

UNC cruises past Spartans

BY GABRIELLE DEROSA
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

It was difficult to discern which statistic best represented the way the North Carolina baseball team blew UNC-Greensboro out of the water 10-3 at Boshamer Stadium.

It could have been the eight Spartan pitchers that made trips to the mound Wednesday night.

Or the eight runs the Tar Heels scored with two outs in the bottom of the second.

Or the back-to-back solo home runs — on back-to-back pitches, no less — launched by Matt Ellington and Mell Adams.

But perhaps the most telling moment of the debacle came by the bottom of the fifth when, after Ellington's home run, every starter had crossed home plate.

"It's kind of what we needed," said UNC coach Mike Fox. "To hit some balls out of the ballpark, move some runners, and we got a good clean pitching effort until the last inning."

But it was the last inning that the Tar Heels (29-10) lost their chance at completely shutting out the Spartans (23-10).

Scott Senatore relieved Scott Manshack in the top of the ninth.

After walking the first three batters, Fox put in Michael Gross, only to have Gross balk in Greensboro's first run of the night.

A fly ball allowed another Spartan runner to tag up from third, and the third and final run scored on an RBI groundout.

The shoddy ninth inning aside, the Tar Heels played a confidence-restoring game offensively as well as defensively.

Starter Robert Woodard pitched six innings and gave up four hits, improving his record to 4-1.

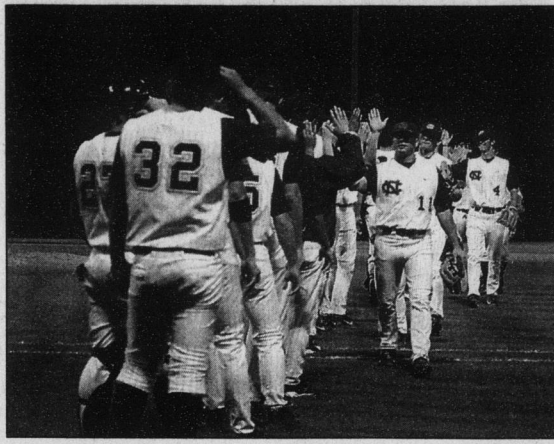
"That was the key to the game," Fox said. "He's really pitched well as a starter for us. ... Just around the plate, a great outing and what we needed, certainly."

The pitching staff is on a steady rise after giving up only six runs in 20 innings during the weekend series against Clemson.

"We wish we'd gotten the shutout because our pitching's been really outstanding the last couple of weeks," Fox said.

On the offensive side, cleanup batter Chris Iannetta went 1 for 4, but his three-run double in his second at bat of the second inning was satisfaction enough.

"It's exactly what you want when you got a guy on the ropes and the bases loaded," Fox said. "You want somebody to step up and really put



DTH/LAURA MORTON

Michael Gross (32) closed the Tar Heels' 10-3 win against Greensboro. Outfielder Chase Younts (11) went 1 for 4 with two RBI and a home run.

the dagger in."

Iannetta, who has the highest batting average on the team, broke his 23-game hitting streak last Friday against Clemson.

"Anytime you get a hit in a big situation, it helps things out," Iannetta said. "But as for confidence, I don't feel any different than when I was on that streak."

Chase Younts also added two RBI with a shot over the right-field

fence in that crushing second inning. Jay Cox, Marshall Hubbard and Ellington also drove in one run apiece in the inning.

"We've just got to score runners when they get on base," Fox said. "We've got to play good defense, and we'll be in every game we play."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Price goes deep in Tar Heel win

Offense dominates second game

BY BRANDON COWARD
STAFF WRITER

After Wednesday, senior Emily Price's dad, Mike, has three more balls to add to his basket.

Price's dad is a fixture behind the left-field fence of the UNC softball field.

"He claims that he can feel it when I'm going to hit one — my teammates say they can too," Price said. "I don't know what he's doing out there."

What he's doing is waiting for his daughter's home runs.

Price's three jacks were instrumental in helping the North Carolina softball team secure their 39th and 40th wins of the season in Wednesday's doubleheader against East Carolina.

North Carolina won the first contest, 1-0, and dominated the second, 11-4.

The wins put UNC in position to surpass last year's 40-win total and makes it only the sixth North Carolina team in Coach Donna Papa's 19-year tenure at UNC to reach the mark.

Papa said the team's success is even more pleasing in light of the fact that the team lost its best returning hitter to off-season surgery and other players to injury.

"We lost the top four batters in our order at the beginning of the year," Papa said. "A lot of people have stepped up. Our team has matured a lot."

The second game of the day showcased a powerful Tar Heel offensive attack, with UNC (40-16) scoring in all but two innings.

The scoring began in the second inning and started the same way the first game ended — with Price slapping a ball over the left-field fence.

UNC followed Price's solo shot with a four-run third inning thanks to a second home run from Price, giving them a 5-0 cushion.

ECU (41-16) struck back in the

fourth inning, posting three runs on three hits and a North Carolina error.

The Tar Heels tallied six runs in the next two innings and allowed only one to put the game away.

Senior Dionne Streete said UNC's uncharacteristic early lead spurred the team to put the game out of the Pirates' reach.

"I think it made us more aggressive, wanting to add to it," Streete said. "Scoring earlier made us want to score more."

While the second game was not a normal UNC home win, the first was typical of this season's Tar Heels. The game began as a scoreless tie and stayed that way until the final inning.

Both pitchers frustrated batters, but in different ways. UNC sophomore Crystal Cox struck out seven, most of whom watched the last strike without taking the bat off their shoulder.

ECU's Brently Bridgeforth only needed one strikeout to hold UNC to three hits. She forced most of the Tar Heels to ground out — that is, until the seventh inning when Price sent Bridgeforth's first pitch 20 feet past the fence and into the woods.

Price would end up a triple away from hitting for the cycle, going 5 for 5 with two walks.

The game-one gopher was Price's 12th of the season. With the two in the second game, she stands at 14, one away from the North Carolina single-season record.

She had three home runs in three games earlier in the season, but she hadn't ever hit three in two games.

Papa said the performance was unprecedented in Price's career at UNC.

"I think that was the best performance I've ever seen a player put on in a Tar Heel uniform," Papa said. "Emily is just having a banner year, and it seems like she keeps getting better every game."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

No. 4 Tar Heels look to capture ACC crown

UNC defeated Virginia in 1st meeting

BY BRIANA GORMAN
STAFF WRITER

The last time the North Carolina men's lacrosse team was ranked fourth in the nation was at the end of the 1996 season before they captured their last ACC Tournament championship.

And now, days before the ACC Tournament, the Tar Heels once again are ranked No. 4 in the nation and, once again, they are contending for the title.

Also in their favor, the ACC Tournament is returning to Chapel Hill, where it has not been played since 1999. That should give UNC a distinct home-field advantage against the other ACC teams:

Virginia, Maryland and Duke.

The Tar Heels face the No. 14 Cavaliers in the first round on Friday at 8:30 p.m. after Maryland and Duke square off at 6 p.m.

"We definitely feel confident," said junior Jed Prossner. "There is a little bit of a revenge factor too, because for the past two years they have knocked us out of the tournament. I think it is a lot bigger game for them than it is for us. It will be a good game, and it could go either way. If we play our best, we will win."

The Tar Heels defeated the NCAA champion Cavaliers, 11-9, in Chapel Hill on April 11. Because the teams were evenly matched, the

game quickly turned into a battle between the goalkeepers. UNC's goalkeeper Paul Spellman and Virginia's goalkeeper Tillman Johnson played brilliantly and compiled 13 and 16 saves, respectively.

No. 3 Maryland, on the other side of the bracket, should have no problem defeating No. 16 Duke. The Terrapins are undefeated in the ACC and beat the Blue Devils 17-12 earlier in the season.

Leading scorer Joe Walters, who logged four goals and two assists in the victory, has been crucial to the Terrapins' success this season, and he will be Maryland's most dangerous weapon in the tournament.

The Terrapins narrowly defeated the Tar Heels, 10-9, earlier this season. The difference between the two was turnovers, which hurt the

Tar Heels despite even play in all other aspects of the game.

"It doesn't really matter who we play (in the final)," Prossner said. "But I'd personally rather play against Maryland, because I feel like we owe them. We didn't play well the first time we played them this year."

But the Tar Heels are focusing on winning their first game before they look ahead to the second.

"When the time comes, if we win, we'll be prepared to play either Duke or Maryland," Prossner said. "No one on our team has played in an ACC championship, and when the time comes, we'll be ready."

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