

Defense is key to beat Tigers

Game and Time: Clemson at No. 4 North Carolina. Tipoff is at 1 p.m.

Site: Smith Center
TV/Radio: The game will be televised on ABC. The Tar Heel Sports Network will provide radio coverage; the broadcast will air on 100.7 FM and WCHL-AM 1360.

Records: Clemson is 12-12, 2-9 in the ACC. North Carolina is 21-3, 9-2 in the ACC.

Series: North Carolina leads 114-19. The Tar Heels have never lost a home game in this series (50-0).

Probable Starters:

Clemson
G: Vernon Hamilton, 6-0 SO
G: Cliff Hammonds, 6-3 FR
F: Sam Perry, 6-5 FR
F: James Mays, 6-9 FR
C: Sharrod Ford, 6-9 SR

North Carolina
G: Raymond Felton, 6-1 JR
G: Rashad McCants, 6-4 JR
F: Jackie Manuel, 6-5 SR
F: Jawad Williams, 6-9 SR
C: Sean May, 6-9 JR

The Key Matchup: Clemson's Cheyenne Moore against North Carolina's Jackie Manuel and David Noel.

Clemson center Sharrod Ford quietly has established himself as one of the most consistent big men in the ACC, as he has averaged 14.8 points and 8.1 rebounds per con-

test this season.

But Ford's interior presence could be negated by the continued solid play of North Carolina center Sean May, who turned in his third straight double-double against Virginia on Wednesday, dropping 17 points and snagging 16 rebounds.

With Ford likely contained, the Tigers' other scoring threats will have to shoulder the burden if Clemson is to win in Chapel Hill for the first time in its history.

But while Mays and Perry have started each of the Tigers' last four games, neither of the freshmen has played more than 23 minutes in any of those contests.



That often left Moore, a 6-foot-6 wingman, to make a significant contribution — and he has done so of late, scoring 14 points against Miami on Saturday and 12 against Georgia on Wednesday.

But Moore likely will have to solve the defensive tandem of Manuel and Noel, something not even J.J. Redick could do. Duke's prolific shooting guard managed only 4-for-12 from the floor against the Tar Heel duo's smothering defense.

Final Analysis/Prediction: Ordinarily, a home game against a below-average opponent three days before a trip to play at N.C. State might create a trap game for the Tar Heels.

But even if North Carolina didn't have a streak to defend — 50

THE LOWDOWN ON SATURDAY'S GAME

 Clemson at  North Carolina
(12-12, 2-9) Smith Center, 1 p.m. (21-3, 9-2)

HEAD TO HEAD

Backcourt Shawan Robinson shot 1-for-11 against the Tar Heels at Littlejohn Coliseum, but he's averaging 10.7 points per game this season. Raymond Felton has scored fewer than 10 points once since Dec. 4. **Edge: UNC**

Frontcourt If Sharrod Ford (14.8 points per game) played on a better team, he'd be a dark horse for the All-ACC team. But Sam Perry and James Mays won't provide enough support against Sean May and Jawad Williams. **Edge: UNC**

Bench If Marvin Williams misses his second consecutive game, UNC's depth takes a serious hit. Clemson's Cheyenne Moore has scored 26 points in his last two games, and nine Tigers average 13 minutes. **Edge: Clemson**

Intangibles Three words — zero and fifty. Clemson has never won in Chapel Hill, and that's not likely to change Saturday. Even if the Tigers keep the game close, Clemson is the ACC's worst free-throw-shooting team. **Edge: UNC**

The Bottom Line — North Carolina 81, Clemson 64

COMPILED BY BRIAN MACPHERSON

consecutive wins against Clemson in Chapel Hill — it has too much talent to allow the Tigers to spring the upset.

Even without Marvin Williams, who could miss his second straight game with a toe injury, the Tar

Heels feature more than enough firepower to defeat the struggling Tigers by a comfortable margin.

The Bottom Line: North Carolina 81, Clemson 64.

—Compiled by Brian MacPherson

Sola's pin leads UNC to victory

BY DANIEL MALLOY
SPORTS EDITOR

With the score tied and two matches remaining against a bitter in-state rival, there was one person who North Carolina wrestling coach C.D. Mock wanted on the mat more than any other.

Fortunately for Mock, it was Evan Sola's turn.

The junior All-American took 2 minutes and 47 seconds to put Wolfpack 133-pounder Matt Spengler on his back and take down N.C. State's hopes with him.

The pin gave the Tar Heels their first and

final lead of the match, as they went on to a 19-16 victory Thursday in Carmichael Auditorium.

"That's a good feeling to send Evan out," Mock said. "It wasn't a question of... if he was going to pin him. It was a question of when. It's a good position to be in. The whole time I knew we had that in our pocket."

The added pressure was no problem for the 11th-ranked Sola, who has been UNC's unquestioned leader for the whole season.

"It puts a little pressure on me, but that tends to get me a little more amped up and ready to wrestle," Sola said. "If someone on the team has to be the guy to step out there and win it, I don't mind being that guy."

Sola's dramatic scene would not have been possible if not for a furious UNC comeback in the second half of the match. The Tar Heels (6-9, 4-2 in the ACC) dropped their first four matches to face a 13-0 deficit early on.

North Carolina got off to a slow start because the match began with the 149-pound weight class, exposing the weak middle of the order for UNC.

"One of the worst places we can possibly start for us is 149," Mock said. "(But) I didn't anticipate being down 13 to nothing."

But unlike UNC's Jan. 28 loss to the Wolfpack (7-7, 3-1) in Raleigh, the team battled back from the adversity to take control of the match.

In that first meeting, N.C. State pinned two Tar Heels en route to victory, but Thursday, several wrestlers escaped with only decision losses, which Mock said was one of the keys to the match.

The coach said 157-pounder Greg Carr, who lost a 17-8 major decision to N.C. State's Kody Hamrah, performed admirably.

"(I told him) just for God's sake, don't get pinned," Mock said. "He did his job and, under the circumstances, he may have saved the match."

The difference proved to be UNC's fitness level, as several Wolfpack wrestlers appeared fatigued during the match.

"It was obvious that we were in way better shape this time," Sola said. "They were taking injury time, acting like they were hurt when they just wanted to get their air back."

With an 8-2 victory at 184 pounds, freshman Justin Dobies started the rally that saw the Tar Heels win five straight bouts, culminating with Sola's win at 133.

"Dobies just gets better every time he wrestles," Mock said. "He's very, very young, but he's a tremendous athlete."

Dobies' play helped finish North Carolina's dual meet season in strong fashion as the team now will take two weeks off to prepare for the March 5 ACC Championships.

Sola said the Tar Heels will be able to use Thursday's match as a springboard for a team that he said is "expected" to win the league title.

"It's always crucial to get a win going into ACCs, just to get your confidence up," Sola said. "Especially when you do it by beating State."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Tar Heels look to sweep Wolfpack

BY GABRIELLE DE ROSA
SENIOR WRITER

Nothing could stop Ivory Latta from coming up big for the North Carolina women's basketball team the last time it met N.C. State at Reynolds Coliseum — not even being knocked around by opponents nearly a foot taller than her.

With about five minutes remaining and UNC down by three, Latta's head served as the basketball when she was knocked to the ground in the paint.

But the sophomore guard was a perfect 10-of-10 from the free throw line and added 18 points to the 77-75 Tar Heel victory on Jan. 14.

Hitting her stride, Latta has scored 19 points or more in the last three games, all ACC matchups.

Latta is one good reason to assume that No. 8 UNC (21-3, 9-2 in the ACC) shouldn't have too

much trouble handling the No. 21 Wolfpack Saturday at 4 p.m. in the Smith Center.

But when you assume anything — well, you know what happens.

Many would argue, and rightly so, that the NCSU loss had a lot to do with Coach Kay Yow's absence. It was the first game the Hall of Fame coach missed this season due to her battle against breast cancer.

"The first day you don't ever hear Coach Yow's voice on the floor, that's a big difference," said assistant coach Stephanie Glance after the game.

The Pack (17-5, 6-3) put on an impressive defensive show, as it held the Tar Heels to 31 percent from the field in the first half.

UNC rallied and pulled that percentage up in the second half. The

consistent rookie, Erlana Larkins, was a key factor in the win and continues to be one in any game.

Larkins dominated the post, scoring 23 points and pulling down six rebounds. Overall, UNC scored 36 points in the paint, while NCSU only managed 16.

However, N.C. State went on to win six of its next seven games after facing North Carolina, including a last-minute victory at Miami — all the more reason UNC should not take Sunday's game lightly. Yow has also returned to the sideline, having missed only two games.

N.C. State forward Khadijah Whittington will be a force to be reckoned with once again. The 6-foot-1 freshman scored her career-high of 20 points against UNC.

Her teammate, Billie McDowell,

is skilled from behind the arc, with a 42.6 shooting percentage in ACC games.

But the Tar Heels might require an adjustment period when they face the Wolfpack. UNC hasn't had a truly challenging opponent since it faced Duke on Jan. 24.

Wake Forest attempted to be a contender Wednesday night in Winston-Salem, when the Deacons led 53-48 with 13:38 remaining in the game. But the momentum didn't last long as UNC pulled out a 9-point victory.

Regardless, the Smith Center's energy worked for UNC against Duke, and the Tar Heels will once again test that variable on Sunday.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

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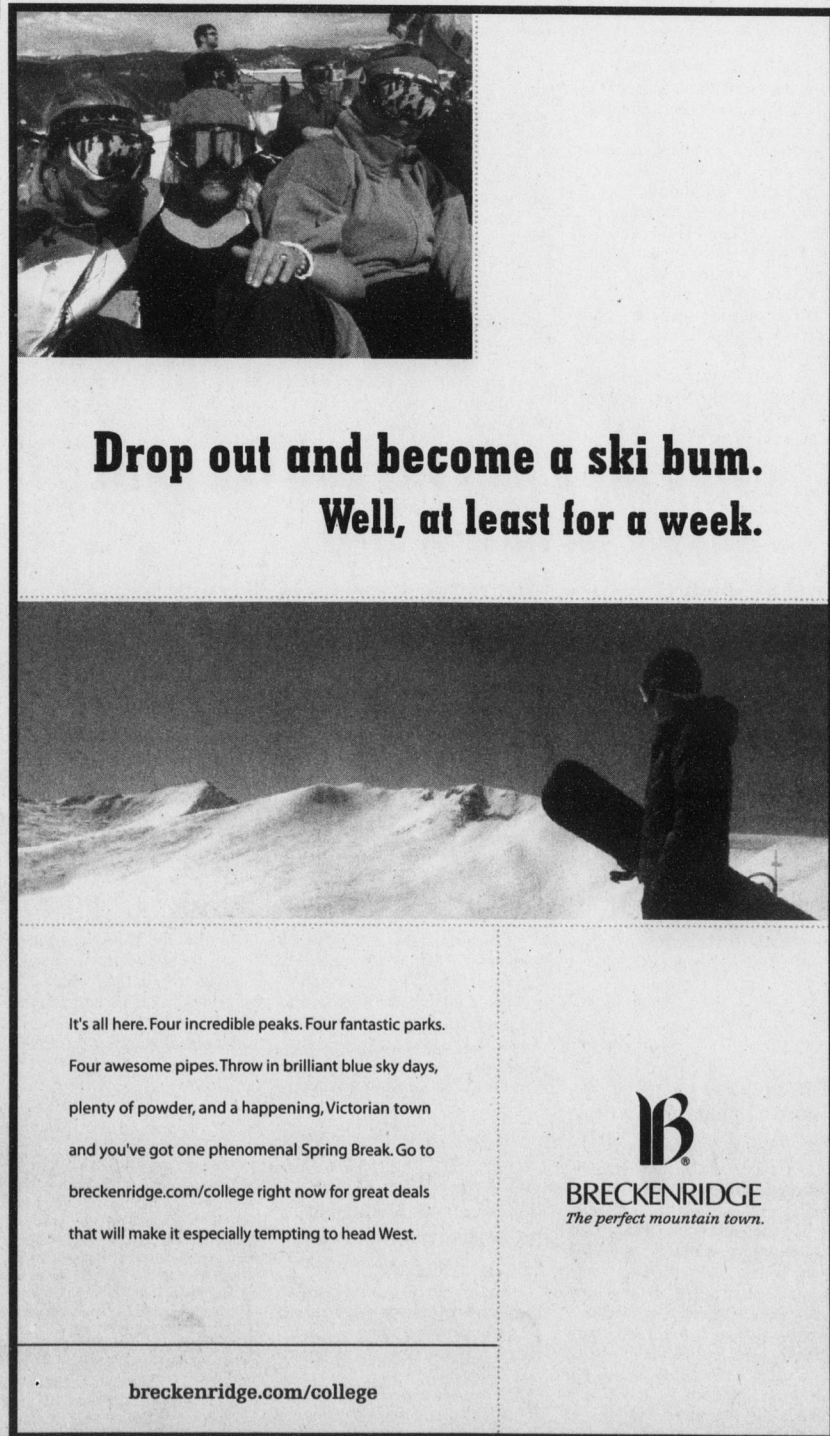
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Saturday, February 19

Men's Tennis
1pm - Charlotte
Cone Kenfield Tennis Center

Baseball vs. Seton Hall
3pm - Boshamer Stadium

Women's Gymnastics
UNC vs. Rutgers, William & Mary
12:30pm - Carmichael Auditorium

Indoor Track & Field ACC Championships
All Day - Eddie Smith Fieldhouse

Sunday, February 20

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