

THOMAS

FROM PAGE 1

myself. Because a lot of times I can't even sleep unless I write something. So when I write something, it's just like a breath of fresh air."

Both the style and the writing came from Oakland, Calif., home to Thomas and a couple other point guards named Kidd and Payton.

And Quentin learned the fundamentals of the game at an early age from his father, John.

"I remember when I was four or five, he had me work on my left hand," Quentin says. "And I was like in tears, because I couldn't do it. But he just kept ... pushing and pushing me to keep working on it."

He also developed a distinct pass-first mentality growing up — he needed it to participate in pick-up games with older players who constantly demanded the ball.

But while Thomas thrived on the court as he sprouted up, there were other challenges when he entered Oakland Technical High School.

Thomas saw many of his friends waste their talents and turn down the wrong paths in a tough area where temptation abounded.

But those same friends were also some of the people who steered him away from those questionable choices.

"They loved me and cared about me enough; they kept me away from that stuff," he says.

And there were his parents, who saw the paths some of Quentin's peers were taking and didn't care to see their son make similar decisions.

"We were also pushing for even the kids on that high school team to make sure they go to class, having study hall, and we would sit in there," John says.

Why don't you transfer?

When it came time for college, Thomas had plenty of top schools throughout the country to choose from. That was fine with John, who wanted Quentin to leave California.

"To me, young men need to get away from home ... to get away from their moms and their dads to the point where they find out, 'Yep, now I see what you're talking about.'"

And from a basketball standpoint, North Carolina thought it had found something special.

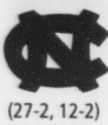
"When we recruited him, I was ecstatic because I really thought that he was going to be a major, major player for us," coach Roy Williams says.

"It didn't quite work that way. First, Thomas sat on the bench in 2005 as UNC made its national championship run — not unheard of for a freshman.

But then it was stress fractures in his left foot and turnovers. And then Bobby Frasor showed up to take the starting point guard job in 2006. And then Ty Lawson took Frasor's job last year, and suddenly Thomas was battling multiple surgeries and confidence and all the players ahead

THE LOWDOWN ON TODAY'S GAME

Florida State vs. No. 1 North Carolina
Smith Center, 8 p.m.
Broadcast: Raycom/LF
Radio: 1360 WCHL



(17-12, 6-8)

(27-2, 12-2)

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Backcourt

FSU's Isaiah Swann is out for the season with a torn ACL. Quentin Thomas is more comfortable at the point than the last matchup, and Ty Lawson's slow integration back into the offense should put UNC on top. **Edge: UNC**



Frontcourt

Tyler Hansbrough continues to play like a National Player of the Year candidate, and even with Deon Thompson at less than 100 percent, FSU's frontcourt doesn't bring enough to compete with UNC. **Edge: UNC**



Bench

Danny Green is playing like he did early in the season — lights out. After scoring 15 or more points the past two games, Green alone puts UNC on top here, and with Swann out, the FSU bench is even thinner. **Edge: UNC**



Intangibles

The Seminoles took the Tar Heels to the brink at home, and they're on a three-game winning streak. But UNC has won six straight and wants to keep its spot atop the ACC going into its game at Duke. **Edge: UNC**



The Bottom Line — North Carolina 82, Florida State 70

COMPILED BY GRAY CALDWELL

of him ... and what the hell was he doing here, anyway?

"It was definitely hard," Thomas says. "A lot of times I questioned, say, if I was even really meant to be here as far as playing basketball at (UNC), and if I had enough talent."

Plus, there were the voices every time he went back home. Phone calls came from friends who wondered if he knew what he was doing, all saying the same thing — "You should transfer."

"You're constantly hearing it," he says. "And then you're like, 'Man, should I listen to them?' and think about taking it into consideration."

But Thomas worried about the problems of transferring and adjusting again, and with good friends for teammates at UNC, he never considered it seriously.

"I felt that being here, not only on the basketball side, but getting a degree from North Carolina, would definitely benefit me in the long run, so I just stuck with it."

Worth the wait

So now it's Senior Night, Thomas' moment of recognition, and the time when the accolades come pouring in.

Alex Stepheson stood near the UNC locker room last week before practice making a statement for Thomas' senior video, describing him as "the man" and a good friend.

But it was hard to imagine his senior season turning out this way.

See, patience and waiting are both great, but they don't always breed the fairy tale success story. The chances Frasor would tear his ACL and Lawson would sit out nearly seven games during ACC play with an ankle sprain weren't good betting odds.

But it all happened, and suddenly Thomas, the guy who couldn't

catch a break, who refused to listen to all the people whispering in his ear and declined to transfer, had his shot.

Welcome to the starting lineup. Tonight you'll be facing No. 2 Duke.

The first game didn't work out so well, but those following saw a changed Quentin Thomas run the floor as the Tar Heels piled up the W's and climbed back to No. 1 in the national rankings.

Suddenly a four-year career transformed into a 6-1 stint as lead dog, and Thomas wowed the doubters by averaging 7.4 points, 6.6 assists and a 2.00 turnover ratio in games where he played at least 20 minutes.

And suddenly North Carolina has a confident Thomas to pair with the less-than-healthy Lawson as the postseason draws near.

So now's the time for a Thomas quote about how this has been a heavenly three weeks, and how he deserves it after all the crap he went through. Instead, he takes it back to the team.

"It's just like, patience, it did pay off," he says. "With Ty getting hurt, and other people getting hurt, and people having to step up and play, it helps our team more in the long run for the tournament."

Leave it to Williams, then, to elaborate a little.

"I don't know that I've ever felt as good and had as warm, fuzzy feelings about something that's going on with one of my players as I do with Quentin," he says.

"But to have those things happen to him and then turn around and be given an opportunity ... to be able to step forward and be successful and do the things that he's done is really a neat thing."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

NOT JUST KUNG FU FIGHTING



DTH/MELANIE HAYWOOD

Mark Plane (left), a fifth-year anthropology student, and Jason Goldsmith, a MD/Ph.D student from Oregon, practice their wun hop kuen do skills in Rams Head. Wun hop kuen do means "combination fist art" so students learn a mixture of karate, judo, jujitsu, kenpo and boxing. The UNC Wun Hop Kuen Do Self Defense Club practices twice a week on campus. "It's great stress relief for school," Goldsmith said.

PRIMARIES

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"It breathes a lot of new life into her campaign and that almost ensures that this primary will go on down to the convention," said UNC journalism professor Leroy Towns.

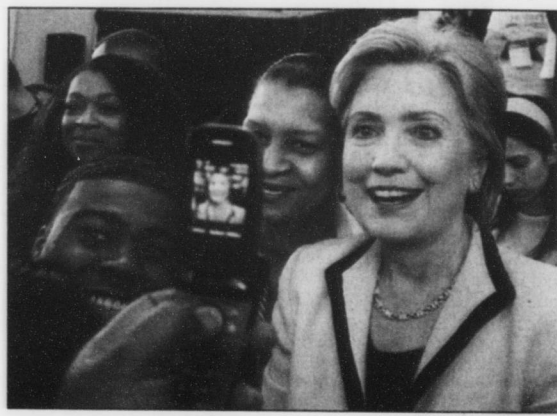
The smaller and less delegate-rich Vermont and Rhode Island also will vote today.

As of Monday evening, Clinton led Obama in Ohio 50 percent to 44 percent, according to Rasmussen Reports, but Obama could be closer than the numbers show, Asher said.

"Even though they show Sen. Clinton ahead, they're probably not capturing Sen. Obama's support among the unaffiliated, young people and among African-Americans," he said.

In Texas, Rasmussen Reports had Obama leading Clinton 48 percent to 47 percent Monday evening.

Clinton is showing up strongest with Latinos and women and in the southern, more rural part of the state; Obama has rallied his firmest support among African-Americans and the college-educated and is leading in urban areas, said University of Texas-Austin government professor Andrew Karch.



DTH FILE/JULIE TURKEWITZ

Hillary Clinton campaigns at Benedict College in Columbia, S.C., before the South Carolina primary in January, which she lost to Barack Obama.

However, Latino urbanization could help Obama, Karch said.

Delegates are allocated by state senate districts and based on previous voter turnout, which is stronger in the urban areas supporting Obama.

"The senate districts worth more are those with demographics that trend toward him," Karch said.

Texas has a two-part process — a primary chooses two-thirds of the

delegates and a precinct convention after polls close decides the rest. The convention allows those who voted in the primary to vote again and typically is dominated by the most politically active voters.

"Obama has dominated the caucus states," Karch said. "It would probably play to his advantage."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

FOOTBALL

FROM PAGE 1

"But my conditioning level, I think, is way up, and I think I kinda breezed through today's practice."

While the beginning of spring is generally met with optimism and excitement, a slew of injuries will force a number of Tar Heels to have limited roles in the coming weeks.

On the defensive side of the ball, Trimane Goddard and Darius Massenburg both will miss time because of an injured hand and wrist, respectively. And on the offensive end, starting quarterback

T.J. Yates will sit out as he completes rehab work on his surgically repaired right shoulder.

Seeing the majority of the action in Yates' stead will be the duo of Cam Sexton and Mike Paulus. And those extra snaps could help both signal callers as the quarterback competition heats up in training camp.

"Yeah, it benefits both of us," Paulus said after Monday's practice. "Obviously, it's a bad case for T.J. that he's gotta wait. But me and Cam have a great opportunity to get more reps. We're both gonna get better from it, get more coach-

ing. We just both have to take the opportunity and run with it."

Davis said some of his favorite parts of the spring session are the intense battles for starting slots.

"I'm a big believer in position competition," he said. "If we're going to be a team that's going to compete to go to bowl games, ACC Championships, get into the BCS, we've got to have great position competition."

"We've gotta have guys on our football team that are pushing guys for starting jobs."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

GONZALEZ

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than any other, it was "Heartbeats," from Gonzalez's 2003 album "Veneer."

"Heartbeats stopped my heart," said freshman Kirsten Stryker, who sat front row. "I've been waiting two years for him to leave Europe."

The single, a cover of the original 2002 version by Swedish band, The Knife, gained popularity after being featured in an advertisement for Sony high-definition televisions, as well as on episodes of "One Tree Hill" and "Scrubs."

Oscillating orbs danced on the ceiling, likely influenced by the heavily publicized Sony commercial, which features thousands of multicolored rubber balls bouncing down the streets of San Francisco. Gonzalez didn't talk much between songs. And what he did say was often indistinguishable beneath his strong Swedish accent.

But after a standing ovation and resounding applause, Gonzalez returned to the stage for an encore, again followed by a single spotlight.

"Thank you. You're very kind," a simple, appreciative statement was one of the few lines heard by the

audience during the performance.

After playing several songs from his latest album "In Our Nature," Gonzalez concluded the show by doing a cover of "Love Will Tear Us Apart," a 1980 hit by the British post-punk band, Joy Division.

Donning a sheen blue dress, singer/songwriter Mia Doi Todd opened the show with a tune reminiscent of tribal beats called "River of Life." But her song selections — including a song in Spanish and another in Japanese — was considerably diverse.

The show cost CUAB \$5,000, a slim price compared to Iron & Wine, a group coming to Memorial Hall in April for an \$11,700 price tag.

Carolina Union President Robert Gordian also said Gonzalez's show illustrates CUAB's continuous goal to expose students to look outside their comfort zones and experience lesser-known artists.

"We really like to expand people's music knowledge as much as we can," he said.

And Allin said Gonzalez and Todd are the just beginning of lesser-known international acts to be invited by CUAB.

"International music is a large movement right now, and we're trying to get on board with it," he said.

Contact the Arts Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

New Orleans Rose:

Ongoing effects of Hurricane Katrina

CUAB presents an evening with

Chris Rose



- The Pulitzer Prize nominated *Times-Picayune* columnist and author of *I Dead in the Attic* will discuss the ongoing cultural effects of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast
- Come prepared with questions about cultural writing, New Orleans now and two years ago and a sense of humor

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