DTH SPORTSATURDAY | 10/1/05

2005 ACC STANDINGS

	CONFERENCE	OVERALL
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COMPI	ERENCE	OAEKUT
Atlantic Division		
Florida State	2-0	3-0
Boston College	1-1	3-1
Maryland	1-1	2-2
Clemson	1-2	2-2
Wake Forest	0-1	1-3
N.C. State	0-2	1-2
Coastal Division		
Virginia Tech	3-0	4-0
Virginia	1-0	3-0
Georgia Tech	1-1	3-1
Miami	1-1	2-1
North Carolina	1-1	1-2
Duke	0-2	1-3

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DELAY OF GAME UNC will not lose 2 in a row to Utes

f you look at the stat sheets North Carolina should not

win today. If you place the 2005 sta-tistics of UNC and Utah side by side there are some glaring differences that would make you think the Tar Heels have no chance against the Utes. Average points per game:

UNC 19, Utah 29.

Average total offense per game: UNC 333.3, Utah 432.5. Average yards in penalties

per game: UNC 84, Utah 48.5. Not to mention the Utes are

already 3-1. When North Carolina trav-

eled to Salt Lake City last year for its first-ever matchup against the Utes, the Tar Heels got a 46-16 thrashing and gave up 669 total yards in offense the most ever by any UNC team.

The Tar Heels not only suffered an embarrassing loss to Utah last year, but also came one week after a brilliant vic-tory against N.C. State in Kenan Stadium. Yes, the same legendary game in which the UNC defense stopped Wolfpack running back T.A. McLendon on the goal line as time expired.

This year UNC once again will face Utah after a surprising, down-to-the-wire win against NCSU. Last week the Tar Heels silenced the raucous crowd of farmers in Carter-Finely Stadium as they defeated the 'Pack 31-24. So not only are the Tar Heels

far outmatched on paper, but their record against the Utes so far stands at 0-1.

Now put those factors aside for a moment and ponder what North Carolina does have going for it this weekend.

UNC is coming off its first win of the season. No one expected the Tar Heels would defeat N.C. State in Raleigh, and that victory is the confidence booster the Tar Heels will need to defeat Utah today. UNC also finally proved it

has a ground game. The team ran the ball — and effectively last weekend against the

Pack and junior running back Barrington Edwards rushed for 129 yards and one touchdown. The ground game of the Tar Heels has been a big question mark since Ronnie McGill tore



BRIANA GORMAN SPORTSATURDAY EDITO

his pectoral muscle in summer workouts, and now it finally has been established.

The Tar Heels' defense is maturing and thus, simply put, finally working. Two weeks ago it was the defense that kept UNC in the game against Wisconsin.

Last weekend it was the defense that forced fumbles and had six sacks. Today if the trend continues, the defense will win the game for the Tar Heels.

UNC also will be playing in front of a home crowd. Though the home field advantage seemed to be nonexistent two weeks ago in UNC's home opener loss to Wisconsin, it will be different today against Utah since the Tar Heels finally know what victory tastes like.

And while I'm not a gambling sort of a person, it's always fun to check out the lines on what the so-called experts are predicting. And guess what?

For the first time since 2003, UNC is the favorite at home - and by three points. North Carolina was favored to beat Duke in 2003, but suffered a humiliating 30-22 loss to its biggest rival and one of the worst football teams in the U.S.

Some of you might be wondering about the William & Mary game last year, but lines aren't run for games against Division I-AA schools.

So even the gamblers think UNC has a chance against the Utes today.

And while the Tar Heels might rank in the bottom half in almost every category in the ACC, I'm giving them a chance against the Utes. They have a lot of momentum from last weekend's victory and they'll carry that into today's game.

And while I generally don't like to gamble, my money is on the Tar Heels today.

Contact Briana Gorman at bggorman@email.unc.edu.

COVER STORY

Earning a name for themselves



Find out why UNC running back coach Andre' Powell doesn't know the names of his starting tailbacks.

FEATURES

Utah manhandled Tar Heels in 2004



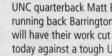
UNC hasn't forgotten the 46-16 slaughtering it suffered last year in Salt Lake City.

Preview of other ACC games



Virginia-travels to College Park; Clemson takes on Wake Forest; Syracuse heads to Florida State; and surprising South Florida plays Miami today.

Key matchups of today's game



UNC guarterback Matt Baker and running back Barrington Edwards will have their work cut out for them today against a tough Utah defense.

DEPARTMENTS

North Carolina faces Utah today



Check out the rosters, starters and analysis for the Tar Heels' game against Utah.

OFF THE RECORD with Kyndraus Guy



The defensive tackle explains why he thinks Coach John Bunting would not enjoy his cooking.

Two teams wearing the same jersey?

Assistant Sports Editor Derek Howles explains why he doesn't think the Tar Heels have a chance against the Utes today.

KICKOFF 3