

Tar Heels don't get the point UNC defense walks softly, carries big stick

Starter still unknown after exhibition

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON SENIOR WRITER

No position is quite so integral to a Roy Williams offense as the starting point guard...

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Table with 2 columns: Team, Points. Catawba 63, UNC 89.

Freshman Bobby Frasor started for the Tar Heels, and he finished the game with four points...

But even the decision to start Frasor on Saturday shed no light on Williams' upcoming decision.

"Don't read anything into that, about Bobby starting, because 'Q' didn't practice yesterday," Williams

said. "I don't know that I've ever started a guy that didn't practice the day before."

Frasor did little to help his case early, but the other four Tar Heels didn't look much better.

"They jumped out to a nice little lead," said UNC forward David Noel, who scored a team-high 18 points.

"I liked the way (Catawba) ran the ball at us, made sure we ran back on the defensive end," Williams said.

"We did a nice job of running back after the first six or eight minutes of the game. They hit us between the eyes a couple of times."

The Tar Heels hit back in the opening minutes of the second half,

a charge led primarily by Frasor.

After Reyshawn Terry fed Noel for a layup, Frasor stole the inbound pass and delivered the ball back to Noel for two more points.

"Bobby looks for his shot a little bit more, to drive to the hole a little bit more than 'Q,'" Noel said.

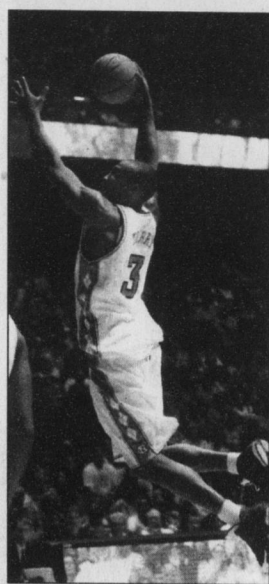
Before he can do much more passing or shooting, however, Thomas needs his nagging foot injury to heal.

"When the season starts, I'm going to have to play with it because I need to be out there," Thomas said.

That season will start when Gardner-Webb arrives to challenge a team defending its NCAA title but unranked in the first national poll.

Said Williams, "My team's so young that when you say something about rank, they think you're talking about the smell."

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North Carolina forward Reyshawn Terry soars for a dunk during UNC's 89-63 exhibition win against Catawba on Saturday.

BY JESSE BAUMGARTNER STAFF WRITER

CARY — Soccer defenders learn early on that their position is not one of recognition and attention.

The headline for most games is simple: Goals equal glory.

But the defense on the North Carolina men's soccer team seems to relish its position outside the spotlight.

Anchored by a back line of juniors Ted Odgers, Michael Harrington and David Boole and sophomore Andre Sherard, the Tar Heels have given up no goals in their last seven games.

"I know the guy to my right and the guy to my left are going to play for me," Odgers said after Friday's 2-0 win against Clemson in the ACC semifinals.

UNC has recorded 15 shutouts on the season, with two different keepers — Justin Hughes and Ford Williams — in net.

And its team average of 0.69 goals against led the ACC during the regular season.

Those efforts finally were rewarded when Sherard and Harrington received second-team All-ACC honors last week and Sherard was named to the all-tournament team during the weekend.

Coach Elmar Bolowich pointed out that defenders often get overlooked because of the dominance of offensive players in most statistical categories.

"I really push hard to make sure that in our conference we also recognize defenders when they make outstanding plays or when they

have consistent good performance — so I promoted our defenders," he said.

Coincidentally, all four defenders are from either Greenville or Raleigh, and Bolowich takes great pride in the fact that the program has been able to recruit players close to home.

"We are very proud of that, that we have also some in-state players that are very, very productive," he said.

Despite the team's overtime loss to Duke on Sunday in the ACC title game, UNC heads into the NCAA Tournament with a lot of confidence at the defensive end of the field.

While Odgers has been pleased with the unit's performance thus far, he said he feels the team still has a few things to fine-tune before the tournament.

"We do have to prepare for the NCAA Tournament, so we'd like to continue our defensive stance," he said.

With no goals allowed in their last 727-plus minutes of play, the Tar Heels won't need to change too much before they head off in pursuit of the national championship, however.

Still, you probably won't hear about them.

But that's nothing new.

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FIELD HOCKEY

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"(Indiana) played tough," said UNC coach Karen Shelton. "They're having a Cinderella year, so to speak, and they got here and they scored on us, and I guess that loosened them up a little bit. ... They weren't intimidated."

And if being outshot worse than General Custer at Little Bighorn doesn't intimidate a team, what else will?

UNC (14-7) peppered the Hoosier net with shot after shot after shot. They recorded 26 in all, half of which were on goal.

"I remember when we played UVa, my sophomore year, we dominated play," said senior back Naomi Weatherald. "They had one shot on

goal. They won, 1-nil. If you don't put the ball in the net... you're not going to win."

On the other end of the field, meanwhile, UNC keeper Katy Tran, who also was playing in her final game as a Tar Heel, faced a mere five shots. Thing is, three went in.

"I would rather have a lot of shots, because then you're in it, and you're focused, and you're warm," Tran said. "It's almost like a placekicker. You only have so many opportunities to play the ball, so you have to make the most every time you play it."

Which is something the Tar Heels did not do.

Even if you dominate time of possession and record nearly eight times as many penalty corners as your opponent (15 versus 2), you aren't guaranteed a victory — especially when "Lady Luck" is entrenched comfortably on the

junior transfer scored all three goals for UNC in the tournament, and against Clemson in the semifinals he netted both goals and hit the post on an unbelievable bicycle kick that would have given him a hat trick.

And Hunter, along with Hughes, midfielder Dax McCarty and defender Andre Sherard, was named to the all-tournament team.

To start the shootout, each team converted its first three shots. Michael Harrington made the fourth for UNC, but Kyle Helton missed for Duke to give McCarty a chance to win the game.

But his shot was saved, and Duke extended it to an extra shooter.

Surprisingly for the Tar Heels, junior forward Corey Ashe did not line up to take a shot.

"At that point you don't put the pressure on the guys," Bolowich said. "The guys have to step forward to feel comfortable and tell you that they are ready and willing to take the shot."

"When I was looking around, certain guys stepped up and said 'I want number one, I want number two, I want number three.' So we went down the list, and that's what I wrote down. I never force anybody to shoot if they're not feeling up to it."

Bickford shot sixth for UNC but had his shot saved as he aimed right at Duke goalkeeper Justin Papadakis — who saved two straight during the shootout.

After Papadakis stopped Bickford, Mike Grella put the ball past a diving Williams to give Duke the win and the ACC title.

"With our guys, there is nobody to put at fault," Bolowich said. "Not during the course of the match and certainly not during a PK shootout."

If the Tar Heels secure a bye as a No. 1 seed in the NCAA tournament, their first match will be Nov. 22.

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other team's sideline. "I was proud of my team for getting 26 shots — it's one of our higher totals of the year," Shelton said. "And 15 corners — that's a lot. ..."

"(Indiana was) opportunistic. During the course of the game the ball seemed to bounce their way a little bit. And that happens sometimes in sport. A rebound, a tip that goes to them instead of you."

And that's exactly what happened on the first goal of the game for the No. 9 Hoosiers (17-4).

Forward Lydia Schrott took a corner, and Tran made a diving save. But the ball bounced off Tran's leg and right onto Schrott's stick, who stuck the rebound for a 1-0 lead just 19 minutes in.

Schrott scored again to make it 2-0 at 35:21, but the Tar Heels wasted no time in responding.

Two minutes later, UNC midfielder Kate Scholl scored off a Britt van Beek assist to cut the deficit in half, and van Beek, a midfielder, knocked home a goal of her own off a feed from midfielder Rachel Dawson 11 minutes after that to

VCU

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start, it took 12 furious minutes for UNC (22-1) to put the game away.

In the 26th minute Yael Averbuch lofted a perfect corner kick and Kendall Fletcher made a perfect run to the far post to head it home.

1-0. Six minutes later Lindsay Tarpley came down with a long ball from goalkeeper Aly Winget just outside the VCU box, and, with two defenders draped all over her, delivered a sliding, left-footed shot past a diving Lauren Hardison.

2-0. And six minutes after that, midfielder Lori Chalupny took the ball upfield and fired a laser from 21 yards out into the left side netting.

3-0. Good night, Rams. But Tarpley wasn't done.

She struck again in the 71st minute, controlling a pass from Averbuch outside the box and nailing the ball just under the crossbar. Then, with more than seven minutes to play, Tarpley took a pass from Corinne Black right in front of the goal, and all she had to do was finish for the hat trick.

"Lindsay Tarpley had a magic shoe on, or something," said VCU coach Denise Schilte-Brown.

In five postseason games, Tarpley, who had been limited by injury much of the season, has six goals and three assists. Tarpley also has 13 career NCAA Tournament goals, putting her two behind Mia Hamm's UNC record.

"When she gets (the ball), that's all she's thinking of doing is shooting," Dorrance said. "She understands that fundamental concept of the game better than anyone I

winding down. But while he was impressive through the air, Baker's biggest contribution might have come with his legs.

On second down from the Maryland 28, Baker dropped back looking as if he was going to throw. But he instead sprinted forward for 21 yards on the designed quarterback run — his only rush of the day and the longest of his career.

"I might have scored if I wasn't so worried about getting stripped from behind," Baker said.

While Baker was unable to put the ball into the end zone on the final drive, it wasn't because he was making bad throws.

He tried to hit Jesse Holley in the end zone, but the pass was broken up by Maryland cornerback Gerrick McPheerson on a twisting,

tie at 2.

But Schrott wasn't done. With 24 minutes to play, she graduated from annoyance to full-fledged thorn in UNC's side, when she slapped yet another corner rebound past Tran for the final margin.

So as the clock ticked toward zero, with the sun setting on their season and the IU defense settled into a groove, the Tar Heels launched a last-ditch round of volleys.

They racked up five penalty corners in the final 18 minutes and had four great shots that could have tied the game at 3.

But Exner saved the first three, including a 2-on-1 UNC breakaway, and the fourth rolled just wide.

"I felt like we just had to find a way to get the ball in the goal," Tran said, her face covered in tears.

"The more we let them hang and the more we let them hold on, the more dangerous they would be and the harder it would be to score."

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have ever seen."

Winget also was on the road to recovery — she had missed the last three games with a sore kneecap. But she was back in net Sunday, having successfully earned her job back from Anna Rodenbough, who started near the end of the regular season.

"I'm the starter," Dorrance said. "And as soon as she regained her health we were going to put her back in."

Winget played solidly, but VCU (13-5-5) cracked the scoreboard in the second half when Stephanie Power stole the ball from defender Robyn Gayle and hit one home. The Rams then added another on a Sandra Anger penalty kick.

It was only the second time UNC had given up two goals in one game this season, the other being its loss to Duke on Oct. 9.

"I think it will make us tighter for the rest of the tournament," Fletcher said. "(It will) focus us up so we won't give up those soft goals."

Friday against Western Carolina, the Tar Heels didn't give up soft goals, or any goals at all, for that matter. The Catamounts provided a tough test, though, compensating for their lack of speed with aggressive and physical play. But North Carolina still prevailed, 2-0, thanks to goals from Heather O'Reilly and Jaime Gilbert.

The Tar Heels now advances to the round of 16 against fourth-seeded Pepperdine on Saturday, once again at Fetzler Field.

And Dorrance will be giving out those roses again.

Just in case.

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leaping, last-ditch effort to bat the ball down.

As Bunting put it, "That last pass to Jesse is a pretty doggone good throw."

Despite the effort from Baker, the Tar Heels eventually fell in overtime, and he was not interested in talking about his stats after the game.

All he cared about was his team's future and the upcoming games against Duke and Virginia Tech.

"What I do is not a concern to me," Baker said. "I try to win games. One pass here or there would have made the difference. Although the stats are nice, it really means nothing considering the loss."

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FOOTBALL

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"It's just a matter of playing a coverage that we play frequently and maybe guessing a little bit and getting caught up," said UNC coach John Bunting. "Give their quarterback and their staff some credit on the out-and-go."

Bunting's team, though, fought back to even the score at 30 before regulation ended. Starting at the UNC 17-yard line, quarterback Matt Baker led the Tar Heels 76 yards toward the Maryland end zone — including a 21-yard scramble to give the Tar Heels first-and-goal with 24 seconds to play.

But after two incompletions, Bunting elected to send the field-goal unit out for third down. Connor Barth's successful kick knotted the game.

The kicker could not drain a 38-yard field goal in overtime, however.

After Maryland scored three points on its series, the Tar Heels garnered just four yards on two runs and an incompletion. Then, Barth's 38-yard line drive sailed wide of the right upright, sparking immediate jubilation from the Terrapin sideline.

"I just didn't keep my eye on it like I normally do," Barth said. "Sucks I had to miss it on that one."

The fourth quarter epitomized a back-and-forth game that contained five lead changes and two ties. Maryland tailback Lance Ball accumulated 111 rushing yards in the first half, accounting for 47 of Maryland's 80 yards in its first touchdown drive.

And Maryland scored its other three points of the opening half courtesy of a controversial penalty — a holding call on UNC freshman Nick Storcevic during a punt that gave the Terrapins an unusual first down.

"I can only repeat what I remember (the referees) telling me, which was there was holding at the line of scrimmage, and therefore they were going to assess the penalty in favor of Maryland," Bunting said. "I've never seen that in my life."

The Tar Heels bounced back to score two touchdowns in the second half — the first on a diving 19-yard catch by receiver Mike Mason in the end zone and the second on Taylor's interception return. UNC had built a 10-point cushion.

"It was like we were swimming upstream the whole game and

no matter how hard we kept trying, we kept getting knocked back down," said Maryland coach Ralph Friedgen.

Friedgen's team ultimately knocked the Tar Heels down — and spoiled a record-setting day for Tar Heel receiver Jarwarski Pollock. With a five-yard catch in the third quarter, Pollock broke Na Brown's school record for career receptions with his 166th as a Tar Heel.

"Getting the record doesn't even matter right now, because we wanted to get this game," Pollock said. "That would have put us in a good position to win next week's game to enable ourselves to go to a bowl game."

"Now, our backs are to the wall, and we just have to go out and fight."

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Table with Maryland 33, UNC 30. Includes scoring summary, first quarter, second quarter, third quarter, fourth quarter, overtime, attendance, and individual leaders.

DUKE

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smaller size by pushing the Tar Heels around, though Bolowich refused to attribute any part of the loss to the size differential.

"You will not find a goal all season long on a header in the box," Bolowich said. "Not one. We are strong in there, and it has nothing to do with size. Our guys, they compete. They win the headers that they need to win. Size doesn't matter."

In the second half, UNC freshman forward Stephen Bickford carried the ball down the sideline looking to cross, but a UNC attacker was taken down in the box by Duke defender Darrus Barnes — and the referees let play continue.

After regulation, with North Carolina goalkeeper Justin Hughes injured with a pulled groin, UNC was forced to substitute in senior Ford Williams.

Williams, who was the starter at the beginning of the season but lost the job because of poor play, came in and shut out the Blue Devils in overtime.

"You try to prepare yourself mentally," Williams said. "You always have to be ready, no matter what it is. It's more than being physically ready to come into a situation like that — you have to prepare yourself mentally."

Despite playing a man down after Blake Beach was ejected in the first overtime when he picked up his second yellow card of the match, UNC still had many chances to end the game.

"I don't think our players' confidence was affected by it," Bolowich said. "Blake played hard. He had already a yellow card, and we wanted to go for it."

Cameron Lewis had a powerful shot saved, and Corey Ashe also had his chances in overtime.

So, too, did super striker Ben Hunter, who has become the secret weapon for UNC lately. The British

BAKER

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stepped up his play recently and has thrown only one interception in the last two games.

"I don't know if it's the best he's played," said UNC coach John Bunting. "He played very well at the beginning of the season at times, and certainly the last two weeks he's really picked it up. I'm really proud of his efforts — he throws the ball really well."

With the Tar Heels trailing, 30-27, and less than five minutes to go in the game, Baker got the ball and played nearly flawlessly on consecutive drives.

He dropped back and hit wide receiver Jarwarski Pollock across the middle for a 35-yard completion — but Pollock coughed it up,