

RUNNING 'N' GUNNING

UNC DROPS 25 UNANSWERED ON N.C. STATE IN RIVALRY WIN

BY DAVID ELY
SPORTS EDITOR

For about 10 minutes Saturday, it looked as though the North Carolina men's basketball team might have a game on its hands.

N.C. State was only down 16-11 and was doing a good job of keeping the Tar Heels from settling into an offensive rhythm, and UNC point guard Ty Lawson had missed the previous five minutes because of a sprained right ankle. But at the 10:47 mark of the first half, Lawson checked back in and the Tar Heels

began to execute their game plan with brutal precision. The ensuing nine minutes and 6 seconds became a basketball clinic as No. 1 UNC (17-0, 2-0 ACC) scored 25 straight points en route to a 43-13 halftime lead and a 93-62 victory at the Smith Center.

"We obviously played a great half of basketball," North Carolina junior Marcus Ginyard said. "Everybody on the same page defensively, executing offensively. ... We were tough to stop."

As hard as it was to slow down UNC, the same cannot be said about the Wolfpack (11-4, 0-1), who took offensive ineptitude to a new level in the first half, scoring just 13 points.

Whenever a N.C. State guard beat his man on the perimeter or a forward had low-post position, there was a second Tar Heel defender to challenge the shot or force the ball away from the basket.

And with a defender in the face of nearly every N.C. State shooter, the Wolfpack missed 18 shots in a row while shooting just 6-for-34 for the half.

"They had a lot of shots that they normally make that didn't go in for them today," Tar Heel coach Roy Williams said. "I think our

defense had something to do with it, but it wasn't the only reason."

Setting the tone defensively for the Tar Heels was the frontcourt trio of Danny Green, Deon Thompson and Alex Stepheson. Those three forwards combined to block nine shots on the day while collecting 25 of UNC's 50 rebounds.

Their ability to rotate on the weak side and anticipate what the Wolfpack were doing offensively contributed in holding N.C. State's low-post duo of Brandon Costner and J.J. Hickson to 18 points.

That defensive effort sparked the North Carolina attack and led to numerous fast-break baskets. After multiple N.C. State missed field goals, Lawson would get an outlet pass from either Green, Thompson or Tyler Hansbrough and then race up court to jumpstart a possession.

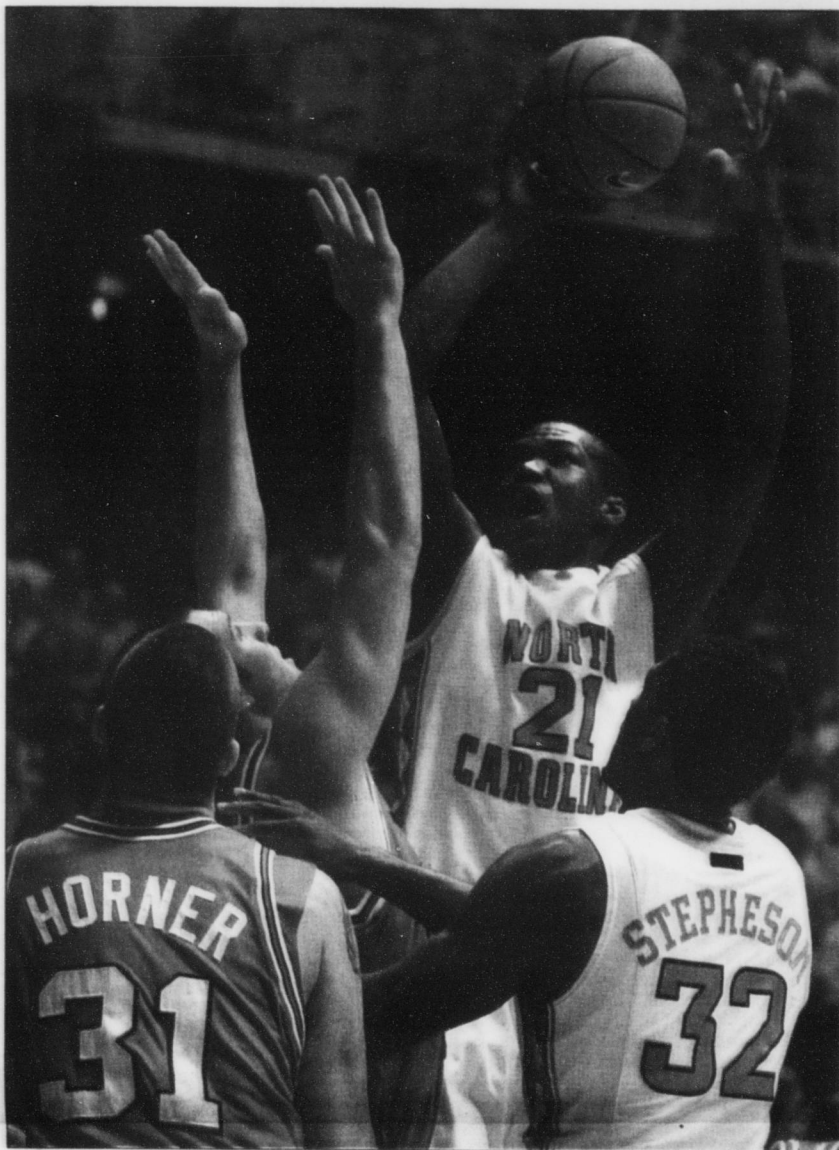
Two or three passes later, the ball would end up back in the hands of a Tar Heel shooter or one of the bigs for two easy points as UNC poured it on the Wolfpack, which surprised few in the North Carolina locker room.

"You can say that you were surprised but then when you go back and look at how we played and the pressure that we put on N.C. State, then you start to understand why it shouldn't really be that surprising," Ginyard said. "The things that we did and the things that we made them do, that should equate to the lead that we had."

Offensively, UNC posted a balanced attack that saw five players score in double figures, highlighted by Lawson and Thompson, who each chipped in with 16 points. The 16 points scored by Thompson was a career high.

The second half saw the Tar Heels relax a bit defensively as N.C. State warmed up offensively, but the lead never fell below 26 points,

SEE ROUT, PAGE 6



North Carolina sophomore forward Deon Thompson shoots over his defender in Saturday's 93-62 UNC victory against N.C. State. Thompson dropped a career-high 16 points to go along with five boards and three blocks.

Tenacious 'D' sparks Tar Heel rout

Wolfpack held to 13 first-half points

BY GRAY CALDWELL
SENIOR WRITER

It's hard to see how No. 1 North Carolina could get any better, but flashes of brilliant defense in Saturday's win against N.C. State set a new standard.

The Tar Heels put together one of their best defensive performances of the season — particularly in the first half — something North Carolina coach Roy Williams said he's been preaching all season.

UNC forced 17 turnovers, eight of

which came off steals. The Wolfpack shot an abysmal 17.6 percent from the field in the first half as UNC blocked more shots — eight — than N.C. State made — six.

"You definitely can't take all the credit," UNC junior Marcus Ginyard said. "They definitely missed some tough shots inside, but I think that just being there with the hands up, contesting, boxing out — that's something that's going to wear on a team, and they might not be making as many shots."

The Wolfpack only managed 13 points in the first half — the fewest allowed by UNC in a half in 10 years, and the second-fewest in the last 29.

"I don't think anyone can beat us if we play defense like we did in the first half," said North Carolina forward Deon Thompson, one of the stars of the defensive effort.

Thompson scored a career-high 16 points along with three blocks. The blocks were part of a great performance with weak-side help defense. Whenever it looked like N.C. State had a lane to the basket in the first half, it seemed like

someone was always there to contest the shot or swat it away.

"We wait for the big man to make a move, and once he makes a move, we try to dig down and make him kick it back out, and they didn't do a good job of it in the first half," Tar Heel junior Danny Green said.

Green had a career day of his own, notching his first double-double of the season. He filled up the stat sheet with 13 points, 14 rebounds — a career high — six assists and four blocks — tied for his personal best. It was his all-around effort that set the tone in the game.

"I said the other day that I feel

like I have six starters, and I feel like Danny is playing really good basketball for us," Williams said. "I had a session with Danny and Deon (Friday), and we talked more about defense than anything else, really."

The talk seemed to have paid off. Better defense is something Williams has talked about after several wins this season, and Green said the comments have gotten the team more focused.

"The whole team pretty much picked it up in practice, just talking and communicating," he said.

SEE DEFENSE, PAGE 6

Heels fall to Terps, power past Crusaders

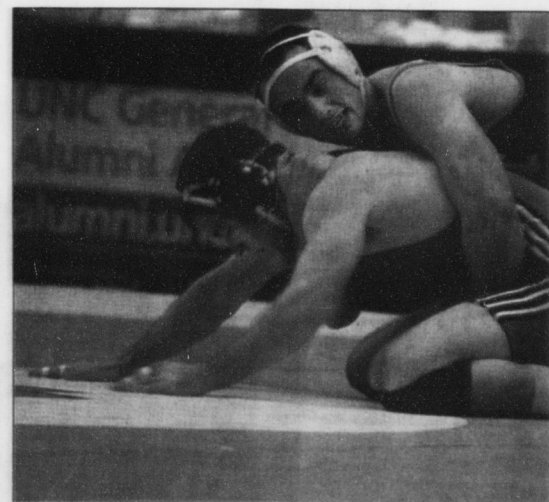
Maryland rally topples Tar Heels

BY DANIEL PRICE
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

A tough ACC-opening loss Sunday at Carmichael Auditorium left the North Carolina wrestling team with something to prove. Unfortunately for Belmont Abbey, the Tar Heels proved it all over the Crusaders.

After building an eight-point lead against No. 21 Maryland, UNC couldn't quite hold on against the Terrapins, losing 19-17 before rebounding against Belmont Abbey 48-0.

When UNC junior 165-pounder Keegan Mueller took a major decision from Maryland's Mike McGill — the fourth win for North Carolina (4-3, 0-1 ACC) in the first six matches — the



North Carolina's Keegan Mueller gets a hold on his opponent. Mueller won both of his matches Sunday against Maryland and Belmont Abbey.

Tar Heels led 14-6. But with the Terps' putting up three-straight nationally ranked wrestlers, UNC had a tough row to hoe if it hoped to open the ACC season with a win.

"We knew it was going to be tough," UNC assistant coach A.J. Grant said. "We know that we're tough in the lower weights and

SEE WRESTLING, PAGE 6

Larkins powers UNC past 'Pack

BY SAMANTHA NEWMAN
SENIOR WRITER

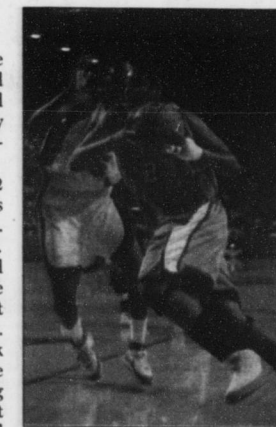
RALEIGH — The bandage covering Erlana Larkins' left hand resembled a small boxing glove, and the North Carolina senior certainly threw some punches Sunday afternoon at the Reynolds Coliseum.

They came in the form of 22 points and eight rebounds as Larkins led her team past N.C. State 79-70 in a battle of the post.

In her third game since breaking her left hand on Dec. 30, Larkins took control of the paint, banging bodies without hesitation and drawing fouls with her aggressive pushes to the basket.

"With her situation, most players would be out for the season, and she's almost got another double-double," UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell said. "I'm just really proud of her and her mentality that she has, twirling in there, working hard."

With freshman guard Rebecca Gray out because of a stress frac-



Senior forward Erlana Larkins drives to the basket during the Tar Heels' 79-70 win at N.C. State. Larkins scored a team-high 22.

ture in her right foot, the No. 3 Tar Heels (16-1, 3-0 ACC) had a taller lineup than usual for most of the game. UNC exploited its advantage in the post, working the ball down low on almost every possession.

LaToya Pringle, Jessica Breland
SEE ROAD WIN, PAGE 9

SPORTS BRIEFS

WOMEN'S TENNIS



DTH FILE/SARAH HISER

FROM WIRE REPORTS

LAS VEGAS — North Carolina sophomore Katrina Tsang saw her run in the 2008 Freeman Memorial Tennis Championship fall one match short, as Tsang lost to No. 51 Amanda Fink of USC, 6-2, 2-6, 6-1, in Sunday's flight one singles final. Tsang and junior Austin Smith advanced to the flight one doubles final, where they fell to Stanford's Jessica Nguyen and Whitney Deason, 8-2. In an added singles match, junior Laura Reichert fell to No. 22 Whitney McCray of Georgia Tech.

FORBES



DTH FILE/LAUREN COWART

For most North Carolina fans, UNC basketball is priceless. Not for Forbes, because they're in the business of putting a dollar figure on everything. And according to their calculations, UNC's basketball program is the most valuable in the country.

Using a scientific formula, Forbes allotted UNC a \$26 million valuation. The Tar Heels easily outpaced the second-most valuable program — the University of Kentucky, at \$24.9 million.

MEN'S GOLF

Two University of North Carolina men's golfers posted top-30 finishes at the 2008 Dixie Amateur. Freshman Kevin O'Connell tied for 13th place, while Henry Zaytoun III, also a freshman, tied for 28th place at the Jan. 7 event.

O'Connell finished nine strokes behind champion David Lingmerth.

ONLINE SPORTS

See dailytarheel.com for more coverage of the UNC wrestling team's two matches this weekend.

The UNC Swimming and Diving teams won in impressive fashion over Clemson and Rutgers.

UNC's Track and Field team opened their season with the Joe Hilton Invitational.

THIS WEEK

WEDNESDAY

MEN'S BASKETBALL
at Georgia Tech
TIME: 9 p.m.
LOCATION: Atlanta

THURSDAY

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
vs. Boston College
TIME: 7 p.m.
LOCATION: Carmichael Auditorium

WRESTLING

vs. Duke
TIME: 7 p.m.
LOCATION: Fetzer Gym

FRIDAY

WOMEN'S TENNIS
vs. UNC-Greensboro, vs. Elon
TIME: 3 p.m., 7 p.m.
LOCATION: Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center