

STREAK

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K.C. Rivers missed a scoop layup to keep the score knotted and send the game into overtime.

From there, it was a mix of clutch 3-pointers, foul-outs and pressure-packed free throws as the two teams passed the lead back and forth.

Throughout all the madness, the one constant was Hansbrough. The power forward finished with 39 points, nailed 17 of 19 free throws and put the Tar Heels (22-2, 7-2) on his back with his clutch play, especially in extra time.

"When he leaves, I am going to consider myself the luckiest guy in the world to have coached him," Williams said of the UNC junior.

Not all of Hansbrough's damage was done in his usual home under the hoop. He helped break the press, drove to the hoop and hit a free-throw line jump shot to open the second overtime.

And his biggest play of all came on the defensive end, when he pressured Clemson's David Potter, poked the ball away and pounced on it to preserve a thin Tar Heel lead.

"I was in a dead sprint, felt pretty good about it and then dove," Hansbrough said.

Behind his effort, the Tar Heels ran their record to an astounding 53-0 against Clemson in Chapel Hill, which broke the NCAA record for the longest home winning streak by one team over another.

"To be honest, I didn't really want to break the streak here," Hansbrough said. "I don't want to be on that team."

Clemson played like a team possessed to change that history. The Tigers attacked, trapped, pressed and muscled the Tar Heels for almost the entire game, trying to avenge a 90-88 overtime loss to UNC a month ago.

UNC 103, Clemson 93

Box score table showing stats for Clemson and UNC players like Perry, Mays, Booker, Rivers, Hammonds, Oglethorpe, Syles, Potter, Stitt, Grant, Morris, Phetrakos, and Total.

Percentage table showing FG, FT, 3-point goals, and other stats for both teams.

Technical fouls — None. Attendance — 20,787.

In the face of a shrieking Sunday night crowd, the Tigers got a heroic 31 points from Cliff Hammonds and clutch offensive rebounds from Trevor Booker, but just couldn't turn the tables on the Tar Heels.

For a UNC team still smarting from a home loss to Duke on Wednesday, the thrilling win was a helpful dose of relief.

"Coach says you can enjoy it until the clock hits (midnight)," Hansbrough said. "I think I'm going to enjoy this a little longer."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

UNC extends streak to nine in a row

Rubin, Tar Heels excel against N.C. State

BY ANNA KIM STAFF WRITER

N.C. State gymnasts took the floor as Wolfpack howls boomed from the loudspeakers, but North Carolina's winning performance spoke for itself.

The No. 21 Tar Heel gymnastics team extended its nine-meet winning streak to start the season with a 195.450-194.975 win against No. 25 N.C. State Sunday at Carmichael Auditorium.

UNC 195.450 regular season home meet, UNC came out with a strong performance to take home the win.

The Tar Heels were coming off a win in the Governor's Cup, where UNC teamed up with the Wolfpack to win a first-place ranking.

"We certainly want to do well against them," North Carolina coach Derek Galvin said.

"Our goal every year is to beat the ACC teams, to beat all the teams in the East Atlantic Gymnastics League."

Galvin accredited the team's performance in vault as one of the strongest he's seen since the NCAA championships last year.

And the other three routines had strong performances as well. Galvin attributed mistakes in bars, beams and floor routines simply to the nerves that accompany the first home meet.

"Some of the mistakes we made today were too much power," Galvin said. "They were too strong in some cases."

But quality and execution gave the Tar Heels the points they needed to overcome N.C. State.

Galvin couldn't remember the last time he had been in such a pivotal end-of-game position.

And after Thomas gave UNC new life, it was Hansbrough diving after a loose ball on the floor and Ellington jumping over the Clemson front line for a final layup that sealed an improbable outcome.

"There was never a point where we thought we weren't going to win this game," Ellington said.

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"We know we've got room to continue to grow and improve," Galvin said.

The Tar Heel faithful did not disappoint, supplying the team with an energetic home-court advantage.

"Gymnasts love a crowd," Galvin said.

"When they hear the people in the audience, and in particular recognize the voices up there and see a lot of people in the stands, they want to have an even stronger performance."

Christine Nguyen, recently named the EAGL Gymnast of the Week, continued to lead UNC to victory. The North Carolina sophomore notched top scores for the Tar Heels in every event.

Senior Sarrie Rubin scored 9.85 in vault, her personal best and tied with Nguyen as the team's leader.

After undergoing a shoulder surgery, then an unexpected recovery a few years ago, Rubin said, she is taking full advantage of her final season.

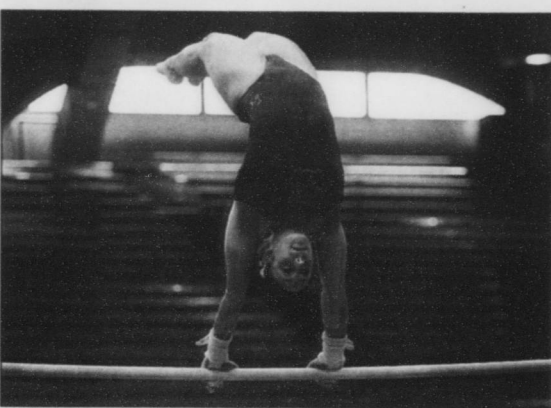
"It's a surprise that I was even able to do gymnastics this long," Rubin said.

"Now that it's my fifth year I'm trying to go all out and show everything off and show everyone what I can do."

The Tar Heels (9-0) look to continue their undefeated record at the upcoming meet hosted by West Virginia at 8 p.m. Friday.

"I'm so excited," Rubin said. "We're doing the best we've done since I've gone to Carolina."

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The North Carolina gymnastics team opened the regular season by defeating N.C. State Sunday. It was the ninth-straight win in the series.

Nguyen shines in UNC victory

Sophomore tops all performers

BY JOHN DOUGHERTY STAFF WRITER

Ascending flawlessly over the lower bar with only the slightest hint of a push off, sophomore Christine Nguyen began her assault on the uneven bars.

Nguyen's overall performance Sunday against N.C. State mirrored her uneven bar routine, rocketing her leaps and bounds above the fellow competition.

For the second week in a row, Nguyen proved herself the strongest athlete in the gym, taking top honors in every event and capturing the all-around high score.

Following UNC's 195.450-194.975 victory, the team's second against NCSU this season and first in Carmichael Auditorium, coach Derek Galvin praised Nguyen for her natural gymnastics ability.

"I think she was really born to do this sport," Galvin said. Nguyen, named the EAGL Gymnast of the Week for her efforts

performers I have ever seen." Coming off last week's 9.875 showing on the beam, Nguyen managed only a 9.85 Sunday. But her score still was good enough for first place by a margin of .025 points.

Senior Sarrie Rubin said she believes her team can take a lesson from Nguyen's beam exercises.

"She is so calm on beam," Rubin said. "She is such a good motivator."

Rubin also commended Nguyen for her work ethic in practice each day and said she considers the sophomore to be a leader by example.

As for the team as a whole, the UNC star knows there is still room for improvement.

And while she personally would like to improve on her floor routines, Nguyen said she has is motivated by the honor of being named gymnast of the week.

"It gives me a lot of hope for what will happen in the season to come," she said. "It just lets me know there is more that we can do."

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OFFENSE

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sharpshooter knocked down five of his nine attempted 3-pointers en route to 28 points — 17 after halftime.

"I was just taking shots in stride," Ellington said. "I wasn't taking anything rushed or forced. ... It came to me, and I just knocked it down."

But while Ellington's performance usually would have been the story, it was Hansbrough and his 39 points — giving Ellington and him 67 of UNC's 103 — that brought the Tar Heels back after they seemed dead in the water.

Constantly attacking the talented Clemson front line of James Mays and Trevor Booker, Hansbrough totaled 11 field goals and 17 free throws. He added 13 rebounds, too, good for his 14th double-double of the year.

"I don't know how much longer I'm going to coach him," Roy Williams said. "But I'd like to coach that big sucker about 13 more years."

And after Ellington and Hansbrough pulled UNC close, it was the often-overlooked Thomas who came through in the pinch. Twice he bought North Carolina an extra five minutes to put a stamp

SOFTBALL

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seven RBIs, nine runs and a home run.

"Honestly, I didn't even think about it. I was just trying to help the team out and hit the ball," Troup said.

"We worked really hard in the offseason and took a lot of reps. Our team collectively really hit the ball well in the fall, and we carried it into the first tournament."

Tar Heel right-hander Amber Johnson, who earned her first victory of the season against Kent State, allowed only three runs in her first two starts.

Johnson was one of five Tar Heels to garner post-tournament honors.

Johnson was the beneficiary of a major confidence boost on the mound with some colossal run-support.

"It's huge," Johnson said. "If we have a run, I feel 10 times better. More than one is nice, but it definitely helps a lot."

In early tournament play, UNC defeated East Carolina 5-1 Friday and scored a victory against Kent State on Saturday, winning 6-3.

"I was really pleased with what we did this weekend," Papa said. "One of our goals going in was to really establish ourselves in a different way than we have in the past, and I felt like going into the season we had a lot more offensive power."

"It was exciting and things just happened. I thought we controlled a lot at the plate."

The Tar Heels will look to continue the momentum when the team travels to UNC-Wilmington for a doubleheader Wednesday.

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Sudoku

By The Mephram Group

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk.

Sudoku puzzle grid with some numbers filled in.

Solution to Friday's puzzle.

Tarheel Take-Out advertisement with phone number 919.942.7678 and website www.tarheeltakeout.com.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down.

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Carolina Sports Menu advertisement for Men's Lacrosse vs. Bellarmine, Track & Field, Women's Lacrosse vs. Denver, and Women's Tennis vs. Florida.