

Men's tennis splits weekend matches with ranked foes

BY DAVID MOSES
STAFF WRITER

Off to its best start in nearly 30 years, the North Carolina men's tennis team was looking to continue its perfect season.

However, after defeating No. 57 Virginia Tech 6-1 on Friday, the No. 52 Tar Heels dropped a close 5-2 decision to No. 12 Virginia Commonwealth on Sunday.

After dropping the doubles point Friday at Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center, the Tar Heels (7-1) fought back to take all six singles matches from Va. Tech (4-3).

"We're not doing some things we've been working on in practice," said North Carolina coach Sam Paul about his team's doubles play. "I'm very disappointed."

Senior Nick Monroe easily won his match at the top spot, and fellow senior Andy Metzler extended his personal winning streak to 11 matches at No. 2 singles.

Sophomores Derek Porter, Raian Luchici, Brad Pomeroy and junior Geoff Boyd all won their singles matches in straight sets.

On Sunday, the Tar Heels once again dropped the doubles point to VCU (11-0).

Monroe won his match when his opponent was forced to withdraw. At that point, things looked good for the Tar Heels.

However, UNC was unable to win the number of singles matches it needed to pull the upset.

Metzler had his personal winning streak snapped as he dropped a 6-2, 6-2 decision.

"I played pretty good for a while," Metzler said. "You know you are going to have a bad match

every once in a while. Unfortunately, I chose today to have my bad match."

In a match marred with arguments, Luchici lost 7-6 (8-6), 6-3. Luchici was forced to default the last point of the first set after he was penalized for throwing his racket.

He was later penalized an entire game in the second set for arguing with his opponent.

There were also some controversial calls in Boyd's 7-6 (7-3), 6-2 victory at No. 6, which resulted in tension and several overrulings.

Paul, despite the disagreements, said he does not worry about the officiating.

"I'm more concerned with our young men and how they handle situations," Paul said. "They've got some things to learn, and I will take care of that."

Paul was upset because he knows part of his team's role is to uphold UNC's reputation.

"I'm very disappointed in my team," he said. "First and foremost, we are going to represent the University in the right way."

"Some young men did not do that today, and we are going to take care of that."

Boyd said the team will not have any problems bouncing back after its first bout with adversity.

"It better motivate us," he said. "I know everybody on the squad, and we're going to fight our asses off, and it's just going to motivate us to fight harder."

Monroe seconded Boyd's feelings and doesn't think the Tar Heels will have any problems with motivation.

"We'll bounce right back," Monroe said. "We fought ... the whole way through. We'll be ready for the next match."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Tar Heels set floor exercise mark

BY GABRIELLE DE ROSA
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Entering this weekend, no gymnastics team in the nation had scored above a 49.7 on floor exercise — until North Carolina stepped off the mat on Sunday.

Courtney Bumpers earned her third consecutive 10.0, and three other Tar Heels earned scores of 9.975 as UNC swept the top six places in the meet at Carmichael Auditorium.

In fact, UNC's lowest score was a 9.925, giving the team an overall score of 49.875 in the event.

But senior Anna Wilson and Olivia Trusty, who both received a 9.975, said there's always room to improve.

"We can just make it better," Trusty said. "Everything we do can be better."

Wilson said she knows the judging will change in the postseason.

"When we get into it at regionals or nationals, we're going to be scored a little differently," Wilson said. "They differentiate a lot better in those higher meets."

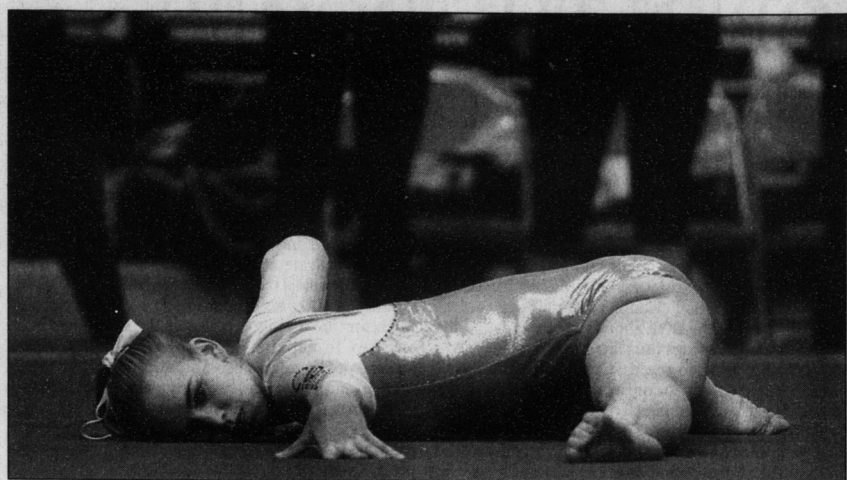
But Coach Derek Galvin doesn't see much room for improvement.

"Right now, our team tumbling on the floor is among the very best in the country," Galvin said. "If this meet had featured Alabama, Georgia and Utah, or UCLA, you would not have noticed much of a difference between our team on floor and those teams."

"Actually, our team is stronger on floor."

Mikel Hester kicked off the rotation with a 9.975 in a slightly different routine from Friday's meet against N.C. State, which garnered a 9.825.

Hester's routine lacked her usual double back flip when a fall in warmups on bars prompted Galvin to change her floor routine



DTH/JOHN DUDLEY

North Carolina senior Maddy Curley tied her career high with a 9.95 on her floor exercise routine Sunday. As a team, the Tar Heels earned a score of 49.875 on floor, the highest score earned by a team this season.

on Sunday.

"Her other routine — the one we went with today — doesn't have the potential for the same execution deductions," Galvin said.

And there were none for Hester on Sunday.

Senior Maddy Curley followed Hester with a 9.95, which tied her personal best on the event.

Freshman Christine Robella gave a flawless routine until her final tumbling pass. Galvin said she gained too much height and couldn't properly stick the landing.

"I'll take that deduction because it happened as a result of doing it

better than she should have," Galvin said. "She had too much power on that last pass, and that's something we can address."

Trusty, who performed after Robella, said she thought Sunday's routine was one of her best.

Wilson followed with a tweaked routine after a fall on Friday.

"This late into the season when I still haven't hit a routine, it's so awesome to have a judge reward my performance," Wilson said.

Then it was time for the grand finale.

For the second time in three days, Bumpers brought the crowd

to its feet with a 10.0 on floor.

"Courtney's tumbling is so big we want to keep her at the end to help build the routines," Galvin said.

After a record-breaking day, the Tar Heels are itching to get to the postseason.

"I pray every night that this team will have the opportunity to compete at the NCAA championships because on floor they belong there," he said. "They definitely belong there."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Monroe fuels early success for UNC

BY DANIEL MALLOY
STAFF WRITER

While waiting for the serve to come, Nick Monroe constantly bounces to and fro, ready to strike.

He rocks to the left and to the right and when his opponent tosses the ball in the air, Monroe hops from one foot to the other in preparation.

He eyes the yellow ball whizzing through the air then uncoils his perfect, son-of-a-tennis-coach form, sailing the serve back to its origin.

The shot flies back to the server, in this case Virginia Commonwealth's Arnaud LeCloerec, and the two exchange a baseline rally.

But as soon as LeCloerec gives North Carolina's No. 1 player an opening, he darts to the net and delivers a well-placed kill shot.

The formula has worked to perfection for Monroe this spring.

The senior is 8-0 in singles matches, ranked No. 23 in the country and was named the ACC Men's Tennis Performer of the Week after his Feb. 14 upset of Georgia's Bo Hodge, who is ranked sixth.

On Friday against 57th-ranked Virginia Tech, Monroe set the tone with a 6-3, 6-2 victory against Andreas Lauland, though he and Geoff Boyd dropped their doubles match.

The team went on to claim all six singles matches for a 6-1 victory.

On Sunday, the Tar Heels faced a much tougher test in No. 12 VCU. Monroe and Boyd came out with a vengeance and dominated their doubles match, winning 8-1 against LeCloerec and Florian Marquardt.

Monroe then played LeCloerec off the court, literally. With Monroe leading 4-3 in the first set, VCU's top singles player had to retire because of a right arm injury.

Coach Sam Paul praised his top performer's ferocious play.

"He's been playing really well, doing a great job," Paul said. "(He) did a great job today in doubles. He's our leader. He's our fighter."

Monroe's leadership is evident on the court. He leads the pregame warmups and stretches. During his matches he will often yell "Go Heels" to his teammates on other courts, always mindful of the collective over the individual.

When asked about his individual goals he did not say anything about an ACC championship or a national ranking.

"I'm just trying to give 110 percent every day I come out to practice or to a match," Monroe said. "But the team, that's what I'm worried about."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

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