

McCants' block party throws down Ga. Tech

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON
SENIOR WRITER

North Carolina fans have come to expect elevation from Rashad McCants, but this was something else entirely.

Georgia Tech's Theodis Tarver, a 6-foot-9 forward, took to the air to attempt a mid-range jumper midway through the second half, but that's as far as he got.

McCants rose with him, extending his right arm just far enough to swat the ball away and create a fast break in the other direction — a break on which he eventually scored two of his 12 points.

"It's just instinctive to me," he said. "I just do the things that come naturally."

McCants, who finished with a career-high four blocks, led a sparkling effort on the defensive end by his entire team on Wednesday.

The Tar Heels consistently trapped Georgia Tech's guards on the perimeter, forced tough shots for penetrating forwards and generally made life difficult for any opponent attempting to score.

The Yellow Jackets shot a season-low 36.8 percent in the game, including a woeful 26.9 percent in the first half.

Many of those misses came from behind the arc, where the Tar Heel defense was at its toughest.

Georgia Tech hit just three of its 17 3-point attempts in the game,

and most of those shots hardly could be called open looks.

"Hey, if they can hit with a hand in their face, we can't do nothing about that, but we wanted to make them take tough shots," said guard Melvin Scott. "When you take tough shots, you're going to miss them."

But not every example of UNC's strong play at the defensive end could be found on the stat sheet.

Three minutes after his athletic block, McCants forced guard Zam Fredrick to dribble the ball across the baseline for a turnover.

The play didn't turn the tide of the game — the outcome no longer was in doubt — but the persistent effort seemed to justify the defenses of McCants offered by those who see him as a complete player.

"Everybody has been getting the bad side of Rashad, everyone's been down on him, trying to kill him in the newspapers," said guard Raymond Felton. "Rashad is a great player. He's just showing it this year."

"He's showing that he can play team ball, and he can score."

Tough defense, in fact, led to many of the Tar Heels' scoring opportunities in the game — and their ability to shut down Georgia Tech's transition game came as no surprise to the Yellow Jackets' floor general.

"We definitely knew they were going to jump out into the passing

lanes early, and they had a lot of good pressure and a lot of easy run-out baskets," said Yellow Jacket guard Jarrett Jack.

Even when North Carolina players made mistakes in their own end, they found ways to atone.

Jackie Manuel's unnecessary foul of Georgia Tech guard Mario West handed the Yellow Jackets three free throws late in the second half, but his intensity paid dividends less than a minute later.

As forward Anthony Morrow dribbled up the right wing, Manuel forced an errant pass into the stands and prompted a good-humored exchange with Coach Roy Williams.

"I told him that was for the play I did before, where I fouled the guy on the 3-point play," Manuel said, laughing. "I told him I made up for it."

"But he shook his head like, 'No, you didn't.'"

It was McCants' block, though, that prompted the buzz in the players' lounge after the game.

He would not reveal whether similar dazzling defensive plays will become a regular part of his repertoire.

"Maybe, maybe not," he said, hardly pausing to mull the question. "You've got to be on your toes and watch, watch and see."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Tar Heels cruise in the pool

BY JOHN ZHANG
STAFF WRITER

UNC's swimming and diving teams blew past Bucknell and Brown on Wednesday, cruising to a double dual victory.

The men started off by winning 14 straight events, defeating Brown 158 to 124 and Bucknell 167 to 124.

On the women's side, the Tar Heels posted a 151 to 145 victory against Brown and a 180 to 116 score against Bucknell.

The women had the fastest times in 14 of the 16 events. Eleven different women posted victories.

"We just came back from our Las Vegas training trip, and we really needed a meet to race when we're tired and before some tougher competition," said women's captain Virginia Hanson.

Due to the quick start, UNC coach Frank Comfort exhibited or sat out many of the top swimmers and allowed young faces opportunities to compete.

Freshmen Brandon Sudreth, Zach Swartz and Philip Owen took advantage of their chances and had the top times in the 1,000-, 100- and 500-yard freestyles.

Owen did not win his event as he was an exhibition swimmer.

Sophomores Casey Kott and Tristan Davidson swam top times in two events for UNC. Kott won both the 100 breaststroke and 200 medley.

Kott said that although his body wasn't feeling 100 percent, he swam well.

"We've come together and are a lot more motivated than last year, but a lot of people are babying injuries just a little too much," Kott said. "We just need to suck it up and maintain a positive attitude the next couple of weeks."

Kott also said he hopes to finish top five in an event for the ACC as an individual goal.

Davidson placed first in the 200 butterfly and had the fastest time in the 100 butterfly as an exhibition swimmer.

For the women, freshmen Kelsey Morrissey and Lindsey Marck won the 50 and 100 freestyles. Junior Lizzy Bruce was a double winner for the women in the 100 breaststroke and 200 individual medley.

In the last five men's swimming events and the last four women's

events, UNC did not compete and only swam exhibition.

UNC's diving team also exhibited its events, with the men not competing in the 3-meter board and the women in the 1-meter board.

Freshman diver Ben Herboth won the men's 1-meter dive and had the best score in the 3-meter as an exhibition diver.

Brown diver Jessica Larsen posted an upset by winning the women's 3-meter board. UNC's Kate Lewis, Lauren Karatanevski and Gia Santoro rounded out the top four, respectively.

The Tar Heels face ACC opposition Saturday at Clemson in what figures to be a tough meet.

UNC hopes to carry on its success into the weekend and improve upon its rankings.

"It will be really demanding for our men," Comfort said.

"We tied them for the first time ever last year. But we came back from a difficult training trip and got some work done with victories under our belt."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

THE Daily Crossword

By Diane C. Baldwin

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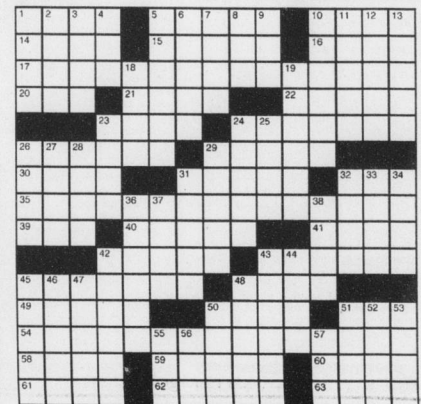
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 35 Jean Harlow, for one
 39 To this day
 40 Each and all
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 42 Do in a dragon
 43 Self-defense art
 45 Soft shades
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 49 Tessie or Milo
 50 No-see-um
 51 Take on the moguls
 54 Likely wallflower
 58 Spotted
 59 Clear the board
 60 Rosy anticipation
 61 Nips in the bud

- 62 Small salamanders
 63 Sink alternative
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 4 Lobster eggs
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- 27 Goggle at
 28 Record spoiler
 29 Claimed up and down
 31 Drives the getaway car
 32 Antitoxins
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 37 Old Nick's knock
 38 Roll-call response
 42 Big mugs
 43 Scoundrels
 44 Hostile to

- 45 Oater extras
 46 Deadly pale
 47 Barest of evidence
 48 Feeling of dread
 50 Chew on
 51 At a snail's pace
 52 Military cap
 53 Account entry
 55 Barbie's boyfriend
 56 High dudgeon
 57 Sounds of surprise

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Bush focuses on high school testing

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — President Bush began a second-term drive Wednesday that he said would improve the American high school, urging the same testing and consequences he used to shake up earlier grades.

In his first major education speech since winning re-election, Bush touted his plan to demand state reading and math tests in grades three through 11. That would broaden his No Child Left Behind law, which requires one year of state testing during grades 10 to 12.

"Testing in high schools will make sure that our children are employable for the jobs of the 21st century," Bush said at J.E.B. Stuart High School. "Testing will allow teachers to improve their classes. Testing will enable schools to track. Testing will make sure that the diploma is not merely a sign of endurance, but the mark of a young person ready to succeed."

Improving high schools has suddenly become a talked-about topic, with calls of alarm from the president, the nation's governors, employers and college professors. The reason: Many high school students aren't ready for college or work after they graduate, if they get that far.

"The attention is welcome," said Kati Haycock, director of The Education Trust, an advocate for poor and minority children. "Other countries are cleaning our clocks at the secondary level, and we need to get serious about it."

Bush headed into the Washington suburbs to speak at J.E.B. Stuart High, a school known for big gains in achievement despite high poverty, student mobility and language diversity.

The president reiterated ideas he presented during his fall campaign, when he signaled that he would shift focus from elementary and middle grades to high school. They include bonuses for teachers whose students perform well, individual performance plans for students entering high school, and more college aid for students who take a rigorous curriculum.

He also proposed extra support for high school students still struggling to read well.

"It sounds odd, doesn't it, for the president to stand up and say, 'We need to focus on reading in high school,'" Bush said. "But that's the state of affairs."

A flurry of reports have raised doubts about the value of the high school diploma, with graduation exams that don't test 12th-grade knowledge, employers who can't find workers with basic grammar skills, and colleges that must place many students in remedial classes.

Bush said his high school plan, a mix of consolidated programs and new money, would cost \$1.5 billion. It may be squeezed fast, with a record deficit limiting domestic spending.

Congress, for example, took Bush's \$100 million request for his "Striving Readers" program and cut it to \$25 million this year. Bush now wants \$200 million for the program.

"Many of these ideas are the right thing to do, and they're the right issues — we're probably late

getting to them," said Patricia Sullivan, director of the independent Center on Education Policy. "But if we're going down this path, we have to have the resources."

Bush won bipartisan support for No Child Left Behind, the law that

reshaped education by demanding schools help children regardless of race, wealth or background. Democrats say Bush hasn't provided enough money for the law, making them wary to join him this time round.

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