

Tar Heels slip past Wolfpack UNC moves closer to tournament bid

UNC to face Terps in semis on Friday

BY BRANDON PARKER
SPORTS SATURDAY EDITOR

CARY — After failing to connect on six first-half shots, it appeared that the North Carolina men's soccer team would make like the weather and go cold in its first-round ACC Tournament matchup against N.C. State on Wednesday.

But the Tar Heels caught fire after the break as they scored two goals in an eight-minute span to defeat the Wolfpack 2-0 at SAS Soccer Park.

UNC senior midfielder Andrew Rhea registered the team's first goal in the 73rd minute. Tar Heel sophomore Blake Beach squeaked a dribbling pass by two Wolfpack defenders, allowing Rhea to knock a short shot into the left pocket of the goal.

"I took a touch, and we've been working on those in practice," Rhea said. "I've been dead on on those, and I was due to make one."

Less than eight minutes later, Tar Heel junior forward Jamie Watson used his back foot to deflect a Dax McCarty corner kick into the net and put the game out of reach.

UNC controlled the ball for the majority of the game, as it outshot State by six shots and held the Wolfpack to just one attempt on goal in the first half.

"Our defense did a good job of containing (State forward) Aaron King, who is a threat for 90 minutes," said North Carolina coach Elmar Bolowich. "Possessing the ball also has to do with movement, and our players did an excellent job of making it difficult for State to track us."

But the Tar Heels squandered scoring opportunities in the game's first half, as they were called for three offside penalties and sent a number of shots wide of the goal.

"This is probably one of our better games this year as far as keeping possession in the first half," Watson said. "There were a couple of chances we wished we could have done better because our job is to score."

"All game, we had been knocking at the door. So when (Rhea) scored, we finally got the goal we deserved."

The Tar Heels had to play the second half without its second-leading scorer, Corey Ashe.

The sophomore forward sustained a mild concussion after the ball deflected off a Pack defender and hit Ashe in the face in the 26th minute. His status for the next game is uncertain.

UNC and N.C. State also met in the first round of last year's ACC



North Carolina forward Jamie Watson (5) looks to dribble away from N.C. State midfielder Santiago Fusilier during the quarterfinals of the ACC Tournament on Wednesday. Watson scored a goal in the Tar Heels' 2-0 win.

Tournament in a thrilling matchup that ended with the Wolfpack winning on penalty kicks.

While last season's loss was a disappointment for the Tar Heels, Rhea said that revenge was not the focus for Wednesday's game.

"We were thinking more down the line of winning the ACC championship, making it to the (NCAA) Tournament," he said. "So it was

more so a drive to keep the year going than getting revenge."

The Tar Heels will face Maryland in the semifinals of the ACC Tournament at 8 p.m. Friday.

In their previous matchup this season, the Terrapins prevailed 1-0. In order to avoid a similar outcome, UNC will look to play 90 minutes of aggressive soccer.

"We need to make sure that we

don't take the backseat," Bolowich said. "If the other team is in the driver's seat, they can sit back and defend, and we will have to create, which is always harder to do."

"The game should be a good match, and we can win if we just keep our focus better."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

BY DAVID MOSES
ASSISTANT SPORTS SATURDAY EDITOR

CARY — When the season began, it seemed a formality that the North Carolina men's soccer team would be playing deep into the postseason.

But after the squad started the season 2-5-2, it wasn't clear whether UNC would even qualify for the NCAA Tournament.

Now, after losing their fifth game — a heartbreaking loss to rival Duke — the Tar Heels have won eight of their last 10 games.

Some of the early struggles for UNC can be blamed on what coach Elmar Bolowich called a "suicide schedule."

"We probably played 11 or 12 teams in the regular season that will show up in the tournament," Bolowich said.

The early-season woes can also be attributed to the youth of the Tar Heel roster.

On Wednesday, only three seniors — Tim Merritt, Andrew Rhea and Marcus Storey — started for UNC.

"Our team has matured," Bolowich said. "We have gone through some growing pains with a very young team. They are coming together."

The Tar Heels' turnaround largely can be credited to improved defense.

In its last 10 games, UNC has surrendered only six goals, posting five shutouts during that stretch.

The defense has been looking to play more aggressively on the field and trying to set up more scoring chances for the offense.

"Our defense and our midfield created a lot of chances for us up top because they were smart with the

opportunities they were giving to us," said sophomore Jamie Watson.

With Wednesday's 2-0 victory against N.C. State in the ACC Tournament, the Tar Heels have almost guaranteed themselves a spot in the NCAA Tournament.

"That's not in my control," Bolowich said. "A lot depends what happens in the south and how the automatic bids go."

While trying to avoid saying directly that his team would make the NCAA Tournament, Bolowich seemed confident that his team would be playing later this year.

"What is looked upon is how well you do towards the end of the season, and we have done a real, real good job against very tough opponents," Bolowich said. "We have gotten the results."

Bolowich and the Tar Heels would like to erase all doubt about earning an NCAA Tournament bid by winning the ACC Tournament this weekend.

The Tar Heels will play Maryland, who beat UNC 1-0 on Oct. 10, in the semifinals Friday, and Bolowich knows they can't take the Terps lightly.

"We can't take the back seat," he said. "We need to start putting together 90-minute games."

Even if they aren't able to win the conference tournament, it seems as if the Tar Heels have done enough to secure themselves at least one game in the NCAA Tournament.

"I'm looking forward to it," Bolowich said. "I think we are going to the postseason."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

UNC's Gey follows in her mother's footsteps

BY GABRIELLE DE ROSA
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

You've got your Bowdens and your Mannings, but the North Carolina field hockey team has its own athletic dynasty.

Freshman Jesse Gey became the first second-generation Tar Heel to step onto Navy Field.

Kim Gey — known as Kim Knickerbocker when she played for UNC — was in her junior year when Coach Karen Shelton came to North Carolina in 1981. Her sister, Jamie, joined the team the following year.

It's an impressive occurrence, given that the NCAA had its first field hockey national championship in 1981.

"To have the first second-generation player, I kind of don't want to spread that around too much," Shelton said with a laugh.

"I am proud of their involvement in our program in its developmental stages. They were part of building what has become a great tradition."

Kim's post-college years were spent officiating and playing club field hockey.

When Jesse was born, Kim brought her daughter to games, including a UNC-Old Dominion match. There, 4-month-old Jesse fell into a coma and was rushed to a Virginia Beach intensive care unit. Jesse recovered a week later.

"I know she took me to a bunch of games when I was little, but I don't remember them," Jesse said. "I didn't have any interest in playing."

Jesse played soccer until the seventh grade when she joined a community field hockey league at the casual suggestion of her mother.

A summer at UNC field hockey camp followed, and as usual, it was a family affair. Jesse's aunt, who now goes by Jamie Warren, had been a coach at Shelton's camps since 1996.

Although Warren never coached Jesse at camp, high school provid-

ed an opportunity for the two to work closely.

Warren was Jesse's coach at Christopher Dock High School in Lansdale, Pa., for three years and led the team to an undefeated season during her senior year.

"We fought a lot, but it was good because she really pushed me to do better and work harder than maybe I would have with a different coach," Jesse said.

All that hard work paid off as Jesse was the highest scorer on Warren's team that year.

"At times, it was difficult," said Warren, who is now coaching her 16-year-old daughter at Christopher Dock. "Jesse's junior year, you could tell she was feeling me out as a coach, but by her senior year, she was a good coach on the field."

But North Carolina was not on Jesse's college radar at the time.

"I was definitely going to play at a D-I school, but it was probably going to be in the Philadelphia area," Jesse said.

Her mother would have preferred that Jesse stay close to home but added that the decision was Jesse's and still was thrilled when she committed to UNC.

Jesse expected to redshirt this season, but Shelton felt her potential warranted playing time this season.

Kim recalled what it was like to play for Shelton.

"She expects 100 percent, and that's apparent today," Kim said. "I learned a lot from her because she brought a lot more knowledge of the game to Carolina."

While a few of the rules have changed and the uniforms are more stylish, two things remain the same — Shelton's stellar coaching record and the athleticism that runs in this family's blood.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Ramadan urges spiritual renewal

BY EMILY FISHER
STAFF WRITER

As cutout turkeys and cornucopias replace Halloween candy in drug store aisles nationwide, a group of students at local universities celebrates a holiday that hasn't bridged the commercial gap.

For Muslims around the world, the holy month of Ramadan, which began Oct. 15 and ends Nov. 14, means sunrise-to-sundown fasting, charity, spiritual renewal and the gathering of friends and family.

Each night of Ramadan, a leader reads one section of the Quran, the holy book that Muslims believe was revealed to Allah during the ninth month of Islam's lunar calendar.

"I can't stress enough the importance of this month," said junior Mahroo Ahsan, the secretary of N.C. State University's Muslim Students Association.

Ahsan was one of about 50 people in attendance at the Triangle Iftar, a sundown fast-breaking hosted by UNC-Chapel Hill's Muslim student group on Nov. 4.

Buzzing conversation subsided as the iftar, literally translated as "breakfast," opened with a sunset

prayer by UNC-CH, N.C. State and Duke University students assembled on paper rugs in the Carmichael Ballroom.

After the prayer, students passed around dates, a traditional fast-breaking food, and enjoyed a meal of bread, rice and chickpeas.

Taiyyaba Qureshi, a sophomore political science major at UNC-CH, said the month is about refraining from negative feelings and actions, in addition to the self-denial of food and water during daylight hours.

"The whole month of Ramadan is about simplicity," Qureshi said. "If you try it for a day, you realize how much your life revolves around food."

Adnan Mustafa, who said he wasn't particularly hungry, said having self-control and discipline in all parts of life is the hard part.

"For us it's a time for soul searching and to get closer to God," said Mustafa, a senior health policy major at UNC-CH.

Senior Mansoor Kazi, president of UNC-CH's Muslim Students Association, said this year has been busy — the population of MSA has doubled to about 60 students

"Ramadan is about simplicity. If you try it for a day, you realize how much your life revolves around food."

TAIYYABA QURESHI, SOPHOMORE

since last year, and the first week of Ramadan coincided with Islamic Awareness Week on campus.

But being busy hasn't stopped Kazi from enjoying it. "This is one month you really see everybody," he said. "I really look forward to it. The prayers at night are so beautiful."

Kazi said thousands of people filled the Raleigh mosque he attends — there is no mosque in Chapel Hill — and he noted that the recitation of the Quran was especially moving.

The final day of Ramadan closes with the festival of Eid al-Fitr, one of the two most important Islamic celebrations — the other occurs after the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca. During Eid, friends and families visit and share treats and celebratory food and drink.

This year, most students will celebrate Eid on the weekend in their homes, Kazi said.

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