FOOTBALL

vard touchdown run three minutes into the game to put UNC (4-5, 3-3 in the ACC) ahead 7-0. The Hokies (7-2, 4-1) responded with a 5-yard score by Mike Imoh.
When Virginia Tech took a 17-14

lead into halftime, both Scott and Imoh had topped the century mark. But Imoh kept up his pace after

halftime, running for 131 yards, including 47 on the half's first play when he ran right, spun past one UNC defender, juked another, and then blew past two more and sprinted down the sideline

Imoh also had a 13-yard touch-down run that put the Hokies up

"A lot of those were hard yards. How many yards he got after the first contact is where you really measure a back," said Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer. "He's a little bowling ball. He's tougher than heck, and he makes us a better football team.

Meanwhile, Scott gained just 19 second-half yards as the Hokies packed in their defense.

But the Tar Heel special teams kept them in the game. After a Barth field goal made the score 27-17, the Tar Heels forced a three-and-out at the Virginia Tech 16 with just more than 10 minutes remaining in the game.

UNC brought an all-out rush against punter Vinnie Burns, and Tom O'Leary got the penetra-tion to stuff the kick. D.J. Walker picked up the ball at the 1 and rolled into the end zone for UNC's first blocked punt for a touchdown

since the 1998 Las Vegas Bowl.

"I'm extremely pleased with
the way our special teams stood
up to this challenge playing the
great Virginia Tech special teams," Bunting said. "We certainly played with them. Equal to of maybe even

CONSISTENCY

more than in the first half," Scott said. "In the second half, when everybody was blocked and I had to cut back, (the defender) was already there. It was kind of hard to make a move."

Meanwhile, the Tar Heel defense resurrected itself by holding Hokie quarterback Bryan Randall to just ne passing yard and forcing the Hokies to punt on three of their final our drives, including a touchdown esulting from a blocked punt.

But the inconsistency of the two-ced Tar Heels led them to fall hree points short of knocking off ranked opponent for the second onsecutive week.

Va. Tech's maintenance of a pow erful rushing attack behind junior Mike Imoh's 236 rushing yards allowed the team to endure the roll-er-coaster efforts of North Carolina.

Imoh's success on the ground, combined with the Hokies' defensive adjustments at halftime proved to be just enough to hold off the Tar Heels.

"In the first half, guys weren't fully wrapping up on the tackles, guys weren't getting to the ball and guys weren't staying in coverage," said Va. Tech defensive end Darryl Tapp. "We just had to refocus our-selves on the fundamentals, and it worked out for us in the end."

Despite UNC's sporadic moments of efficiency, these bright spots were overshadowed by the team's errors in critical situations.

On the Hokies' opening drive, the Tar Heel defense was whistled for penalties on two of the Hokies third-down situations. So instead of UNC regaining the ball with a chance to go up by two scores, Va. Tech was able to continue its momentum and ultimately tie on

a 5-yard run by Imoh.

"We were not technically sound,"
said UNC center Jason Brown. "There are a lot of things that we could have executed better. We had a lot of penalties and shot ourselves

in the foot."

The Tar Heels also managed to hurt their own cause on their final push to win the game.
On third-and-8 at the Hokies' 26-

yard line, UNC quarterback Darian Durant was unable to get a pass off

Durant was unable to get a pass on and was sacked by Va. Tech's Jim Davis for an 11-yard loss. Consequently, UNC kicker Connor Barth was forced farther toward the threshold of his kicking range, and his 54-yard field

goal attempt fell short.

Although the Tar Heels were unable to effectively entwine their offensive and defensive efforts, UNC head coach John Bunting took note of his team's late-game competitiveness and resolve attributes that have been essentially nonexistent during the last

"Once again, it just shows you how close we are getting to where we want to be," he said. "To be in those games in the fourth quarter, I don't think anyone thought we yould, but we did. We are one or two plays away from finishing this game and winning it."

> Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Virginia Tech 27, UNC 24

10 10 0 27 7 3 7 24

First Quarter
UNC — Scott 48 yd. run (Barth kick), 12:00
VT — Imoh 5 yd. run (Pace kick), 6:35

Second Quarter UNC — Wright 49 yd. pass from Durant (Barth kick), 12:32

Third Quarter
VT — Pace 36 yd. field goal, 10:34
VT — Imoh 13 yd. run (Pace kick), 3:40
UNC — Barth 30 yd. field goal, 0:45 UNC — Walker 1 yd. blocked punt return (Barth kick), 10:30

	VT	UNC
First Downs	23	13
Rushes-Yards	51-270	26-131
Passing Yards	100	165
Comp-Att-Int	7-18-0	14-21-1
Total Yards	370	296
Punts-Avg.	3-27.3	3-39.3
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	4-35	7-56
Time of Possession	36:03	23:57

Rushing: UNC — Scott 15-122. VT — imoh 31-243. Passing: UNC — Durant 14-20-1 165 VT — Randall 7-18-0 100. Receiving: UNC — Pollock 6-40

Although the special teams made some big plays and the defense held its opponent to a season-low 370 yards, it was penalties that ultimately cost the Tar Heels.

UNC entered the game as the least penalized team in the ACC, but the Tar Heels committed seven costly penalties for 56 yards. On Virginia Tech's first drive,

which culminated in Imoh's first touchdown, UNC had forced a three-and-out. But Gerald Sensabaugh was flagged for a late hit on Josh Hyman to keep the drive alive. With the loss, the Tar Heels must

now win twice in a row to qualify for a bowl game. They must win both on the road — a feat they have yet to accomplish — starting with a game at Wake Forest on Nov. 13.

"Tough loss for these kids. They're down. They had a big win last week, and they're real down right now," Bunting said. "We'll just ave to pick it back up because we have a two-game season now, and we still can make something special out of this year."

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BASKETBALL

Thomas quickly converted both the crowd and his teammates into believers by making a few well-

"That dude's got the ball on a string," said forward David Noel. He threw a pass tonight to Sean (May) that I was just in awe of. I was like, 'Oh my goodness, we might have another Raymond (Felton)."

Marvin Williams, meanwhile, entered the game with 16 min-utes, 59 seconds to go in the first half and took a grand total of nine seconds to score his first basket as a Tar Heel.

Williams scored 11 points and showed flashes of the talent that garnered him preseason ACC Rookie of the Year accolades.

The Tar Heels' starting five of Felton, May, McCants, Jawad Williams and Jackie Manuel looked primed and ready for a season in which they will face their highest expectations to

Led by 21 points from McCants and Jawad Williams, all five except Felton scored in double figures and shot better than 50 percent from

Felton did most of his damage passing the ball, chalking up 11 of the Tar Heels' 34 assists

Midway through the first half, he threw a jaw-dropping alley-oop to Jawad Williams, who toma-

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hawked the ball with one hand in

front of the press bench.

Manuel notably showed an improved shooting touch, scoring 15 points on 7 of 10 shooting, converting his only three-point

attempt.
With the baskets coming often
for North Carolina, UNC's biggest
challenge was staying focused in
the face of a lead that kept getting

The Tar Heels launched a 27-6 run in the second half that frustrated Rams coach Phillip Stitt. He admitted after the game that he began to wonder, "Who's run-ning the damn clock?" Roy Williams challenged his

players to keep their eyes off the scoreboard and focused on the ingame action.

"I can go a whole half and never look at the score because I make my decision on how we're playing on what I see, not just what the scoreboard tells us," Roy Williams

After beating a Division-II team by 60 points, the Tar Heels didn't gain much except the experience of playing an opponent with a dif-ferent jersey for the first time this

But for the players, that's all that mattered.

"It was fun," Scott said. "We loved playing defense. We enjoyed

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SWIMMING

Comfort said the Golden Gophers

"If they had gone three one-hundreths of a second faster in a relay last week in Florida, they would have beaten the No. 3 team in the nation," Comfort said, referring to Minnesota's only loss to Florida.

The Gophers demonstrated the significance of the gap between a top-10 team and 15th-ranked North Carolina. Minnesota took first place in 17 of the meet's 20

The only UNC swimmers to win were Josh Glasco in the 200-yard butterfly on Friday and Matcovic in the 100 butterfly on

Saturday. Junior Ryan Matuszak added a third victory by winning the men's 1-meter dive.

Matkovic, who is a two-time All-ACC swimmer, wouldn't make excuses for the team's potential

fatigue.
"We have had an extra month of training (since the meet against

"That is why we swim against them. They show us exactly what we need to do to be successful."

FRANK COMFORT, UNC COACH

Georgia) and a lot of us are tired, but that's no excuse," he said. Instead, the Tar Heels hope to take the loss as a learning oppor-

"They are a great team, and that is why we swim against them," Comfort said. "They show us exactly what we need to do to be successful."

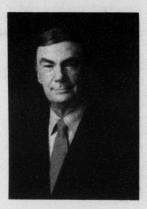
Matkovic also noted the impor-

tance of learning from early season matches.

"What it comes down to is the last race at the end of the year," Comfort said. "The rest is basically practice, and we take it like that."

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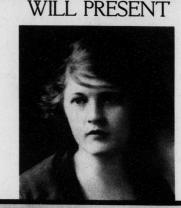
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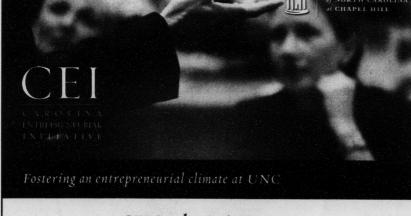
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