

# Freshman shows he's no longer green

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON  
SENIOR WRITER

Want to be compared to Kirk Hinrich and Paul Pierce?

There's a simple formula — miss a few shots, throw a few bad passes and ignore a few defensive assignments. That's what it took for North Carolina coach Roy Williams to compare Danny Green's early struggles to his former Kansas stars.

"They had some really bad games," Green said. "He was just making a point that you're going to have bad games — shake it off and play the next game, play harder, and don't worry about the last game."

Green, touted as a wing player with a strong outside shot, hit just seven 3-pointers in his first 13 games. But in the Tar Heels' last four games, he's shot 11-for-17 from behind the arc.

In the Tar Heels' 86-69 win against Arizona on Saturday, he hit five of his six shots from the field, including three of his four 3-point attempts.

The game also epitomized the up-and-down nature of Green's rookie season.

During one two-minute stretch early in the second half, Green scored six points and blocked two shots but also threw what his coach called "two brain-dead passes."

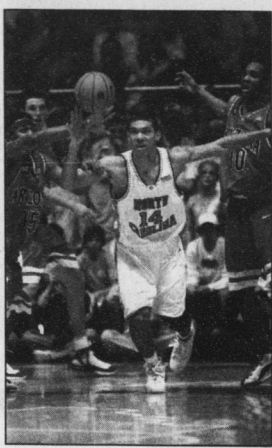
Right after the second pass found the hands of an Arizona defender, forward Reyshawn Terry — as if reading Williams' mind — jogged to the scorer's table to substitute for Green.

"It's not OK to say, 'Well, I struggled because I'm a freshman,' but you've got to understand that they bounce back from it," Williams said. "Danny took that to heart more than anybody."

## Miller continues to shine

Guard Wes Miller, playing on his 23rd birthday, started for the third straight game and continued to shoot well from the perimeter, while playing tough defense.

He scored 14 points, the second time in three games he has scored in double figures, on 5-of-7 shooting (including 4-of-5 from 3-point



DTH/WHITNEY SHEPTE

After a slow start to the season, freshman forward Danny Green (14) has scored in double figures in North Carolina's past three games.

range). He drained a layup on a fast break after a David Noel steal, his first non-3-point field goal since the Tar Heels' win at Kentucky on Dec. 3.

In that time, Miller had hit 28 3-pointers without sinking a shot from inside the arc.

At the other end, the 5-foot-11 Miller defended 6-foot-3 guard Mustafa Shakur for much of Saturday's game. Shakur led the Wildcats with 18 points, but he hit only one of his three 3-point attempts.

"It was as hard to stay in front of him as it was for me to ever stay in front of anybody," Miller said. "He's got the ball on a string, and he's super quick."

Miller also earned an ovation from the Smith Center crowd with five minutes remaining in the game — and with the Tar Heels ahead by 17 points — when he dove on the floor for a loose ball and called a timeout to secure possession.

"He's epitomized by that dive on the floor, picking up the loose ball and calling a timeout," Williams said. "He's a kid who's worked his tail off."

Contact the Sports Editor at [sports@unc.edu](mailto:sports@unc.edu).

# From down low to downtown

BY DANIEL MALLOY  
SENIOR WRITER

It started with some innocent joking around after practice.

In those informal sessions 6-foot-1 forward Erlana Larkins would launch 3-pointers alongside long-range ace Ivory Latta. And she was pretty good at it.

Larkins wasn't really taking it seriously, but Latta — who knows a thing or two about 3s considering she has made one in 48 straight games — saw something more.

So while Larkins was stretching before Sunday night's epic Duke-North Carolina matchup, Latta bounded up to her with a message.

"E, go ahead," Latta said. "If they give you that shot, take it."

Now, a battle of the last two unbeaten teams in the country with

ESPN2 cameras bearing down isn't exactly a time for joking around. But thoughts that Larkins, who was 1-for-7 from behind the arc for her career heading into Sunday's game, would be an outside threat were pretty laughable to the Blue Devils.

"We knew they would give us the 3-point shot in our motion offense because they didn't respect our post players (from outside)," Larkins said after the game.

The result of that disrespect: two tide-turning treys in the beginning of the second half that jump-started a dominant 20 minutes from Larkins and a miraculous UNC comeback.

Less than a minute into the half, Larkins nailed a step-back 3 at the top of the key.

"Just something told me to take it because we were down by (12)," Larkins said Monday. "I was like, 'Well, it won't hurt. I'm wide open, and I'll probably get yelled at if I don't take it.'"

A minute later, she hit another to cut the Duke advantage to 44-36, and it was the Duke defenders yelling at each other for leaving Larkins open. What was once a 16-point deficit had been sliced in half, and Duke's confidence had been cut down with it.

And after her brief outside shooting spree opened up the middle, Larkins went back to her bread and butter in the paint.

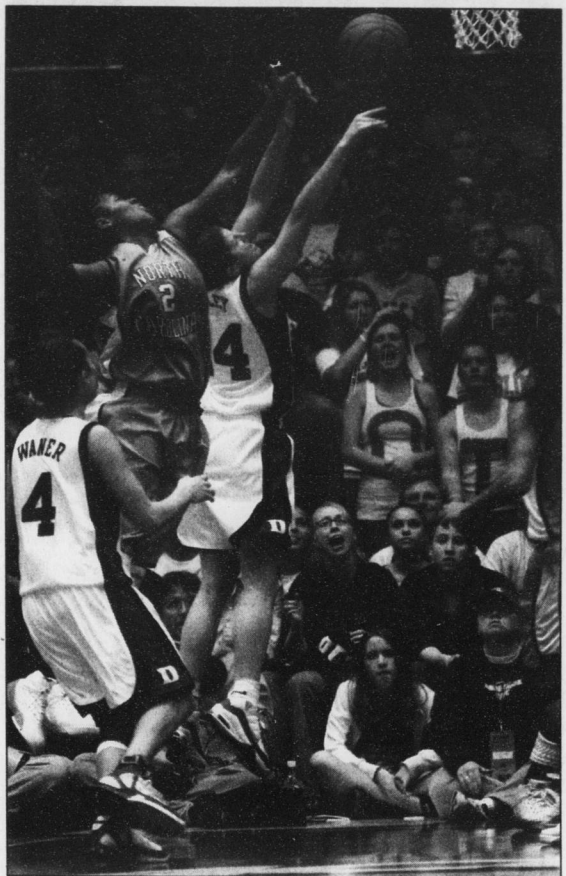
Twice she beat the entire Duke defense down the court for transition layups.

With 7:21 to play she cut the Blue Devil lead to four when she laid in a lob from Latta — further exciting the surprisingly loud Tar Heel fans in Cameron Indoor Stadium.

But two minutes later, disaster nearly struck as Larkins picked up her fourth foul, forcing her to the bench. She sat for a minute while sophomore LaToya Pringle — who is a sho-in for most improved Tar Heel this season — chipped in two free throws and a layup to tie the game at 62.

Then Larkins came back to carry the rally to its conclusion.

She hit two free throws to give UNC its first lead since 14-13. And with less than 30 seconds to play — on the most crucial possession of the game — she picked up a loose ball and fired a pass to La'Tangela Atkinson who hit a layup to put the



DTH/WHITNEY SHEPTE

Sophomore forward Erlana Larkins (2) recorded four rebounds, four steals and 23 points in North Carolina's win against Duke on Sunday.

## Tar Heels up by three.

Larkins' game, as usual, was an exercise in filling the box score — a season-high 23 points, four rebounds, four steals and two blocks.

But it was just one line on the stat sheet — 2-for-3 from 3-point range — that drew the most attention. And even if future opposing teams take the jumper away, Larkins' ball handling is no laugh-

ing matter either.

"I think more people are going to start honoring her jump shot outside, and then that's when she has the ability to drive past people," Latta said Monday. "She's pretty deadly."

Senior writer Jacob Karabell contributed to this report. Contact the Sports Editor at [sports@unc.edu](mailto:sports@unc.edu).

## SPORTS CALENDAR

### TODAY

**Wrestling**  
vs. Duke, 7:30 p.m.  
Carmichael Auditorium

### THURSDAY

**Men's basketball**  
at Maryland, 7 p.m.  
College Park, Md.

**Women's basketball**  
vs. N.C. State, 7 p.m.  
Carmichael Auditorium

**Wrestling**  
at Virginia Tech, 7 p.m.  
Richmond, Va.

### FRIDAY

**Men's swimming and diving**  
vs. N.C. State, 7 p.m.  
Koury Natatorium

**Women's tennis**  
vs. Oklahoma, all day  
Madison, Wis.

**Track**  
Army Invitational, all day  
New York, N.Y.

## next up for women's basketball

thursday, feb. 2nd  
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**HOODWINKED** REG 1:00-3:00 5:00-7:00-9:15

**UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION** REG 1:45-4:20  
7:20-9:45

**MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA** REG 1:30-4:30-7:30

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## The Daily Tar Heel

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