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## Latta, UNC ready for limelight

Ivory Latta strode into Friday night's postgame press conference, the picture of humility, poise and professionalism. Not exactly what you'd expect from the sparkplug of a North Carolina women's basketball team that cruised to wins on back-to-back nights by a combined 78 points, the latter a 71-47 dismantling of South Florida. But the junior guard with the thousand-watt smile and a personality as bubbly as a baking soda/vinegar volcano science fair experiment was all business in fielding her first question from the media — dutifully attributing the wins to competent coaching and unselfishly citing the importance of teamwork. Latta's uncharacteristically ordinary answer caught the assembled media off-guard and silenced the room. The quiet was broken by the one person who saw through the act. "She's practicing for ESPN, is what she's doing," said head coach Sylvia Hatchell. "She can't wait." With her cover blown and her trademark smile back in tow, Latta couldn't contain her excitement for tonight's clash with Connecticut and her enthusiasm toward the rest of the season.

"This is what you dream of," Latta said with a chuckle. "You dream about playing games like this — especially on ESPN."

After Latta — the squad's indisputable leader whose court vision and defensive tenacity evoke comparisons to Allen Iverson — North Carolina is stocked with versatile post players, both in the starting lineup and off a deep bench that will be critical to the team's success both tonight and throughout the ACC grind.

"Our strength is probably those forwards," Hatchell said. "We've got lots of forwards on the team that can do a lot of things, that can play about any position on the floor."

Six-foot-2 senior La'Tangela Atkins and junior Camille (anything but) Little start for the Tar Heels and create matchup nightmares for opposing coaches unable to counter their size.

"(Hatchell) can take a 6-2 kid out and bring another 6-2 kid ... long, athletic to guard our post players or even guard our perimeter players," said USF head coach Jose Fernandez.

Sophomore Erlana Larkins is the team's truest post player and, along with Latta, a preseason All-ACC selection.

As the first player off the bench, Rashanda McCants is another of those forwards who makes it difficult for opposing coaches to sleep at night.

The 6-foot-1 freshman has the handle to bring up the ball, the body to play inside and a jump shot eerily similar to her Timberwolf brother that makes her a threat from beyond the arc.

A combination of size and four returning starters from last year's ACC Championship team have Latta and the rest of the Tar Heels eager to bring their game to a hostile Hartford Civic Center and to show a national audience just how deep they are.

The Tar Heels' impressive versatility will be tested seriously for the first time tonight against UConn's 6-foot-3 wing Ann Strother. North Carolina's ability to contain the preseason candidate for National Player of the Year will serve as a litmus test for when it digs in against the ACC's best — No. 1 Duke and No. 9 Maryland.

And if the Tar Heels continue to exploit their superior versatility, they'll be practicing for ESPN when it matters most — in late March and early April.

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# 'CATS ARE ROADKILL

TAR HEELS SHOW RESILIENCE IN TOPPLING NO. 10 KENTUCKY IN LEXINGTON

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON  
SENIOR WRITER

LEXINGTON, Ky. — The Kentucky players knew it. The crowd knew it. Ashley Judd knew it.

David Noel knew it, too. The 10th-ranked Wildcats trailed by 12 points at halftime in their own building, and a momentum-turning rally was only a matter of time.

"Look, they're going to make a run," he told his teammates in the locker room. "The crowd's going to get back into it. We just have to be

able to stop their run and answer it with one of our own."

Buoyed by the guidance of Noel — and a few fiery words from Coach Roy Williams — North Carolina withstood the Kentucky onslaught and emerged with an 83-79 victory at Rupp Arena on Saturday.

Reyshawn Terry scored a career-high 25 points and Noel snagged a personal-best seven offensive rebounds, but it was the poise of the young Tar Heels that ultimately paved the way to victory.

"When the Rupp Arena crowd got to rocking because Kentucky's play had made the crowd really get into it, I told them to just pretend that they were cheering for them," Williams said.

The psychological ploy didn't work precisely as planned, but the rookies still managed to avoid the jitters that usually accompany a first trip into a hostile environment.

"That place was screaming," said freshman Bobby Frasor. "You can't pretend they're cheering for you. But you've got to block it out and try to execute your plays and get some baskets."

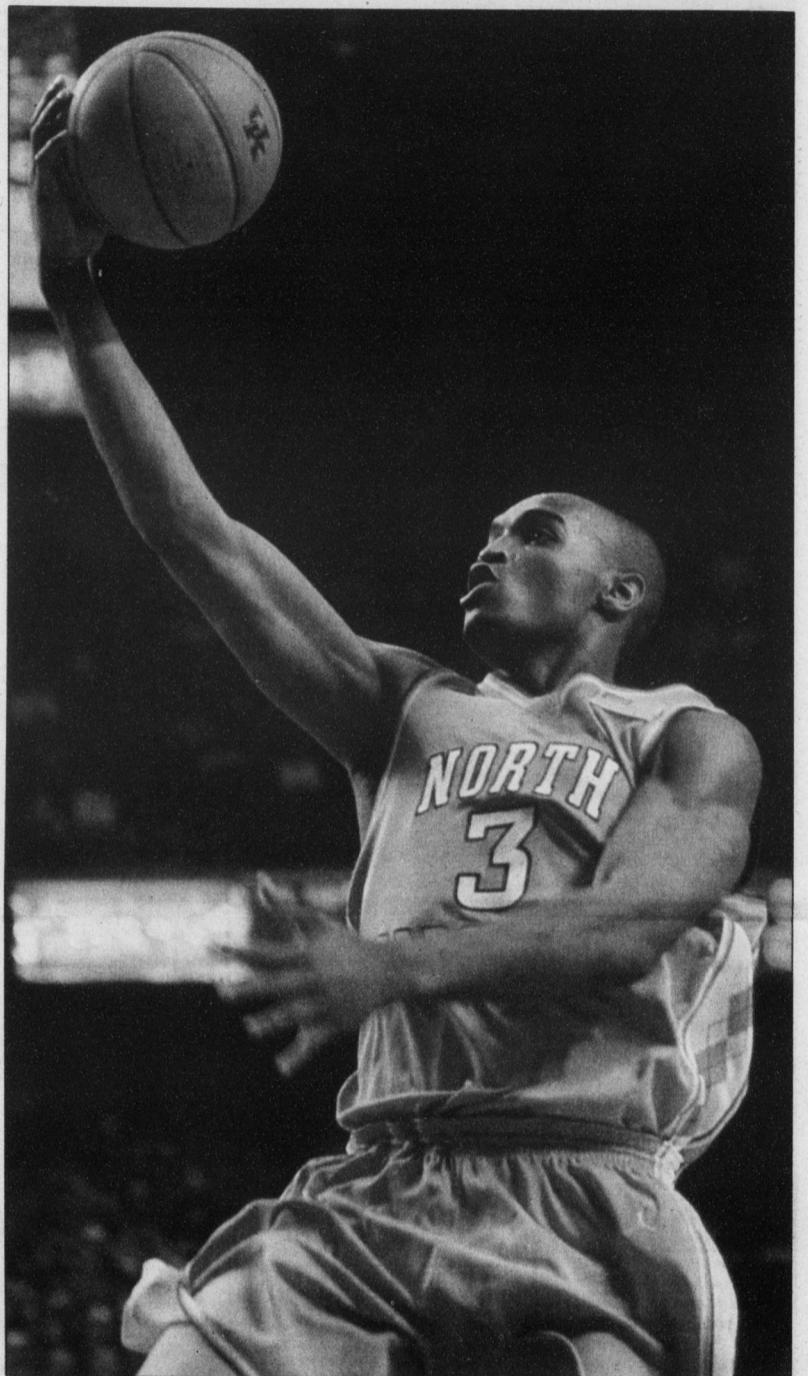
Kentucky (5-2) led by four midway through the first half when Williams inserted Wes Miller, Danny Green and Byron Sanders to try to swing the momentum, though scoring wasn't their primary mission.

"I wanted to give this team a spark on the defensive end of the



Kentucky guard Rajon Rondo (left) is defended by UNC's Wes Miller, who contributed 12 points and impassioned defense off the bench.

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North Carolina junior forward Reyshawn Terry posted a career-high 25 points Saturday in the Tar Heels' 83-79 win against Kentucky. Terry was 2-for-6 from beyond the arc and chipped in with seven rebounds.

## Kentucky Terry-fied by junior's 25 points

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON  
SENIOR WRITER

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Sure, it sounded plausible that Reyshawn Terry could become an offensive force for North Carolina this season. After all, the 6-foot-8 forward had spent his first two seasons buried in the rotation behind — and battling in practice with — future NBA players.

Once the draft lottery claimed the Tar Heels' established stars, it stood to reason that Terry would have his chance.

But through four games, it hadn't happened. He showed a flash of promise with three monster dunks in an exhibition against Catawba, but he'd averaged only 11.8 points

and 5.5 rebounds since the regular season began.

And against Illinois Terry scored only six points.

"He had been struggling," said UNC coach Roy Williams. "He was averaging double figures although he had not been playing very well."

That changed in a big way against Kentucky on Saturday. Terry scored a career-high 25 points and justified the hype his teammates been throwing his way since before the season.

"People know now — it isn't just talk," said guard Wes Miller. "He really is that talented. He can score. He can do so many things — he's so

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## Blowout of USF is final tuneup for UConn trip

BY JACOB KARABELL  
SENIOR WRITER

North Carolina coach Sylvia Hatchell said she expected Friday's game against South Florida to help prepare her team for tonight's clash against No. 8 Connecticut.

But while the teams might each employ a similar slow tempo, it gradually became evident that the Bulls do not have the talent and

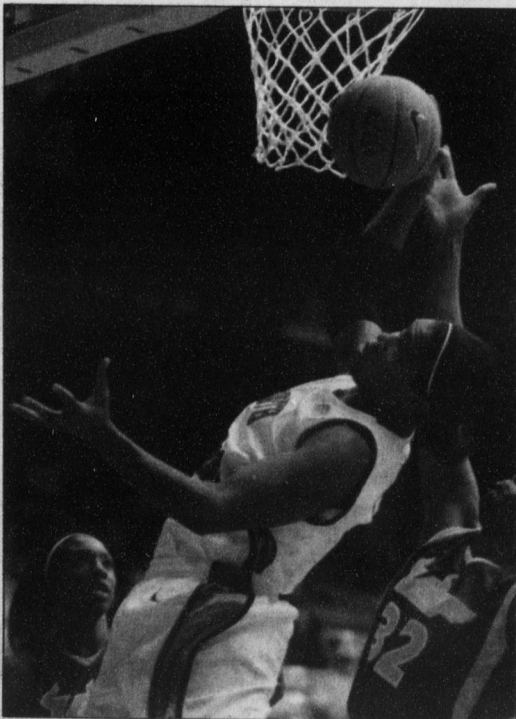
depth to compete with an upper-echelon team such as the Tar Heels.

Seventh-ranked UNC employed stifling defense in the first half and found an offensive rhythm in the second, cruising to a 71-47 win Friday at Carmichael Auditorium.

"They did a really good job matching up and making us play a half-court game, but after we settled down a little bit we did a good job of getting some good shots," Hatchell said. "I felt like our defense at times made them play out of a little bit of the rhythm they were used to playing with."

USF entered the game undefeated, but it had yet to face a school from a major conference. The Bulls also had to overcome an injury-depleted backcourt that

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North Carolina forward Erlana Larkins comes down with a rebound amid a forest of South Florida players in Friday's 71-47 Tar Heel win.

## Comeback effort falls short in OT

BY DAVID MOSES  
SENIOR WRITER

When junior Corey Ashe walked off the field into the McCaskill Soccer Center on Saturday, he unleashed a thunder-

ous expletive — his voice so filled with anger and disappointment that his frustration could be felt throughout the building.

And it probably wasn't the only curse word flying from the mouth of a North Carolina men's soccer player after its 3-2 double over-

time loss to Southern Methodist. SMU had come into the game on a roll after winning games at heavily favored UCLA and UNC-Greensboro to make it to the NCAA quarterfinals.

The Mustangs picked up right where they left off, controlling the first half and taking a 1-0 lead into the break.

"We came out a little bit timid, a little bit tight," said UNC coach Elmar Bolowich. "Not our usual selves."

The second half didn't start out much better for the fourth-seed-

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## Cougars upend Heels in NCAA Tourney 1st round

BY ALICIA JONES  
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

The Purdue volleyball team was cracking under the pressure.

College of Charleston was playing relentless defense in the potential game-ending rally, causing one Boilermaker to scream out "I can't take this!"

The Purdue group was among those watching from the Smith Center stands as C of C defeated North Carolina, 3-1, in a first

round NCAA Tournament match so intense it had a bystanding team on edge.

Though UNC (23-10) previously was undefeated in the series and had home-court advantage in the match, UNC coach Joe Sagula said the loss was not an upset.

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