovers for 6-point win

BY DANIEL BLANK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

For 16 seconds in the first half of the North Carolina women's basketball game, the scoreboard operator forgot to restart the clock, setting the tone for an all-around sloppy affair.

In only the second game at Carmichael Auditorium in the last 28 days, Florida State and the "road-weary" Tar Heels combined for 49 turnovers in UNC's 66-60 win Sunday.

"The main thing is, we played hard and we won," said UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell. "We'll keep working on taking a little better care and value of the basketball."

Paced by 13 steals, the Tar Heels converted 26 Seminole turnovers into 18 points.

UNC set the tone for the game immediately, committing a turnover on each of their first three possessions.

Despite that, the Tar Heels (17-3, 7-2 in the ACC) jumped on the Seminoles 11-2, a run that started when Camille Little stole an inbounds pass and converted the layup.

But the 'Noles (10-10, 3-6) countered with 10 points in a row to steal the momentum.

The Seminole run was fueled by the inside play of center Trinetta Moore. Moore scored the team's first eight points and led FSU with 20 for the game.

UNC also claimed a 10 point lead to open the second half, but FSU responded with another run that kept the game close until the final minutes.

Again it was Moore who led FSU back, scoring six points in a 9-2 run that cut UNC's lead to two.

Hatchell said the team's inexperience has been the biggest reason why the Tar Heels have been able to put a team away after jumping on an early lead.

Although each team recorded 13 steals, both sides agreed that the marathon of turnovers was mainly a result of sloppy play.

But Hatchell said she's been satisfied with the Tar Heels' intensity in each of

the two games since their upset loss at Wake Forest Jan. 26.

"We're playing very aggressive," Hatchell said. "I can live with the turnovers as long as we're playing hard."

UNC survived 23 turnovers because of the performance of Little, who led all players with 27 points, 9 rebounds and 4 steals.

As a freshman, Little did not expect to have such a prominent role so early in her career.

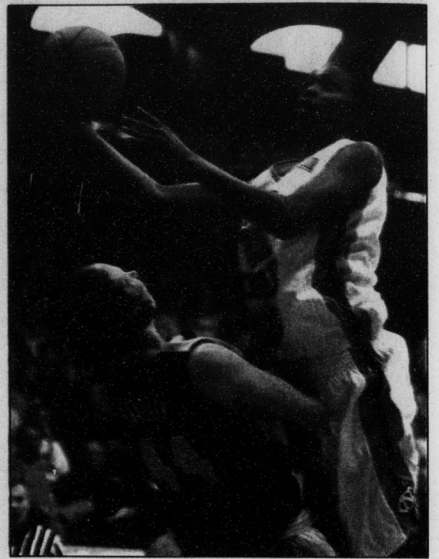
"I didn't anticipate playing this much," Little said. "I just wanted to come and play as a freshman and contribute. (Hatchell) told me she didn't expect me to do this well."

Apart from her gaudy numbers, Little jump-started the final spurt that pushed the Tar Heels to victory.

After a pair of Lauren Bradley free throws knotted the score at 56, Little took a pass from fellow freshman Ivory Latta on the right block and hit the layup to give UNC the lead.

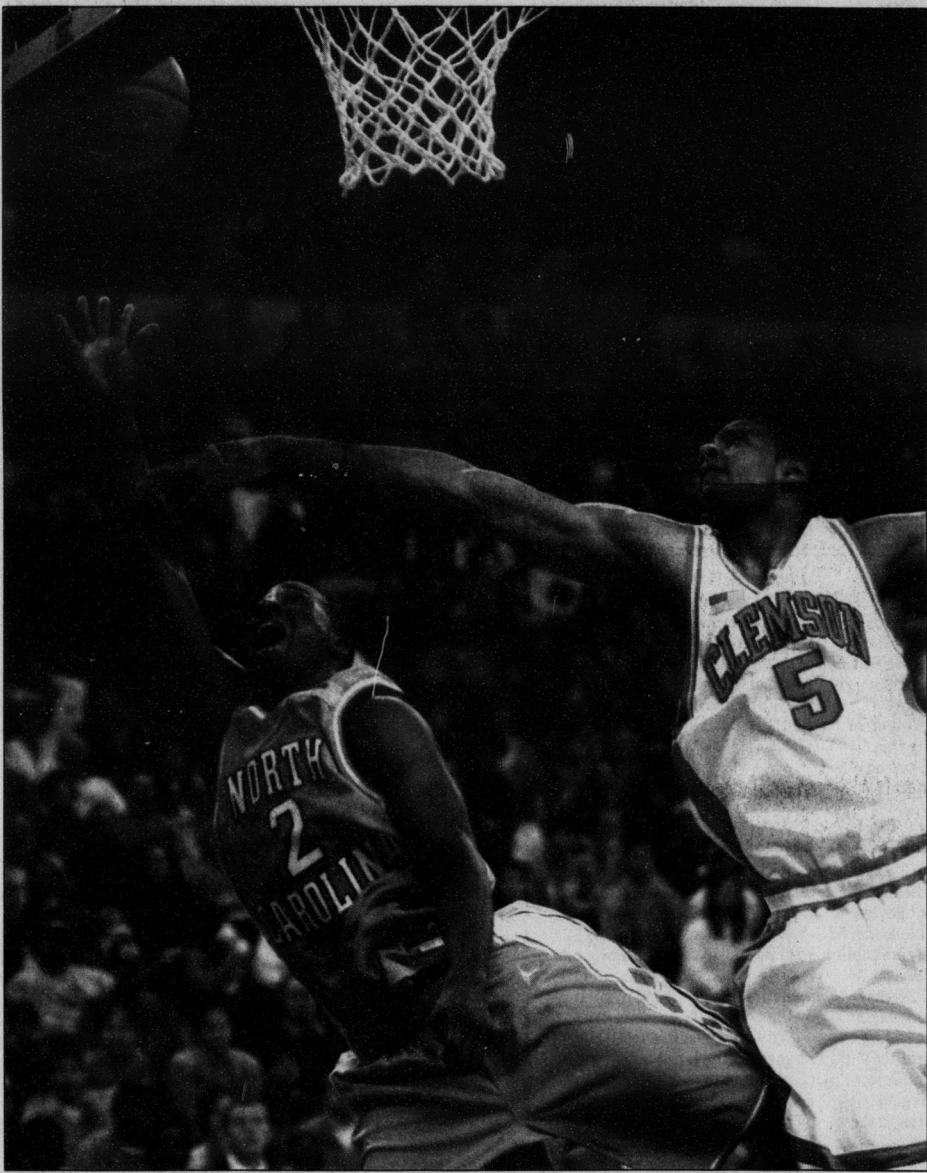
Just seconds later, on the opposite end of the floor, she stepped in front of Shante Williams to draw the charge.

SEE WOMEN'S HOOPS, PAGE 9



DTH/KIMBERLY CRAVEN

North Carolina forward Camille Little (20) drives for a shot against FSU center Lauren Bradley in Sunday's 66-60 win for the Tar Heels at Carmichael Auditorium.



DTH/KIMBERLY CRAVEN

North Carolina point guard Raymond Felton (2) goes for a layup against Clemson center Sharrod Ford. Felton scored eight points and dished out seven assists in the Tar Heels' 81-72 loss to the Tigers at Littlejohn Coliseum on Saturday.

TREYS TOPPLE UNC

Tigers hit 11 of 13 from behind arc

BY CHRIS GILFILLAN
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

CLEMSON, S.C. — Although 84.6 percent from beyond the arc sealed the deal for Clemson, the No. 12 Tar Heels were at a distinct disadvantage from the beginning.

The Tigers' dominance, both inside and outside, began at tipoff and led to an 81-72 final.

The Tigers' Chey Christie grabbed the tip, drove down the floor and dished to a cutting Olu Babalola, who slammed the Tigers' first points home. It was a fitting beginning to a game that would center around the size advantage Clemson had over the quick Tar Heels.

And after taking a 17-14 lead with 14:07 left in the first half, the Tar Heels never led again.

The Tigers went on a 14-0 blitz that included scoring from five different players.

The Tigers shot 11 for 13 from behind the arc in the game.

Clemson (9-10, 2-6 in the ACC) came into the game with the worst three-point shooting average in the ACC (23.4 percent), but strong inside-outside play helped the Tiger guards get open looks.

"They hit them," said UNC wingman Rashad McCants. "They shot the lights out and there was nothing we could do about it. We just played great defense and they hit all their shots."

With UNC's 6-foot-9 center Sean May stiffed on the inside against twin towers Sharrod Ford and Chris Hobbs, the Tar Heels had to keep the tempo high to have a chance.

May finished with only 3 rebounds.

"We needed to be solid inside,

SEE MEN'S HOOPS, PAGE 9

Road woes still haunt Tar Heels

BY CHRIS GILFILLAN
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

CLEMSON, S.C. — The numbers have come in, and for North Carolina, it has nothing to do with the 11-for-13 3-point shooting Clemson put up on Saturday.

The loss almost was destined the second UNC stepped off the bus. On the road this season, the Tar Heels have played abysmally, offensively and defensively.

This season alone they have won just two away games — Davidson and Cleveland State. And UNC has yet to win an ACC road game.

Looking back to last season, the Tar Heels are 2-12 on the road since a win against Florida State in Tallahassee on Dec. 12, 2002.

SEE ROAD WOES, PAGE 9

Spartans top UNC after late tech fall

BY MICHAEL MARTINEZ
STAFF WRITER

GREENSBORO — It was supposed to be an out-of-conference tune-up match.

It turned into a dogfight. And for the North Carolina wrestling team, Saturday's dual meet at UNC-Greensboro ended in disaster.

The Spartans won the match in the final bout after Kevin Artis scored a 5-point technical fall victory against Rick Seibold that tied the match 20-20 and gave UNC-G a 1-0 match advantage in technical falls.

The advantage in technical falls gave UNC-G (4-4) the victory according to NCAA tiebreaker rules.

Saturday's victory at Flemming Gymnasium was the Spartans' first victory against UNC (3-5) in school history and their first against an ACC opponent in four seasons.

UNC coach C.D. Mock said the loss was typical of the direction the team has been heading this season.

"With this team right now, nothing really is a surprise," Mock said. "We're struggling through some adversity. This is a completely different team than it was in the beginning of the year."

Saturday's match started out in UNC's favor, with the Tar Heels taking the first two bouts of the night.

Andrew Slack put UNC on the board with an 8-3 victory against UNC-G 149-pounder Kevin Pietropinto. Tar Heel sophomore Ashton Buswell followed up on Slack's handiwork by getting out a 4-3 victory against O.T. Johnson at 157 pounds.

The Spartans refused to give up, however, and scored victories in three of the next four bouts.

UNC-G senior Keith Ritter got his team back into the match with an 8-4 victory against Garrett Atkinson at 165 pounds. The Spartans then took their first team lead when Charles Jones pinned Tar Heel 174-pounder Eric Zakrzewski.

The Tar Heels reclaimed a bit of their momentum when Mark Canty dismantled Spartan 184-pounder Joe Lowe with a 15-4 major decision, but Lowe kept the door open for his team by avoiding the pin.

The teams traded victories in the next two bouts, as Darren Burns eked out a 3-1 victory against Venroy July at 197 pounds, and Tar Heel heavyweight Ryan Adams notched his 22nd victory of the season by pinning Brett Reed in the second period.

The match appeared to be wrapped up after UNC's Drew Forshey scored another major decision for the Tar Heels at 125 pounds, but the Spartans crept back by taking the final two bouts of the night.

David Johnson scored a controversial victory in the final seconds of his bout with UNC's Bobby Shaw at 125 pounds. With the score tied 2-2 in the third period, Johnson was awarded two points for a takedown as time expired.

After the match, Mock said he was extremely disappointed with the call.

"I'm not one to say something like this but that kid didn't beat (Shaw)," Mock said. "The ref gave the kid the points. I'm furious about that."

The Spartans capitalized on Johnson's victory when Artis knocked out his technical fall victory in the night's final bout at 133 pounds, and the match ended on a sour note for the Tar Heels.

UNC won't have much time to dwell on the loss. The Tar Heels have an important ACC dual meet against Duke on Tuesday.

"We're not close to where we want to be," Adams said. "We came out here, let's be honest, we stunk it up today. If we want to reach our goals, we've got to step it up as a team. If we don't, it's going to be a long rest of the year."

Contact the Sports Editor
at sports@unc.edu.