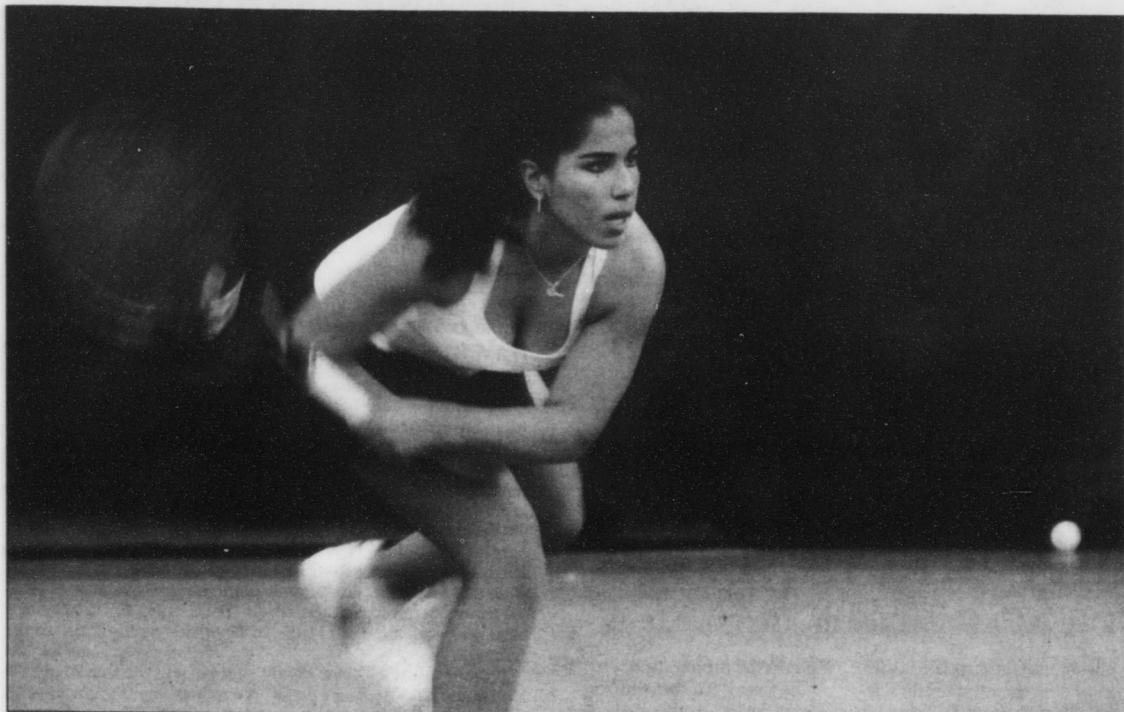


Tar Heels shut out two, fall to Lady Vols



North Carolina sophomore Sanaz Marand sets her feet after a serve in the Tar Heels' season-opening doubleheader Friday at the Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center. UNC shut out both UNC-Greensboro and Elon by scores of 7-0 before dropping to 2-1 on Monday with a loss at Tennessee.

BY JOE MCLEAN
STAFF WRITER

While top-shelf talent is never a bad thing, it always helps to have the depth to back it up. So far in January, the North Carolina women's tennis team has shown it has plenty of both.

Neither UNC-Greensboro (0-1) nor Elon (0-2) won a set in singles play against the Tar Heels, who registered dual 7-0 victories. The team was efficient in doubles play as well, particularly in the second match of the day against Elon.

UNC (2-1) beat Elon in the three doubles match-ups by scores of 8-0, 8-0 and 8-1.

Earlier this month in Las Vegas, Tsang and Smith advanced to the doubles finals of the 2008 Freeman Memorial Tennis Championship. Tsang also reached the finals of the singles bracket in her first competitive event since returning from hip surgery.

"She played awesome," Smith said. "She played unbelievable. I was very impressed, since she hadn't played since, like, May."

Tsang last competed in the NCAA tournaments last year and went to Las Vegas simply to get a few match-

"I was really impressed with our doubles energy and communication, so I think that's a key."

BRIAN KALBAS, COACH

es in before the season started. "I definitely got as much tennis as I could," Tsang said. "I really had no idea what would happen. I came close to losing first round even, and I had three-set matches every single match."

The only rusty sign Tsang showed Friday was when she nailed Reichert in the back of the head on match point of her second doubles match. Reichert was fine, and moments later the pair finished off their almost flawless victory.

"We actually were trying to set up a point there to try to end it well because we were up 7-0," Tsang said. "It's all good. We had a good laugh about it."

The Tar Heels had those two spring victories under their belts before they traveled to No. 22 Tennessee for their first major match of the season Monday.

The Volunteers took the doubles point to gain an early lead. The match would eventually come down to the No. 6 singles match, in which Meg Fanjoy lost to No. 95 Zsofia Zubor in three sets, giving Tennessee (2-0) the 4-3 victory.

And closely contested matches could be a norm for this UNC team when conference play begins.

"Our schedule, our conference, is incredibly tough, so we're going to have to be mentally committed throughout and finishing strong throughout the matches and in great physical shape," Kalbas said.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

UNC men struggle with Duke

BY JORDAN MASON
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — The North Carolina men's tennis team is not exactly in regular season mode with just nine practices since the start of the semester.

"It feels like a duel match," UNC sophomore Stefan Hardy said of the exhibition competition.

"It's always going to be serious anytime you play a rival like that."

The Tar Heels faced Duke at the Sheffield Indoor Tennis Center on Monday to finish its round-robin schedule at the Duke Indoor Invitational. UNC competed against Michigan on Saturday in Durham and Elon on Sunday in Chapel Hill in the first two head-to-head competitions.

The invitational was not scored on a team basis, but on an individual basis. But the Tar Heels still benefited from the competition despite its unusual format.

"We get to see where the kids are and what we need to do," UNC coach Sam Paul said.

The team's needs were very evident Monday as North Carolina lost twice as many singles matches as it won. Paul said the team is not sharp after being off for nearly a month.

But the team was not disappointed with its early season performance.

"Everybody is fighting," senior David Stone said. "And that's all you can ask for."

The Tar Heels did manage to capture the doubles title at the invitational as Hardy and sophomore Clay Donato picked up an 8-3 win against the Blue Devils' David Goulet and Alain Michel to push into first place and remain unde-



Stefan Hardy The sophomore captured the doubles title with sophomore UNC teammate Clay Donato.

feated on the weekend. The highlight in singles play came Sunday as the team won all but one of its matches against Elon.

"We're right there," Hardy said of how far the team is from where it needs to be.

"Come regular season, everybody is going to be ready."

The Tar Heels achieved this success with usual contributors like Lenny Gullan and Chris Kearney watching from the stands. Both sat out with injuries that Paul said were not minor.

match-ready.

"We need matches," he said. "But it's no excuse for our performance."

The only Tar Heels to finish in the top 10 in singles competition were Stone and junior Taylor Fogleman as both tied for seventh place.

But Hardy said the experience that came with these matches is why the team played in the invitational in the first place.

"We're all still finding our games," he said.

Stone said it will be particularly important to find that game early this season with difficult matches like Ohio State in the next month. But he expects this weekend to help that process.

"We're going to take a lot that we learned and put it into practice and work on it," he said.

"And hopefully it will pay off."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

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