

OBSERVATIONS

FROM PAGE 14

floor. But the Tar Heels still won. And in the other two games combined, UNC shot a much prettier 50.7 percent. Against Clemson, the Tar Heels even got their fast break mojo working again and scored 34 points in transition. "I think that's the biggest thing about playing in March, is just doing whatever it takes to get it done," junior Marcus Ginyard said. "It's not going to be pretty all the time, but as long as you're staying together and everybody's keeping the same focus to the same goal, then you can pull through." ■ The Tar Heels can win coasting a little. The proof — UNC rarely ever loses the rebounding battle, and coaches often say rebounding is about effort and desire. Friday, for only the third time all season, the Tar Heels failed to rebound their opponent when they tied Florida State at 30 each. Against Virginia Tech, the Tar Heels were tied on the boards in the first half before kicking it up a few notches in the second and running away with a 43-33 advantage. Until the championship game, the Tar Heels did just enough to win. Ginyard said it best after the VT win: "We might not have been fighting as hard as we needed to the whole game, but when it came down to it, we gave that extra effort." ■ Tyler Hansbrough is a beast. Not that anyone needed a reminder. But as the accolades rack up (ACC Tournament MVP and ESPN.com's Sports Illustrated's and Sporting News' Player of the Year), he continues to live up to the hype.

Hansbrough finished the weekend with 66 points, 26 rebounds and one game-winner. He moved into third place on the all-time UNC scoring list, and his fadeaway to beat Virginia Tech and advance to the finals was one of the biggest of his UNC career. "I just remember Ty (Lawson) going into the lane area, and I knew he was going to put the ball up," Hansbrough said. "So I just ran over to where Ty was gonna shoot, and luckily the ball had a good roll out to me. And I just caught it and let it fly. I was pretty glad it went in." ■ Wayne Ellington is hitting his stride at just the right time. He's scored 15 or more points in 10 of the last 11 games and continues to hit big shots when it counts. Ellington held off rallies from Florida State and Clemson and helped keep UNC in the game against Virginia Tech with his three scores from beyond the arc. "I got into a pretty good rhythm from the first day, and I think I just went from there," Ellington said. "I'm feeling very confident right now, and that contributes to my shooting from the perimeter." ■ Lawson still isn't 100 percent. Against Virginia Tech on Saturday, Lawson shot 1-7, including a couple of botched layups, and had only one assist to go with four turnovers. But things do look a little brighter after Sunday's performance, when the point guard racked up 12 points and eight assists. "I think he's getting closer, but he's gotta get a lot better for us to reach the dreams that we have," Williams said.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

ACC TITLE

FROM PAGE 14

Heels' ability to get easy points when they did break Clemson's press, frequently from Lawson's quickness. The Tar Heels ended the game with a whopping 34 fast-break points. "Once the opposing team scores, they are coming right behind you," Clemson guard K.C. Rivers said. "When you're jogging back and not paying attention, Lawson and (Quentin) Thomas were coming right behind us." Perhaps more importantly for UNC, Lawson displayed his vaunted blow-by ability that's been missing since his ankle injury. "I felt like I had a little bit more of my explosive back," Lawson said. "And that (play) was the first time I really just jumped off my ankle at all, so it felt good." But despite UNC's transition success, the Tigers used Rivers' sweet lefty stroke — six 3s and 28 points — and baskets off turnovers to claim a one-point halftime lead, 39-38. Hansbrough, who battled Tiger forward Trevor Booker all afternoon, was held to just six points and no free throw attempts in the first half. But after the intermission he started heating up. For most people that would mean three or four pure jumpers in a row. For Hansbrough? Some brute force layups, a couple freebies from the line and a dunk off a loose ball scrum. In fact, the whole UNC team took its cue from Hansbrough. Rather than settling for jump shots, Ellington & Co. all took the ball straight to the hoop off fast breaks and set plays as UNC took only two 3-pointers the entire second half. Amid that banging, Danny Green found an opening on the left wing for

Federowicz. "I was struggling a little bit with the bat, and it helped me get out of it a little bit," Federowicz said. "I saw runners on bases and took advantage of it." After a leaping Ackley catch in the sixth inning stranded three Hokies on the base paths, the Tar Heel offense came alive. UNC piled on the runs en route to the convincing 10-run win. Tar Heel starting pitcher junior Adam Warren picked up the win, throwing six innings and allowing one unearned run on four hits with three walks and three strikeouts. Seemingly, everything went right for the Tar Heels in game one. But Saturday multiple errors kept UNC and Virginia Tech

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

UNC's only 3-pointer of the half to give the Heels a 72-59 lead with 8:05 remaining. Despite a quick Clemson comeback thanks to two Rivers trifectas, UNC used defense and took advantage of poor Tiger free-throw shooting to run out the clock. "It was definitely frustrating," Rivers said. "We just couldn't get that one that was going to make it click to get us going again." Selection Sunday confirmed that UNC, as the overall number one seed, will open in Raleigh and play in Charlotte should they advance to the round of sixteen. The Tar Heels will discover their first opponent after Tuesday night's game between Coppin State and Mount Saint Mary's. And while this weekend's net-cutting was sweet, the Tar Heels have bigger aspirations. "It's a good feeling, but we feel that it is not enough," said Thomas, the only holdover from the 2005 team. "We want to achieve one more goal, and that is a national championship."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

CHAMPIONS

FROM PAGE 14

said. "They don't care who scores, as long as we win. And that's what makes them a championship team." Larkins scored 56 points in the tournament, including 25 in the quarterfinals and featuring a stat line of 14 points and 15 rebounds against Virginia. But even she said it was the team's balance that allowed her to turn in her MVP performance. "I think everybody's contribution has just taken the pressure off myself," she said. "To have people right-in and night-out have at least a minimum of 10 points or better has done a lot for me, and it's done a lot for the team. It's opened up things inside as well as outside." The win completed an impressive feat for Larkins and Pringle, who helped UNC to win the last four ACC titles. The duo never lost in Greensboro. And on the flip side, freshman point guard DeGraffenreid continued to play at a level that exceeds her age. She scored 17 points and

"The strength of our team is our depth and our balance, and they're so unselfish."

turned the ball over only once in the championship game, and she has led the UNC offense in the absence of injured senior Alex Miller. "Cetera has not gotten the credit I think she deserves for leading our team and running our team, because she's just a great kid," Hatchell said. "She's just real solid and real steady." With the ACC Tournament taken care of, the Tar Heels now will set their sights on their first NCAA championship since 1994. UNC will discover its seeding when the brackets are unveiled 7 p.m. today on ESPN.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

UNC 86, Clemson 81

Score summary table showing UNC 86, Clemson 81, with quarter scores.

Player statistics table for UNC (UNC) including Perry, Mays, Booker, Rivers, Hammonds, Stitt, Sykes, Potter, Oglesby, and Total.

Percentages — FG 42.0, FT 53.3, 3-point goals — 9-26, 346 (Rivers 6-12, Oglesby 2-6, Stitt 1-2, Hammonds 0-3, Mays 0-1, Booker 0-1, Potter 0-1). Team rebounds — 1. Blocks — 10 (Booker 5, Mays 2, Perry, Sykes). Turnovers — 17 (Perry 4, Mays 3, Booker 2, Rivers 2, Hammonds 2, Potter 2, Stitt). Steals — 14 (Rivers 6, Mays 3, Hammonds 2, Perry, Stitt, Potter).

Player statistics table for North Carolina (NC) including Ginyard, Thompson, Hansbrough, Lawson, Ellington, Thomas, Graves, Green, Stepheson, and Total.

Percentages — FG 40.0, FT 58.3, 3-point goals — 4-10, 400 (Ellington 2-4, Green 2-4, Lawson 0-2). Team rebounds — 7. Blocked shots — 4 (Thompson 2, Green, Stepheson). Turnovers — 20 (Lawson 4, Hansbrough 3, Thomas 3, Green 3, Ginyard 2, Thompson 2, Ellington 2, Stepheson). Steals — 9 (Ginyard 2, Thompson 2, Hansbrough 2, Ellington 2, Green).

Technical fouls — None. Attendance — 20,035.

Advertisement for Milltown featuring a \$5 lunch special (soup and half sandwich) from 11am-2pm Tuesday-Friday. Includes contact info: 919.968.2460, 307 East Main Street, Carrboro, NC.

BASEBALL

FROM PAGE 14

of a lead so he could kind of get back in a rhythm — that was big for us." At the plate, Tar Heel first baseman Dustin Ackley extended his hitting streak to 21 games, dating back to last season, with a 1-for-3 performance Sunday. "This will sound crazy, but if you probably talk to him, he's probably not satisfied really with the way he's swinging it," Fox said. "He's being pitched around a bit, but he is just such a talent." Friday the Tar Heels kicked off the series with a dominating 11-1 win behind a career-high six RBIs from designated hitter Tim

locked in a tight battle for most of the game. The Hokies took advantage of three Tar Heel errors, and three of VT's five runs came unearned. But a two-run Tar Heel sixth set the stage for an 11-inning Tar Heel victory. In the final frame, Hokie hurler Rhett Ballard committed an error and threw a wild pitch before allowing Kyle Seager to knock in the winning run. Ackley scored from third on Seager's walk-off sacrifice fly to left field. The Tar Heels have just one day off before starting a two-game series against Princeton on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Sudoku puzzle section with a 9x9 grid, level indicators, and solution to Friday's puzzle.

Advertisement for Summer School at Carolina, featuring the text "Teaching that fits your learning style. Summer School at Carolina." and website summer.unc.edu.

THE Daily Crossword section with clues for Across and Down, and a crossword grid.

ARMADILLO GRILL advertisement featuring burritos, beer, and bluegrass. Includes address: 120 E. MAIN STREET • CARRBORO NC.

KAPLAN TEST PREP AND ADMISSIONS advertisement for Kaplan's Secrets of LSAT Preparation. Includes event details for March 25th 2008 and contact info: 1-800-KAP-TEST | kaptest.com/lsat.