



JACOB KARABELL
FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

Philly fans pin hopes on Eagles

Nineteen eighty-three. It's a year that has special significance for me — mostly stemming from May 31, three days short of two months before I was born.

On that day, Julius Erving, Moses Malone and the "fo, fo, fo" Philadelphia 76ers finished off a sweep of the Los Angeles Lakers, earning an NBA title.

The championship was the city's fifth since 1967 — and the second for the Sixers in that stretch.

The "Broad Street Bully" Flyers won two titles in the 1970s. Even the Phillies, the team with the worst record of any team in any sport in the 20th century, managed to win a World Series in 1980.

Since then, however, nothing. Zip. Nada.

So you can forgive me if I was feeling more than a little anxious heading into Sunday's NFC Championship game. Would Warrick Dunn become inaugurated into the Philly Hall of Woe? I thought there might have been a spot for him available between Joe Carter and Joe Jurevicius.

I assumed my position on the couch — same place, same food, same outfit as last week's divisional win against Minnesota. It also happened to be the same outfit that I donned for the last three NFC Championship clashes — but fourth time's a charm, right?

My angst failed to subside after the Falcons stopped the Eagles' attempted fake field goal, but the Birds' defense held, and it's possible that my yell after Dorsey Levens powered for a second-effort touchdown was heard throughout the 27514 zip code.

Despite the fact that the Eagles had taken their biggest conference championship game lead since the first quarter against Tampa Bay two years ago, it seemed that the Falcons had the advantage.

After all, according to the always brilliant announcing trio of Joe Buck, Troy Aikman and Cris Collinsworth, the determining factor in the game was going to be the wind.

And since the Falcons were set to gain the wind at their backs in the second quarter, it appeared that all the Eagles could do was hold on for dear life during the forthcoming Falcon onslaught.

Apparently, then, Philly's second-quarter effort was nothing short of a miracle against the most brutal of human elements. The Eagles entered halftime with a 14-10 lead, and the margin grew to 20-10 after a sloppy offensive third quarter.

For most fans, a 10-point lead heading into the fourth quarter would give cause to relax.

But Philly has not only suffered through the agonizing failures of NFC championship games past but also two of the most memorable chokes in sports history.

The Flyers squandered a three-games-to-one lead to the New Jersey Devils in the Eastern Conference Finals in 2000 just as it seemed that they had conquered their longtime nemesis. And I have long heard the lore of the 1964 Phillies blowing a 6-game lead with 12 games remaining, a collapse that people still hesitate to bring up in normal conversation.

Somehow, though, this was different. The Eagles' defense curtailed Atlanta's running attack, and I, along with the 67,717 fans at Lincoln Financial Field and millions more elsewhere, could finally exhale and celebrate.

Maybe this year will be different. Maybe fans will remember 2005 instead of 1983 or 1960, the year the Eagles last won the NFL Championship.

Regardless of what happens Feb. 6 in the Super Bowl, I will always remember the day the Eagles finally reached the Super Bowl.

Bring on the Patriots. What else do Philadelphia fans have to lose?

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NORTH CAROLINA BLOWS PAST THE HURRICANES 87-67 BEHIND 17 POINTS AND 15 REBOUNDS FROM JUNIOR CENTER

MAY SEIZES DAY



North Carolina center Sean May (42) goes up for a layup while Miami's William Frisby (34) looks on during UNC's 87-67 rout of the Hurricanes at the Smith Center on Saturday. The Tar Heels have won 13 consecutive home games dating back to Feb. 5, 2004.

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON
SENIOR WRITER

Don't try to tell the North Carolina players they don't know an effective strategy when they see it.

One week after watching Wake Forest repeatedly draw fouls and convert on free-throw opportunities, No. 6 North Carolina pounded the ball inside against a smaller Miami team and reaped the rewards with an 87-67 victory Saturday at the Smith Center.

"We just tried to attack them as much as possible, get them in foul trouble," said center Sean May, who scored 17 points in perhaps his most dominant performance of the season.

"Anytime you get their best rebounders out of the game, it puts a stop on their team."

May's bruising play in the paint — he grabbed 15 rebounds in the game — had an additional consequence beyond points on the board.

It forced William Frisby and Anthony King, the Hurricanes' only two starters taller than 6-foot-2, into early foul trouble and created a parade of Tar Heels to the foul line in the first half.

North Carolina (16-2, 5-1 in the ACC) took advantage of its opportunities, sinking 17 of 19 shots from the charity stripe in the first half.

"We're making guys pay," said guard Melvin Scott, who finished with seven points in 14 minutes

SEE BASKETBALL, PAGE 9

McCants shines in 2nd half

BY DANIEL MALLOY
SPORTS EDITOR

With time winding down in the first half of Saturday's game, North Carolina point guard Raymond Felton was fouled at the top of the key as he passed the ball, and the official blew the play dead.

The ball bounced to Rashad McCants, and the junior swingman nailed an uncontested, meaningless three-pointer from the right wing.

McCants shrugged his shoulders and shook his head, staying in the same spot while Felton shot his free throws.

It was the only shot McCants made in the first half, as he was held scoreless for the first 20 minutes.

Fast forward to 14 minutes and 20 seconds remaining in the second half. Felton once again found McCants, this time well behind the top of the key.

He hoisted a high arcing shot that fell through the net for his eighth point of the half.

SEE MCCANTS, PAGE 9

Tar Heels take down 18th-ranked Tennessee

UNC avenges NCAA Tournament defeat

BY MARY DUBY
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

After ousting the North Carolina women's tennis team in the NCAA Regional final last year, Tennessee came to Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center and covered the visitor sign on the scoring posts with orange signs reading "UT," as if laying claim to the courts.

But the Lady Volunteers couldn't make good on that claim Saturday, and No. 15 UNC garnered a hard-fought 5-2 victory, defeating Tennessee for just the second time since 1986.

"I wouldn't say we were pumped up because we lost to them last time," senior Aniela Mojzis said. "Coming into it, we were just focused because we were playing a better team and a tougher team and our first competitive team. ... This is a very scrappy team, you have to fight. You know they're going to fight to the end. We have to

SEE TENNIS, PAGE 9

UNC splits weekend matches

BY DAN SCHWIND
SENIOR WRITER

For the North Carolina wrestling team, this weekend might have seemed like déjà vu all over again.

The Tar Heels faced Virginia and Nebraska — both rematches from last weekend's Virginia Duals.

And in both matches, the results were remarkably similar as the Tar Heels defeated the Cavaliers on Friday 25-12 before getting drubbed by the No. 7 Cornhuskers 34-7 on Saturday.

With the victory against Virginia (3-6), UNC (3-3) improved to 2-0 in the ACC.

"I'm happy we came out so strong," said junior Evan Sola. "It showed that we were in better shape and we were better overall."

The Tar Heels, led by sophomore Bobby Shaw and freshmen Isaiah Britton and Chris Ramos, won the first four bouts to jump to a 15-0 lead.

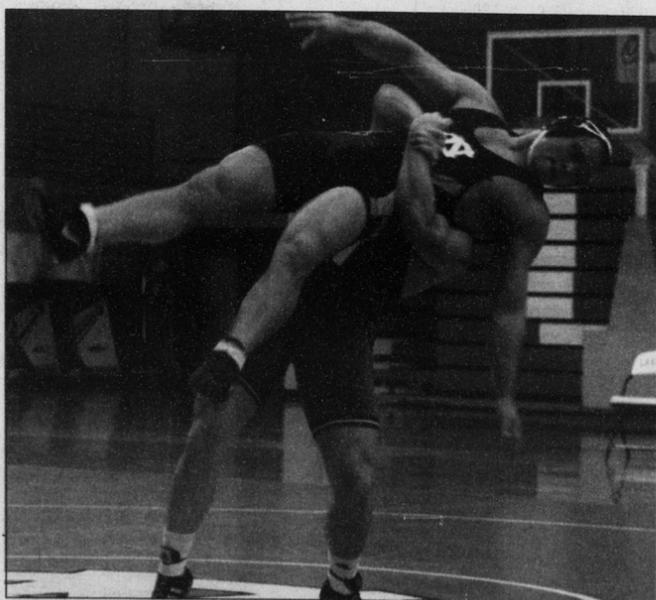
"We came out and wrestled well," Shaw said. "We really wanted to take it to them."

The Cavaliers briefly rallied, cutting UNC's lead to 15-12, including a pin by Cavalier freshman Rocco Caponi.

But the Tar Heels responded, winning the last three bouts, including a 13-5 major decision by sophomore David Dashiell, to close out the 25-12 victory.

"I was very happy," said head coach C.D. Mock. "We did a really great job and came out and fought real hard."

Saturday was a different story for UNC.



North Carolina's Spencer Nadolsky (black) is swept off his feet by Nebraska's Mitch Manstedt in UNC's 34-7 loss Saturday. Nadolsky lost 3-2, ending his 5-match win streak.

The Tar Heels started the afternoon off strong, with wins by Shaw and Sola to take an early 7-0 lead. But Nebraska scored 34 unanswered points to win the match.

"It was like our heads weren't cut in," Sola said. "We just didn't look alive. We looked like we wrestled scared."

The Cornhuskers (14-1-1) won the last

eight bouts in the win, including three pins in that span.

Shaw said he was disappointed by how the team responded to Nebraska, especially after the Tar Heels had battled to a 26-12 loss to the Cornhuskers the week

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