

NOT EVEN CLOSE

Ailing Tar Heels blow out hapless Hokies

BY NICOLE LUKOSIUS
SENIOR WRITER

Virginia Tech might have thought it was going to encounter a battered and bruised No. 5 North Carolina squad.

And while this might have been true, it certainly did not show — as evidenced by the Tar Heels' 92-53 victory Saturday afternoon at the Smith Center.

"We had some really good things happen for us; we were more aggressive defensively," UNC coach Roy Williams said.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Va. Tech 53
UNC 92
"It was probably our best game of the year in our half-court defense, and it was probably our best game of the year in our half-court offense."

But before the game there were a lot of questions surrounding which Tar Heels actually would be in the lineup to face the Hokies (14-11, 5-6 ACC), due to an injury report that keeps on growing.

Forward Tyler Hansbrough had his toenail removed, sixth man Danny Green had battled the flu toward the end of the week, and junior Marcus Ginyard has been slowed by a right ankle sprain and turf toe on his left foot.

If that wasn't enough, Deon Thompson was looking at limited playing time due to a hyper-extended left knee, and floor leader Quentin Thomas was hampered by back spasms.

"Deon was hurting, but he gave us nine minutes in the first half, and it was good," Williams said. "And Danny was under the weather — to say the least — but yet he was able to give us 21 minutes."

Despite these setbacks, North Carolina (24-2, 9-2) still got the job done — in a very impressive manner.

Shooting 50 percent from the floor, UNC had five different players score in double figures, led by 23 from Hansbrough. Alex Stepheson also had a solid performance, posting 11 points, nine rebounds and two blocked shots coming off the bench.

"It feels good," Stepheson said. "Coach gave me the nod, so it feels good to go out there and contribute and do what I can."

Stepheson converted on a fast break dunk on a pass from sophomore guard Wayne Ellington that got the Smith Center fans out of their seats and put the Tar Heels up by 39



North Carolina sophomore forward Alex Stepheson slams home two of his 11 points in the Tar Heels' decisive 92-53 win against the Virginia Tech Hokies on Saturday. Stepheson had a game-high nine rebounds, six of which came off the offensive end of the floor.

SEE ROUT, PAGE 11

Strong first half leads to second weekend win

Women remain unbeaten in ACC

BY DAVID ELY
SPORTS EDITOR

Friday night at Virginia, North Carolina coach Sylvia Hatchell chided her team for its lack of first-half intensity. Less than 48 hours later, UNC had no such early game issues.

Against Florida State, the UNC women's basketball team sprinted to an early double-digit lead en route to a 97-77 win Sunday afternoon at Carmichael Auditorium.

The Tar Heels (24-2, 11-0 ACC) found

open shooters and crashed the boards on offense. They shut down

Seminole passing lanes and pressured the ball on defense. Apparently, Hatchell had made her point.

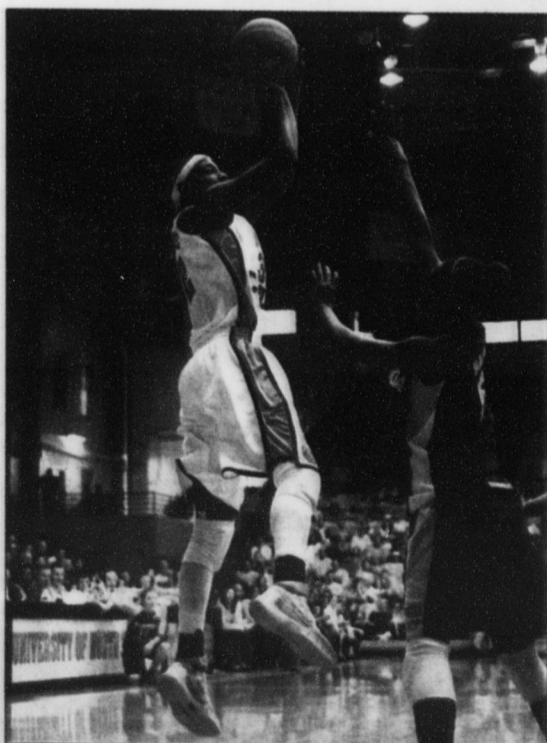
"We always come into games trying to fix things that we probably did wrong in the game before," UNC junior Rashanda McCants said. "The Virginia game we were kind of sloppy, and so we wanted to kinda clean it up this game."

For the first 20 minutes, unlike in previous victories, the Tar Heels did not follow their typical Erlana Larkins-LaToya Pringle blueprint for success. A sagging Seminole zone shut off the majority of UNC's post game and held Larkins and Pringle to only five first-half looks.

"We weren't getting the ball inside as much as I wanted us to," Hatchell said. "At halftime Erlana was 4-for-4 — she needs more touches than that."

With limited production from its star forwards, UNC was forced to find alternative means to get baskets.

So the Tar Heels leaned heavily on the aggressive play from



North Carolina junior Rashanda McCants shoots a fadeaway jumper over a Florida State defender. McCants scored 18 points, tied for the team high.

McCants and players normally relegated to a supporting role.

Reluctant to shoot from the outside, McCants sliced her way into the lane for floaters, layups and putbacks. McCants scored 10 of her 18 points — tied with Larkins for the team lead — in a first half that also saw her attack the glass to the tune of seven rebounds.

Rounding out the balanced North Carolina attack were freshmen Cetera DeGraffenreid, Rebecca Gray and Italee Lucas and sophomore Jessica Breland, who combined for 46 points, 22 in

the first period.

The second half saw more of the same as UNC continued to pour it on and play with intensity, even if the scoreboard didn't suggest a Seminole comeback was possible.

"We're just trying to work on our execution ... when we're up that far," Larkins said of the team's second-half mentality. "And also trying to keep coach Hatchell off our backs because she likes to say intensity for 40 minutes."

Byproducts of UNC's tenacity

SEE ACC WIN, PAGE 11

UNC cruises to victory in opener

BY POWELL LATIMER
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

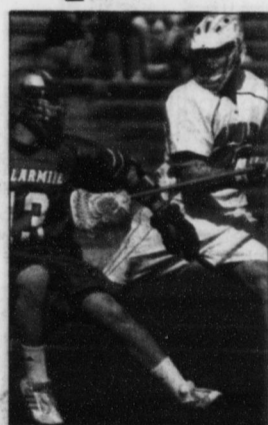
The No. 10 North Carolina men's lacrosse team had some serious first-game jitters — for about one quarter.

UNC opened its season Saturday against the Bellarmine Knights at Fetzer Field, and after 15 minutes of play, the flat-footed Tar Heels trailed 2-1.

"Everyone was kind of rushing, trying to score a million goals in the first couple of minutes," junior attacker Bart Wagner said. "Sometimes you gotta realize that games are 60 minutes long."

Apparently, UNC came to that realization just after the start of

SEE LACROSSE, PAGE 11



North Carolina junior Jack Ryan defends his Bellarmine opponent in UNC's 15-2 victory against the Knights. The Tar Heels are 1-0.

Gators take doubles point, bite Tar Heels

BY DAVID REYNOLDS
STAFF WRITER

The North Carolina women's tennis team didn't have enough to pull out another win against a highly ranked squad.

Facing its fourth top-10 opponent in a row, UNC (6-3) fell decisively to No. 6 Florida 6-1 Sunday.

The No. 5 Tar Heels were outmatched at nearly every position, with its only win coming from sophomore Sanaz Marand at No. 2 singles.

"Anything bad today that could have happened, happened," UNC coach Brian Kalbas said.

"I thought our energy level wasn't there. We were waiting for things good to happen instead of

making things happen."

Florida (4-1) seized the momentum by taking the doubles point and never looked back, taking the first four singles points before Marand put the Tar Heels on the board.

Kalbas said the loss of the doubles point and an injury to freshman Jelena Durisic were the match's turning points. He said that the doubles point loss deflated the team members' attitudes and that Durisic had a good chance of winning her singles match if not for injury.

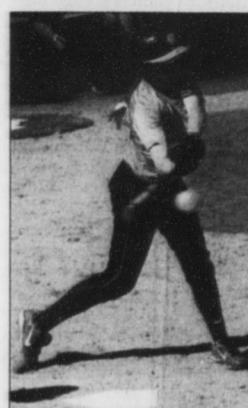
The Torrance, Calif.-native appeared to hurt her knee during the first set of her match, and she limped off the court after being unable to continue.

Kalbas said that she is sched-

SEE TENNIS, PAGE 11

SPORTS BRIEFS

SOFTBALL



DTH FILE/SARAH RIAZATI

FROM WIRE REPORTS
GAINESVILLE, Fla. — North Carolina's battle against No. 10 Florida lived up to its billing Sunday as the Tar Heels and Gators battled for eight full innings before either team scored. Florida was able to push across a run as it claimed the 1-0 decision in nine innings against North Carolina.

UNC's Lisa Norris was dominant once again, striking out eight and allowing the lone unearned run, while setting down 16 consecutive batters at one point in the game.

MEN'S TENNIS



DTH FILE/ERIN SMITH

SEATTLE — The nationally 13th-ranked and 12th-seeded North Carolina Tar Heels capped off an impressive showing Sunday at the ITA National Men's Team Indoor Championships with a big win against the nation's No. 9 team, Notre Dame.

The shutout victory marks the second win in a row for the Tar Heels against a top-10 opponent and gave UNC a 2-1 mark for the tournament.

On Saturday, UNC won the doubles point and eventually upset No. 4 Baylor by a score of 4-3.

BASEBALL

North Carolina sophomore Dustin Ackley is among the college baseball standouts to earn a spot on the watch list for the 2008 Golden Spikes Award, USA Baseball announced Friday.

The Walnut Cove, N.C.-native hit .402 last year with 10 home runs and 74 RBI in 73 games.

ONLINE SPORTS

The women's basketball team beat Florida State but sustained two more injuries. See dailytarheel.com for story.

The women's lacrosse team won both of its weekend games to open the season. See dailytarheel.com for story.

UNC's Patience Coleman improved upon her provisional high jump mark. See dailytarheel.com for story.

THIS WEEK

WEDNESDAY

MEN'S BASKETBALL
at N.C. State
TIME: 7 p.m.
LOCATION: Raleigh

SOFTBALL
vs. Campbell
TIME: 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.
LOCATION: Anderson Stadium

SWIMMING & DIVING
ACC Women's Championships
TIME: 7 p.m.
LOCATION: Atlanta

THURSDAY

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
at Miami
TIME: 7 p.m.
LOCATION: Coral Gables, Fla.

SWIMMING & DIVING
ACC Women's Championships
TIME: 11 a.m.
LOCATION: Atlanta