

DTH FILE/KATE NAPIER

No. 3 North Carolina's Chad Flack makes contact against Gardner-Webb on Wednesday at the USA training complex in Cary. Flack, who is batting .302 this season, and the Tar Heels face off against N.C. State this weekend.

# Tar Heels prep for series against 'Pack

BY DANIEL PRICE  
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

About 25 miles separate UNC's Boshamer Stadium and N.C. State's Doak Field. And right in between them is the USA National Baseball Training Complex — where the two clubs will meet this weekend.

But despite the geographically neutral site, the Tar Heels will surely not be surrendering the home whites.

"We've been playing and practicing there, and from a fan's standpoint we certainly hope there's some Carolina fans," UNC coach Mike Fox said Thursday. "We expect it to be that way."

UNC (20-4, 7-2 ACC) comes into the series having won its last four games, scoring in double figures in each contest, while the 'Pack has dropped three of its last four.

Despite this and the fact that UNC has won five of its last six games against N.C. State (14-8, 4-5), including a sweep in 2006, they will not be taking their conference rivals lightly.

"They've certainly got a really good team," Fox said. "I think the strength of their team is their pitching."

Anchoring that strength for N.C.

State will be starters — Clayton Shunick, Eric Surkamp and Eryk McConnell — who have a combined 3.45 ERA with 70 strikeouts in 78.1 innings to go against just 29 walks.

Shunick accounts for almost half of the group's Ks (32) and has by far the best ERA (1.55). But with little run support in his appearances, he possesses a record of just 2-2.

"I think we just will continue to do what we're doing," UNC senior Chad Flack said. "We'll make sure we're swinging at the right pitches — we're swinging at our pitches, not his, put some hits together and have some big innings."

The 'Pack has several options out of the bullpen, as well, as six different relievers have seen at least 10 innings of work. But there's no doubt the bullpen's ace is closer Jimmy Gillheeny.

The sophomore right-hander from Johnston, Rhode Island, has struck out 19 batters and walked just four in 14 innings of work this season.

To counter N.C. State's formidable staff, the Tar Heels will send starters Alex White (3-2, 2.19 ERA), Adam Warren (4-0, 4.56) and Matt Harvey (3-1, 1.19) to the

## Series versus N.C. State

Game times: 7 p.m. today, 2 p.m. Saturday and 1:30 p.m. Sunday.

► To reserve a free seat on a bus to Friday or Saturday's game, e-mail your name and PID to carolina.baseball@gmail.com.

ground this weekend.

Judging from past games, North Carolina looks to hold a substantial edge at the plate. The Tar Heels boast six batters with more RBIs than anyone on the entire N.C. State roster.

With the majority of the Tar Heels attack running on all cylinders and Flack approaching the UNC all-time hits record, the momentum at the plate couldn't be greater.

Even with individual accolades around, a team approach is key.

"If I'm getting hits, it means I'm helping the team out," Flack said. "Hopefully we can just pull out three wins this weekend."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

# Reaching the Sweet 16 nothing new for UNC

BY POWELL LATIMER AND DAVID ELY  
SENIOR WRITERS

The first-seeded North Carolina women's basketball team is still dancing; the floor just looks a little familiar.

The Tar Heels are facing 4-seed Louisville in their fourth straight Sweet 16, and they're all business.

For most of UNC's upperclassmen, trips to Regionals are nothing out of the ordinary.

Nowadays, for a program that has emerged as one of the finest in the nation, success isn't even measured in trips to the Final Four. The Tar Heels have won back-to-back Regionals only to come up short the next game both times. So when it comes to postseason success, there is only one measuring stick — a championship.

After winning their first two games by 35 and 14 points, UNC seems to be playing the kind of dominating basketball required to win it all. Even when faced with a big, slow-it-down opponent in second-round victim Georgia, the Tar Heels simply kept running, and it looks like they aren't about to run out of steam.

A key part of that is the re-emergence of All-America forward Erlana Larkins. The senior, who averaged only 14 points in the regular season, has exploded during postseason play, averaging 17.8 points and 10.2 rebounds in the ACC and NCAA tournaments.

To add to Larkins' production, unheralded junior Heather Claytor is coming alive as well. The shooting guard has stepped up her production on both ends of the floor, becoming "that player" — a gritty defender and good shooter whose contributions don't always show up on the stat sheet.

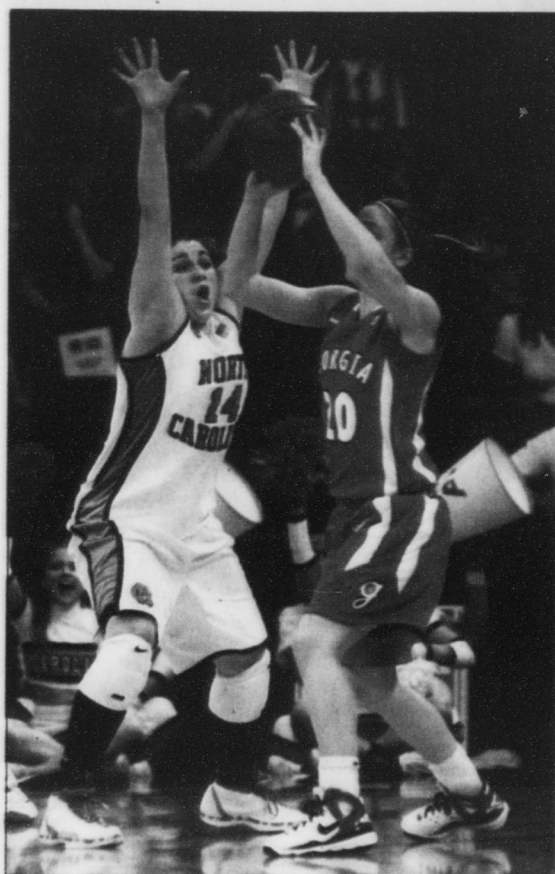
Chiefly, Claytor excels as a help-side defender. She has a knack for picking the perfect moment to attack a ballhandler for a half-court trap, and Claytor is one of the perimeter defenders that allows UNC to rotate efficiently on ball screens.

Larkins and Claytor will need to be on their A-games Saturday afternoon in New Orleans when the Tar Heels square off against a battle-tested Big East foe in Louisville.

The Cardinals are hitting their stride at the perfect time. Louisville notched its best win of the year in topping Rutgers in the Big East Tournament and has rolled to two easy wins in the NCAA Tournament. And there's also the fact that this is Louisville's first trip to the Sweet 16, so anything on top of that will just be icing on the cake.

While the Tar Heels will most certainly be the favorite to advance to Monday's Elite Eight game, the Cardinals are more than just a stepping stone to the next round.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.



DTH FILE/EMMA PATTI

UNC junior Heather Claytor defends against Georgia in North Carolina's NCAA tournament game in Norfolk, Va., on Tuesday. UNC won, 80-66.

## THE LOWDOWN ON SATURDAY'S GAME

No. 4 Louisville vs. No. 1 North Carolina  
New Orleans Arena, noon  
Broadcast: ESPN  
Radio: 1360 WCHL

### HEAD-TO-HEAD

<b>Backcourt</b>	Cetera DeGraffenreid may be a freshman, but she doesn't play like one. Her speed and point production will give UNC a slight advantage against Louisville's Patrika Barlow, who averages 6.9 assists. <b>Edge: UNC</b>
<b>Frontcourt</b>	UNC will have its hands full down low against Angel McCoughtry, averaging 23.5 points for the Cardinals. But Erlana Larkins and LaToya Pringle have proven that they can match up against anyone. <b>Edge: UNC</b>
<b>Bench</b>	The UNC reserves were relatively quiet against Georgia on Tuesday with only eight points combined. Look for Jessica Breland to bounce back and provide her usual spark off the bench against Louisville. <b>Edge: UNC</b>
<b>Intangibles</b>	Louisville turned heads in the Big East Tournament, upsetting Rutgers and giving Connecticut a scare. The Cardinals are looking to make school history in their first ever Sweet 16 appearance. <b>Edge: Louisville</b>

The Bottom Line — North Carolina 79, Louisville 72

COMPILED BY SAMANTHA NEWMAN

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