

FLAWLESS NATIONAL CHAMPS

Field hockey rides perfect record to national title

BY JOE MCLEAN
STAFF WRITER

COLLEGE PARK, Md., Nov. 18 — For the North Carolina coach who always says, "The most important game is the next one," there's finally a chance to rest.

After 24 wins and a school-record 16 shutouts, the Tar Heels have no more games to play.

They've won them all.

The undefeated UNC field hockey team captured its fifth national championship under head coach Karen Shelton with one final shutout win against No. 9 Penn State on Nov. 18.

The 3-0 victory at Maryland's Field Hockey & Lacrosse Complex sealed the Tar Heels' perfect record and gave them a seat in history as only the fifth Division I field hockey team to win it all without losing or tying a game.

"We're absolutely euphoric to have won the national championship," Shelton said. "We started this campaign a long time ago. From the first practice in preseason, to now, I've had a team that's remained remarkably focused and hard-working."

The Tar Heels (24-0) kept their last opponent in check with ironclad defense from the game's start to the middle of the second half. They had some breathing room thanks to goals by Katelyn Falgowski and Rachel Dawson, the second after a fake shot on the team's fifth penalty corner.

And when Danielle Forward nailed a reverse stick shot home off a pass from Dawson, the celebration could begin.

Before the showdown with Penn State, the Tar Heels two days earlier had to beat No. 4 Connecticut, the only team in the final four UNC hadn't already met this season.

After battling possession with the Huskies in a hard-fought final 20 minutes, UNC prevailed again. A baseline goal by Forward to seal the deal for a 4-2 victory.

But after Sunday's final game, there was no more



DTH FILE/DANIEL VAN NIEKERK

The North Carolina field hockey team celebrates the close of its undefeated season Nov. 18 in College Park, Md., after beating Penn State 3-0 to claim the national championship. The Tar Heels, led by senior captains Laree Beans and Rachel Dawson, are the fifth team in Division I history to finish a season without any losses or ties.

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Deja vu: Heels fall short again

OSU ousts UNC again in CWS championship

BY DAVID ELY
SPORTS EDITOR

OMAHA, Neb., June 24 — It seemed so familiar and yet so different.

For the second consecutive year, North Carolina's baseball season came to a disappointing conclusion as Oregon State swept the Tar Heels 11-4 and 9-3 at Rosenblatt Stadium to repeat as national champions — the first team to do so since Louisiana State in 1996-97.

"I've got to congratulate Oregon State," UNC head coach Mike Fox said. "What an unbelievable accomplishment that is to win back-to-back national championships. Can't ever say never, but I'm not sure that's gonna be done here at this level too many times."

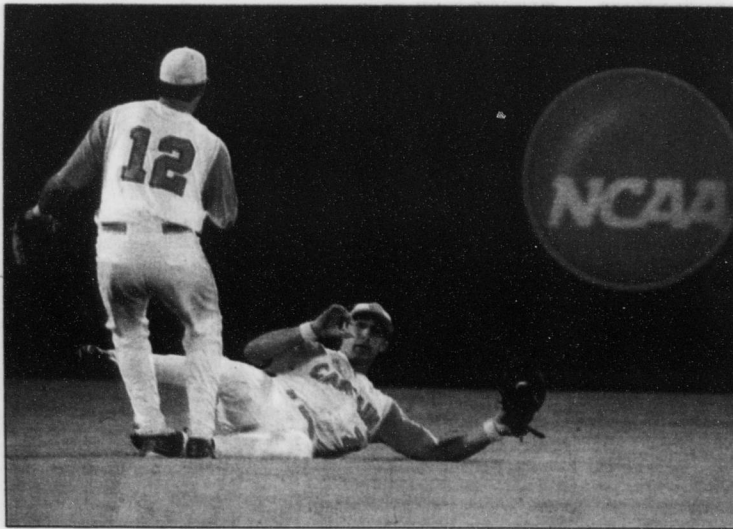
Unlike last year, when OSU won a tight three-game battle for the NCAA crown, this time around Oregon State (49-18) was clearly the better team in its two weekend victories.

In its back-to-back wins, OSU utilized timely hitting and steady starting pitching — the most surefire recipe for postseason success — to put the Tar Heels (57-16) in early deficits that they couldn't overcome.

It wasn't just those long balls that doomed the Tar Heels, it was Oregon State's penchant for punishing UNC with big rallies.

During the course of the weekend, OSU had six innings of two or more runs while the Tar Heels countered with only one of their own. UNC couldn't string together the needed hits to prolong a rally nor were they able to deliver the big hit.

"We couldn't just get that big hit, whether it's two outs or an extra-base hit with people



DTH FILE/LARRY BAUM

Then-juniors Josh Horton (12) and Reid Fronk (7) were integral parts to North Carolina's second consecutive run to the men's College World Series final, where UNC was knocked out by Oregon State.

on base," Fox said.

"I felt like if we could just get one, it would really spark the rest of us, and maybe more would follow."

Much of North Carolina's inability to score, though, can be attributed to the two Beaver hurlers head coach Pat Casey elected to start.

Right-handers Jorge Reyes and Mike Stutes combined to pitch 11.2 innings, holding the Tar Heels to just three runs apiece.

"To win a national championship, you obviously have to have pitching," Tar Heel shortstop Josh Horton said. "And they held us to four or

less runs both nights. So you have to give all the credit in the world to them."

The 57 wins set a single-season team record, and the Tar Heels are one of three teams to reach the finals twice since the NCAA went to the current format in 2003.

"We've accomplished some great things," Fox said. "This is a special place, and I wouldn't want to end our season anywhere else, honestly."

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Success, injuries for hoops teams

BY POWELL LATIMER
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

2007 was a year of parallels for the North Carolina basketball teams.

Both ended their seasons in the late stages of the NCAA tournament, and both won ACC tournament championships.

In fact, those similarities continued into the 2007-08 season, in which injuries have taken away key members of both teams.

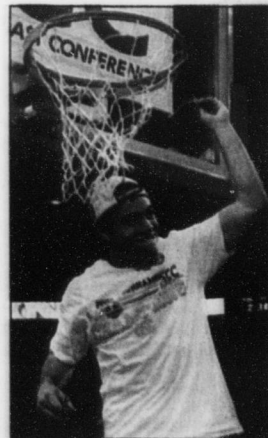
The men's team fell short to Georgetown in overtime of the East Regional Final, after besting N.C. State a couple of weeks earlier to win UNC's 16th ACC tournament championship.

"I would give every cent I have right now for my team to be out there cutting down those nets and feeling those feelings that Georgetown's players are feeling," coach Roy Williams said after the loss on March 25. "But life doesn't always go like you want."

The women's team won its third-straight ACC championship in 2007. Senior point guard Ivory Latta led the Tar Heels with tournament MVP honors, garnering the award for the third straight time.

In the Final Four of the NCAA Tournament, the women fell to Tennessee on April 1 in a hard-fought matchup.

"Tennessee played a good game, and we did some great things on



DTH FILE/LARRY BAUM

Then-senior Wes Miller helps cut down the nets after the men's basketball team's ACC tournament championship victory.

defense because they shot like 30 percent for the game," Erlana Larkins said that night in Cleveland. "But they went to the free-throw line a lot more, and we weren't getting calls. Anytime you go to the free-throw line twice as much or more, your chances are pretty good."

Both teams came into the 2007-08 season with bitter memories on

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HOW THE TAR HEELS FARED IN 2007

MEN'S SPORTS

FENCING

16th: Finish by then-sophomore Bobby Ziechmann in men's sabre in the 2007 NCAA Championships in Madison, N.J.
13th: Finish by the men's and women's team in the NCAA Championships.

SWIMMING AND DIVING

Chip Peterson: Set school records in 1,000- and 1,650-yard freestyles.
Frank Comfort: Retired after 30th season as UNC coach with 578 career dual meet wins, most in NCAA history.

LACROSSE

NCAAs: Made the quarterfinals for first time since 2004.
10-6: Final record, a five-game improvement from 2006.

TENNIS

20: Consecutive wins to start the season, the Tar Heels' best start since 1965.
No. 6 Seed: UNC's placement in the NCAA Tournament field, the highest

seed in Tar Heel history.
ACC Honors: Coach Sam Paul won coach of the year; Chris Kearney won freshman of the year.

GOLF

Martin Ureta: The UNC senior qualified for the 2007 U.S. Open in Oakmont, Pa.

21st: Place finished by the squad in the NCAA Championships.

TRACK AND FIELD

3: Number of Tar Heels who received All-America recognition as Justin Ryncavage (javelin), Adam Montague (javelin) and Nick Owens (hammer) garnered the honor.
Justin Ryncavage: Won his second straight title in the javelin at the NCAA Championships.

CROSS COUNTRY

10th: Overall finish by UNC at ACC Championship.
Alex Ray: Crossed the line in 22nd place at ACC Championships with a

time of 24:54.0.

SOCCER

7-8-5: The final record for the Tar Heels, who went 4-6 in the ACC.
1-0: Score of the ACC semifinal game, in which the Tar Heels fell to No. 1 Wake Forest in overtime. UNC missed the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1998.

WRESTLING

3rd: Place finished in the ACC, failing to win the title for the first time since 2004.
Evan Sola: The two-time All-American won his third ACC title at 133 pounds and advanced to NCAA championships.

WOMEN'S SPORTS

FENCING

2nd: Finish by the Tar Heels as a team in the ACC regular season.
NCAAs: Jennifer Sawicki finished 15th at NCAA Championships, May-Lynne Chen-Contino placed 22nd and Courtney Krolkoski came in 23rd.

SWIMMING AND DIVING

8-1: The final record for the Tar Heels, who tied for 30th place at NCAA Championships.

Whitney Sprague: The then-sophomore was named to the first team All-ACC, placed 15th in the 500 freestyle at NCAAs, and also swam on the 800-yard freestyle relay.

Won: The Janis Hape Dowd Nike Cup Invitational in November.

GOLF

21st: Finish at NCAA championship for the Tar Heels, with sophomore Sydney Crane tying for 81st place overall.

4th: Place at ACC Championships, led by Katie Miller's seventh-place finish.

ROWING

Lisy McIntee: The junior was given second team All-America honors. She was the third rower in program history to be named an All-American.

ACC: The varsity four placed sixth in the conference championship.

TRACK AND FIELD

Brie Feltnagle: Won a national championship in the 1,500 meter run with a time of 4:09.93.

5th: At the ACC championships. UNC was led by Feltnagle's two ACC championships in the 1,500 meters and 800 meters.

TENNIS

8-3: ACC record for UNC, including an upset of then-No. 9 Miami.
Sara Anundsen and Jenna Long: Took the NCAA doubles title in May.

SOFTBALL

Emily Troup: Sophomore outfielder named to the All-ACC Tournament team.

46-21: Final record.

LACROSSE

43: Goals scored by Kristen Taylor, leading the team as a freshman.
3: IWFLCA All-Americans in 2007.
Jenn Cook, Christina Juras and Amber Falcone.

Upset: Knocked off then-No. 1 Northwestern in their season opener

SOCCER

ACCs: Won 18th ACC championship in 19 years.

Early ending: Third-round exit in the NCAA tournament equalled the shortest postseason run ever by UNC.

CROSS COUNTRY

Brie Feltnagle: Placed first at regionals and 11th at the NCAA cross country championships.

3rd: Overall finish in NCAA Regionals.
ACCs: Placed fourth at ACC championships.

VOLLEYBALL

15-16: Overall record in 2007, including a six-match winning streak without dropping a game.

Brianna Eskola: Was named second-team All-ACC after leading the league in digs with 648. She was UNC's first All-ACC pick since Dani Nyenhuis in 2005.