



BRANDON PARKER
GOT THE J-U-ICE

Childhood refund after game

Mike Imoh has got nothing on me.

Yeah, the Virginia Tech tailback almost ran for a school record with his 236 rushing yards, while reaching the end zone twice against North Carolina. But I've got the upper hand on him.

Eleven years ago in our 9-year-old youth basketball league in Virginia, my 26.3 points per game beat out the same Mike Imoh's 24.4 points per game average, allowing me to snatch the scoring title for that season.

After congratulating him on Saturday's win, I wasted no time in bringing him back down to earth by reminding him of our childhood battle.

"You did your thing today in football, and I'm glad because we all know who was better in basketball between us," I said jokingly.

"Come on, Brandon. You had a better jump shot than me, but you know I let you win that scoring title," Imoh noted as a wide grin stretched across his face.

A few minutes earlier, that same face had been swarmed by cameras, microphones and tape recorders as he tolerantly fielded questions from focused journalists — one of whom was yours truly.

It's hard to fathom that the same two kids who used to play countless hours of video games together, engage in one-on-one battles on the playground and dream of being stars in the NBA are now young men on the verge of entering the profession that had intertwined them from the start — sports.

Sports bring together children from all walks of life and allow kids to exert their never-ending energy in a constructive manner.

Some make out like Imoh by finding instant success and deciding to pursue the game in hopes of making it big on the professional level.

Some discover that athleticism is not one of their gifts but still use sports as an infrequent means of leisure among their buddies.

And some end up like me — realizing that while my athletic skills had the potential for success, my love of all games brought about a greater interest in the related field of sports journalism.

"Man, it's crazy with you asking me questions and all in the locker room because I'm thinking, 'I just grew up with this kid playing ball and having fun,'" Imoh said during our moment of recollection.

The beauty of it all is to witness this process evolving in front of your eyes. And no matter the path that is taken, sports always will serve as the foundation for the everlasting bond that surpasses social and physical stratifications.

As the years roll on, it is easy to get lost in the stresses and demands of the real world. But reminiscing about one's early days in sports allows for a return to the carefree and joyful moments that matter most in life.

So as I sat in the press room after the game and watched my childhood friend attempt to juggle the media circus created by his career day, I couldn't help but crack a smile — and a joke.

"Mr. Imoh, can I have your autograph?" I playfully asked after the rest of the reporters left.

"Man, I just signed your game box with 200-some yards rushing," he responded in his typical playful fashion. "But you're still my boy."

So as he tears up and down the football field while inching closer to his NFL dream, and I take my spot in the press box covering and writing articles about performances like his 236-yard effort, "the boys" will forever be linked through this common love and start in sports.

Yeah, he might make more money than I will. But he still can't outscore me.

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

VIRGINIA TECH 27 UNC 24

COMING UP SHORT



DTH/BRANDON SMITH

Virginia Tech running back Mike Imoh (20) looks to escape a tackle by North Carolina linebacker Tommy Richardson (8) and charging linebacker Jeff Longhany (52). Imoh, a junior, tallied 243 rushing yards Saturday, the highest rushing total that UNC has ever allowed in a game. The mark is also the highest single-game rushing total in Virginia Tech history.

BY DANIEL BLANK ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Freshman Connor Barth was toeing the turf near midfield late in the fourth quarter in what seemed like an instant replay of the scene the previous week against Miami.

But this time, Barth was lining up for a game-tying field goal against Virginia Tech, and the try was 12 yards farther away.

And this time, Barth's 54-yard attempt got caught in a swirling wind that made the ball die just short of the uprights. As the ball fell short so too did North Carolina's upset bid against Virginia Tech as the Hokies escaped Kenan Stadium with a thrilling 27-24 victory Saturday.

"Looking at it from that angle straight on, and it was dead on, it looked like it was so good," said center Jason Brown. "And what was going through my head was, (broadcaster Woody Durham) saying, 'It's high enough, it's long enough and it's good, and seeing the ref (make the signal). It hurt.'"

Off the foot, Barth thought he had tied the game as well.

"It felt fine," Barth said. "I guess the wind up top was a little bit harder than it was down on the field. I thought it was in, and all of a sudden I just saw it die down a little bit, and it fell a little short."

The game's biggest play, though, was the one immediately preceding Barth's potential game-tying field goal.

On 3rd-and-8 from the Virginia Tech 26-yard line, quarterback Darian Durant dropped back to pass but couldn't find an open receiver before Jim Davis tracked him down for an 11-yard sack.

"Huge play, great pressure by them," said UNC coach John Bunting. "Their defensive tackles got some pressure on us, Darian was about ready to throw out to Chad (Scott) and was going to throw out to Chad (Scott) and decided not to. Then, he was hit. What are you going to say?"

From the start of the game, it was the two teams' ground attacks that dominated.

Scott opened the scoring by breaking off a 48-

SEE FOOTBALL, PAGE 9

BY THE NUMBERS

243

Total rushing yards by Tech's Mike Imoh

19

Second-half rushing yards by UNC back Chad Scott

2

Wins needed for UNC to be bowl eligible

UNC fails to be consistent

BY BRANDON PARKER
SPORTSATURDAY EDITOR

North Carolina seemingly fielded two different squads in against Virginia Tech on Saturday.

The first team began the game with great offensive firepower and intensity. UNC senior running back Chad Scott led the attack with his 103 rushing yards in the first half, including a 48-yard touchdown scamper on the game's opening drive.

On the other side of the ball, the Tar Heel defense surrendered 225 yards and allowed the Hokies to enter the red zone four times — three of which resulted in a score.

The second UNC team played the game's final 30 minutes as the offense and defense flipped the dominant role, yielding very different results.

Scott was unable to find the same success he had in the first half and managed just 19 rushing yards.

"It seemed like they stacked the box a little

SEE CONSISTENCY, PAGE 9

UNC women swim to 2 easy victories

Men's team falls to No. 6 Minnesota

BY WILLIS ISLEY
STAFF WRITER

In a two-day meet at Koury Natatorium, the North Carolina swimming and diving women's team continued to look like potential ACC champions, while the men succumbed to sixth-ranked Minnesota.

The women's team started the meet off with a bang, taking first place in seven straight races on Friday night.

After losing its first meet to Georgia, the women's team was able to pull out a 242-124 victory against No. 24 Virginia Tech. In the dual meet, the Tar Heels also defeated Richmond 236 to 124.

The UNC women's team won all five relay races over the weekend. Both freshman Lindsey Marck and junior Lizzy Bruce added two individual event wins each.

Marck won both the 100- and 200-yard butterfly, while Bruce won the 100 and 200 breast-stroke. Both swimmers were

also parts of the 200- and 400-yard medley relays.

Helping out at the diving end of the Natatorium, sophomore Lauren Karatanevski won the women's 1-meter with a score of 250.95.

Meanwhile, the men's squad lost to Minnesota 239 to 127 and defeated Virginia Tech 278.5 to 91.5.

Because Virginia Tech is one of the tougher ACC opponents that UNC will face, the men can come away with a lot of confidence in the victory.

"We're not complacent, and I think we definitely have some room for improvement, but we feel good," said Eddy Matkovic, who was one of only two Tar Heels to win a race during the meet.

After UNC's encouraging win against Georgia earlier this season, such domination by the Gophers might have been unexpected. But UNC coach Frank

SEE SWIMMING, PAGE 9

UNC topples Rams in rout

BY BEN COUCH
SENIOR WRITER

The North Carolina men's basketball team jogged on to the Smith Center court Friday sporting hooded powder blue warm ups.

Rashad McCants wore the hood up with only the top two buttons done, leaving the warm up flapping around him like a cape as he swooped in for his turn in the layup line.

The image of a UNC player as the Grim Reaper fit because the Tar Heels came playing to kill.

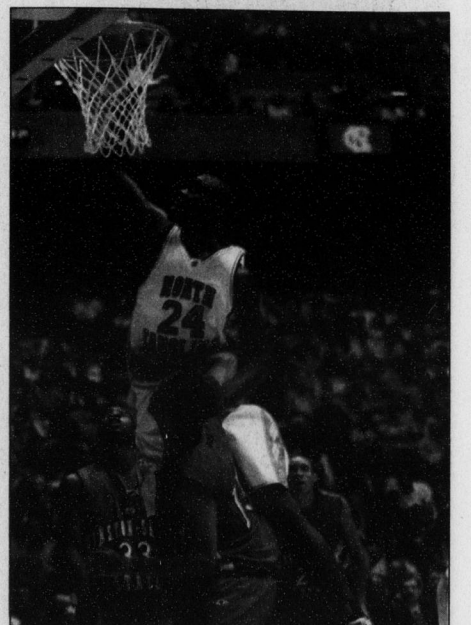
In its exhibition opener, North Carolina slaughtered W-S State 54 Division-II Winston-Salem UNC 113 State, 113-54.

The Tar Heels exhibited a penchant for high-flying aeriels and pretty passes, though they came against a team featuring no starter taller than 6-foot-5. But even with all the highlights, player after player mentioned defensive intensity as the most significant aspect of the win.

"We just wanted to play defense and get our offense started through our defense," said guard Melvin Scott. "If we can take that attitude and have that mental frame of mind, we'll be fine — no matter who we play."

Coach Roy Williams did see plenty of room for improvement, but he was impressed with the play of UNC's heralded freshmen, Quentin Thomas and Marvin Williams.

SEE BASKETBALL, PAGE 9



DTH/LAURA MORTON

North Carolina freshman forward Marvin Williams (24) dunks the ball over Winston-Salem State's Corey Parker (33) and Darnell Gregory in UNC's 113-54 victory Friday.