

Lions hand Tar Heels 1st loss

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — Penn State's upset of North Carolina was so stunning, the Lions' substitute coach had to ask her team about the biggest details.

"I don't even know what happened," coach Annie Troyan said after the 77-71 win Sunday over the No. 2 Tar Heels. "I said to the kids when we came in, 'What happened?' They said, 'We won.'"

Troyan is coaching Penn State in place of Rene Portland, who began a leave of absence last month because of medical reasons.

The Lions got 21 points and

seven assists from Tanisha Wright, but it was the team effort that pleased Troyan the most.

Penn State had five players score in double figures, including

Jen Harris, who tied her career high with 19 points. Jess Strom added 11, and led the team in assists (9) and rebounds (7).

Penn State (3-3) used a 7-0 run after halftime to take a 47-43 lead on Ashli Schwab's tip-in with 17:14 left.

Though the Lions fell behind by one on Ivory Latta's 3-pointer 1:51 later, Harris hit a 20-footer from the right corner with 14:52 left to put them ahead to stay. It was the 11th lead change of the game.

Penn State used a big second-half rebounding advantage (19-9) and 23 points off turnovers to turn around what had been a lopsided game in the paint.

"We constantly kept it in our heads to remind each other what we needed to do," Wright said. "It was a big focus for us after the first half. We let that down, so I think the second half we came out and

every time we got the chance, every loose ball, every break — we rebound, we need to rebound, we need to rebound."

Latta led the Tar Heels with 19 points, and Camille Little added 11 rebounds, but her tip-in with seven minutes left — tying the game at 62 — was the last time the Heels pulled even.

"They gave more than we did," Latta said. "We usually go after loose balls and dive, but we didn't do that ... they deserve to win if they do stuff like that."

Penn State's win was its first

this season against a Top 25 team in three tries, and the Lions' first victory against a team ranked No. 2 since they beat Texas at home on Dec. 7, 2003. Penn State lost at Texas and Duke earlier this season. The Lions had a five-point half-time lead against the Blue Devils, but lost 66-58.

"In the Texas game and the Duke game, we talked about it, like 'We need a stop, we need a stop, we need to do this,' but we lost those two games because we didn't get that stop," Strom said. "This time

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BRANDON PARKER GOT THE JU-ICE

Irish hasty, wrong to fire coach

As sad as it is to say, I was not really surprised when Notre Dame fired head coach Tyrone Willingham.

I actually expected him to be fired after a 5-7 season in 2003, because the rule with black coaches is usually one strike and you're out.

By hiring its first black head coach in its most prestigious sport, Notre Dame basically said that it would give Willingham a fair chance and believed that he had the capability to restore the school to its past level of success.

It took him only one year to do just that.

In 2002, the Fighting Irish won their first eight games, cracked the top 10 in the national polls for the first time since 1999, tied a school record by defeating four ranked opponents and finished with a record of 10-3.

Two years later, Notre Dame claims that 21-15 is an unacceptable coaching record, and a change was so necessary. Willingham could not even coach his team in the bowl game he guided them to this year.

But I guess they forgot to show the same sense of urgency when the legendary Lou Holtz was just 25-10 after three seasons or when Bob Davie was allowed to continue coaching for two more years after posting a 21-16 during his first three years.

And let's not forget all that Willingham had to face during his tenure.

He lived with the fact that he was not even Notre Dame's first choice. He worked within the limited pool of potential recruits due to the school's high academic standards. He tolerated the tough schedule and scrutiny that would always be in store for an independent school like the Fighting Irish.

If that was not enough, Willingham was also shouldering a tremendous burden — the future of black head coaches in college.

Since minorities at the helm in sports are judged collectively instead of an individual basis, Willingham's performance was seen as a trial for all black coaches at major universities.

(Now this ridiculous responsibility will be given to Mississippi State's Sylvester Croome, who is one of the two remaining black coaches in Division I-A football).

I am not excusing the fact that Willingham's teams posted some embarrassing defeats and showed inconsistency at times. But what happened to honoring the length of a coach's contract?

When an athletic director hires a coach, this person is given the power and entitlement to try and reverse the past misfortunes within the span of time designated by the contract.

Thus, the true policy should be that the coach is given adequate time to recruit his own players, implement his own system and make the necessary adjustments. Then, after the contract is up, the school can evaluate the coach's performance and proceed accordingly.

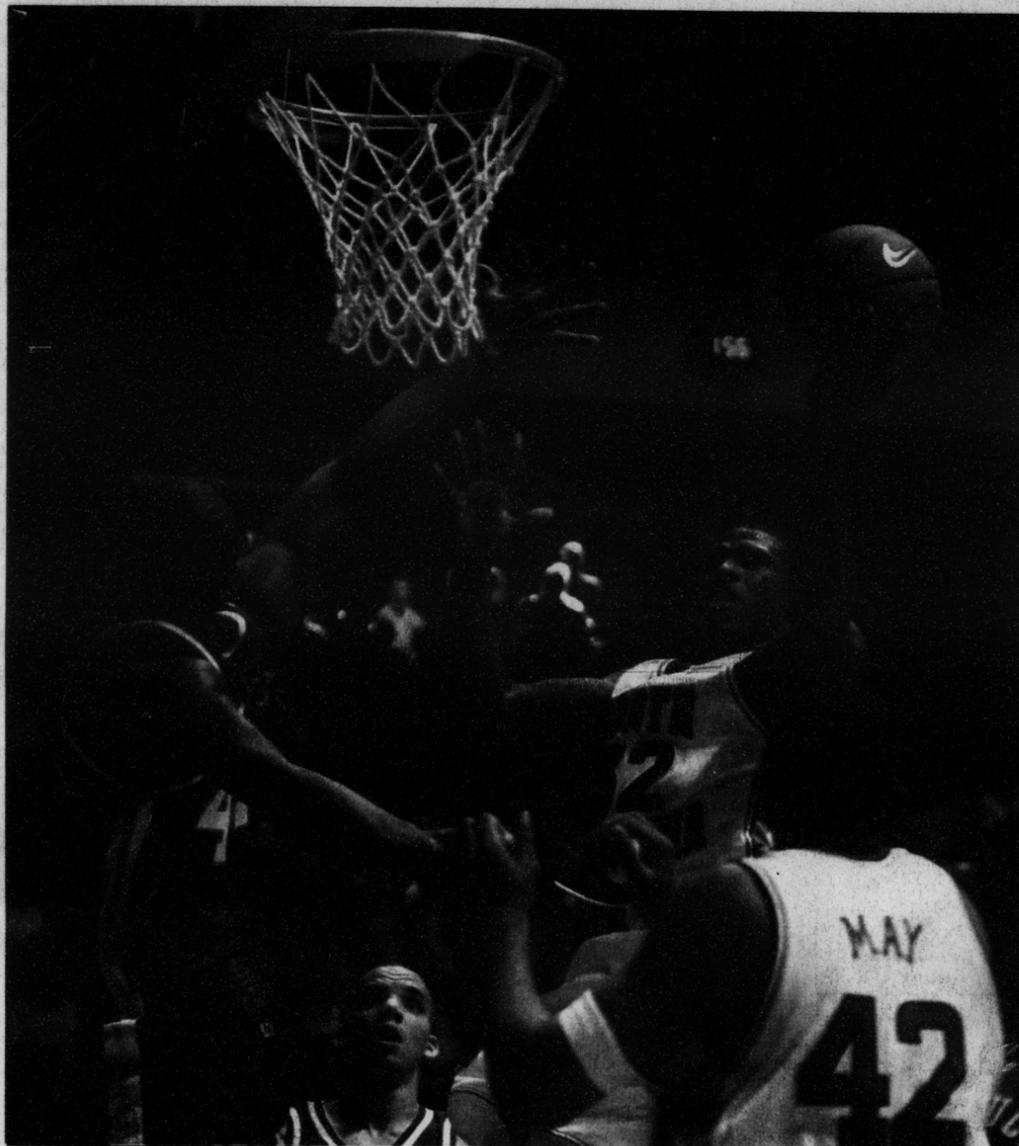
But the fact that Willingham became the first Notre Dame coach to not serve out his contract proves that the times have changed, and coaches are dropping like flies as a result.

When Notre Dame finally realizes that its arrogant expectations of constant undefeated seasons, Bowl Championship Series bids and supreme reign as an independent school are just plain silly, then maybe it will witness the same resurrection that schools such as USC and Oklahoma have seen.

But now that coveted head coach Urban Meyer has jilted his "dream job" in South Bend for the sunshine of Florida, and Notre Dame has furthered the injustice surrounding black coaches in the NCAA, it appears that the luck of the Fighting Irish has run out.

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UNC 91 KENTUCKY 78



North Carolina swingman Rashad McCants (32) goes for a layup over Kentucky's Chuck Hayes in the No. 9 Tar Heels' 91-78 victory against the No. 8 Wildcats on Saturday at the Smith Center. McCants scored a team-high 28 points on 7 of 15 shooting from the field.

WILDCAT STRIKE

BY BEN COUCH SENIOR WRITER

Seven and a half minutes into Saturday's game against No. 8 Kentucky, North Carolina guard Rashad McCants stole the ball and raced upcourt for a dunk, extending UNC's lead to 24-6.

During the next seven and a half minutes, the No. 9 Tar Heels couldn't make a single field goal.

But when McCants stroked a 3-pointer to break that streak with 12 minutes left in the half, UNC's lead was still 16 points.

North Carolina offset each of Kentucky's six buckets during that time with a trip to the free throw line.

It established a pattern for the game — no matter what problem Kentucky presented, UNC found an answer throughout its 91-78 win at the Smith Center.

"I've always said that if another team makes a run at you, the best way to take care of that is to attack, not get tentative," said UNC coach Roy Williams. "I've always found that our team did a good job of continuing to attack and not getting to a tentative stage."

Unlike last season, the Wildcats (4-1) had no answer for McCants. The junior continued his hot 3-point shooting, going 4-for-7 from

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McCants shoots Tar Heels to win

BY DANIEL BLANK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Rashad McCants was shooting the lights out Saturday — literally.

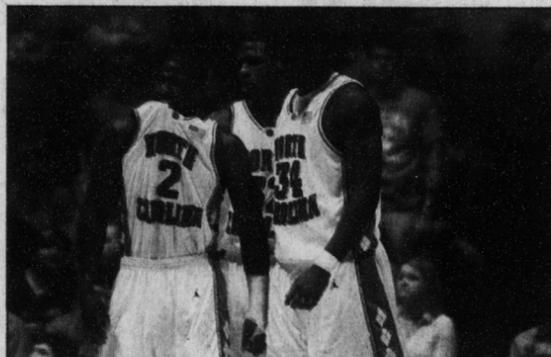
As North Carolina's junior swingman swished the 27th of his game-high 28 points from the foul line, the Smith Center scoreboards temporarily blinked off.

McCants dominated Kentucky from the start, dropping 20 points

in the first half on his way to his season-best total.

It was a stark contrast from his play against the Wildcats in Rupp Arena last year — a disastrous four-point, five-turnover performance in which UNC coach Roy Williams benched his star for a lack of effort.

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Junior point guard Raymond Felton (2) winces in pain after Kentucky's Rajon Rondo smacked his injured wrist. Felton had 7 assists in the win.

Young UNC squad shines

Freshman Maciag wins 174-lb. title

BY DANIEL MALLOY
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

With only three wrestlers returning from last season's starting lineup, North Carolina is counting on a bevy of newcomers to lead it to a successful season.

So far, so good. The results of Coach C.D. Mock's offseason acquisitions were on display Saturday at the Irwin-Carolina Open in Carmichael Auditorium. Freshman Alex Maciag took the title at 174 pounds and sophomore Spencer Nadolsky — a transfer from Michigan State — finished second at heavyweight.

The victory was Maciag's second of the year, as he is emerging as the star of the freshman class.

"Overall, we're just a very young team, and Alex is just a freshman," Mock said. "You don't necessarily expect a freshman to go out and win, but Alex has that kind of potential."

In his final match against Appalachian State's Corey Pendergrass, Maciag took control in the third period. He scored two takedowns and dominated at the end on his way to a 6-3 victory.

Maciag is a key part of Mock's rebuilding efforts. His tumultuous first season was marked by the dismissal of All-American Chris Rodrigues in the middle of the season for a violation of team rules.

The team struggled to a 5-11 finish, placing fourth in the five-team ACC. Several other wrestlers did not return to the team this season.

"We're trying to create a new image and perception of Carolina wrestling and get it back to where it used to be," Mock said. "And in order to do that, we had to get some guys gone. ... It was important that we follow that up with a great recruiting year, and what's exciting is I think that we have a lot of young guys here who have the hunger and the passion and want to win."

Maciag said Mock is motivating the team by looking forward and not dwelling on the failures of last year.

"He has mentioned (last year's struggles), but we try to forget about it and take it like it's a new year," Maciag said.

One starter from last season

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