

Tar Heels fall in Durham

BY DAVID REYNOLDS
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — The Duke women's tennis team gathered on the court after its match against UNC, crying out a resounding "Our house!"

And on this Tuesday no one could question them.

Riding a wave of confidence from decisive victories against N.C. State and Wake Forest, the No. 15 UNC rolled into its match against rival No. 7 Duke poised to pull off an upset.

But what UNC (14-7, 5-3 ACC) found in Durham was a Blue Devil team doing its best imitation of a brick wall, stopping the Tar Heels' momentum train before it got started. Duke got its revenge for two losses last season by beating UNC 5-2 in dominant fashion.

Duke (14-3, 7-2) threw the first punches quickly and effectively as it took the doubles point and surged to straight-set wins at Nos. 3 and 5 singles, and UNC suddenly found itself in a 3-0 hole.

UNC coach Brian Kalbas said Duke's fast start made it difficult for the Tar Heels to make a comeback.

"Momentum is kind of a funny thing," he said. "You can sense it when it's going, and once it turns it's kind of difficult to regroup."

UNC held off Duke a little longer, but the Blue Devils finally

broke through when UNC junior Laura Reichert fell at No. 4 singles to clinch the match for Duke.

Sophomore Sanaz Marand and junior Meg Fanjoy finally put the Tar Heels on the scoreboard with wins at Nos. 1 and 6 singles, but the team result subdued the excitement of their victories.

"We're better than we played today," junior Austin Smith said. "I don't want to take any credit away from Duke because they are a great team, but we didn't finish off points how we could have."

Kalbas had similar sentiments about the team not playing up to its potential and said the Tar Heels' inability to seize control of the match led to their demise.

"We as a team have to understand when the momentum is on our side, how to keep it and when the momentum is not on our side, how to make the adjustments to turn it," he said. "Here, at their place against a talented team, you can't give free points, free energy, and we gave them too much of that today."

With six umpires observing instead of three, a large pro-Duke crowd and the looming pressure of the UNC-Duke rivalry, the match had a decidedly bigger feel than a normal ACC match. Smith said that while she was not nervous because of her experience, it played a factor with other members of the team.

"When we played here my fresh-



DTH/J B YOUNG

No. 15 North Carolina's sophomore Katrina Tsang hits a backhand during UNC's 5-2 loss against No. 7 Duke on Tuesday in Durham.

man year, I was as nervous as I have ever been, and it was horrible," Smith said. "I think that as a team as a whole, we were kind of nervous coming in here playing against Duke."

But even after the tough loss, Marand said the Tar Heels are still upbeat and optimistic about this weekend's final regular season matches against Virginia and Virginia Tech.

"At the end we were a little bit down we lost, but I think we can bounce back and hopefully win these two matches on the road," she said.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Offense sputters against Elon

BY DANIEL PRICE
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

CARY — It was a night of first-in-a-whiles for the No. 4 North Carolina baseball team in Tuesday's 2-0 loss to the visiting Elon Phoenix.

Coming off a loss to then-No. 14 Georgia Tech on Sunday, it was the first time UNC lost two consecutive home games since March 17 and March 18 last season against Virginia.

"We don't lose too many games back to back here," UNC coach Mike Fox said. "We pride ourselves in being able to respond after a loss. I'm probably more disappointed in that than the fact that we got shut out."

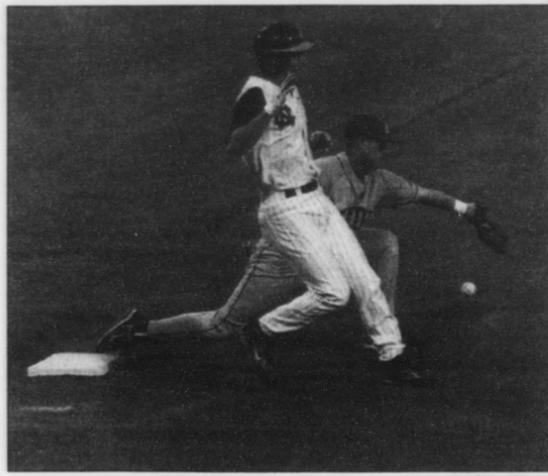
A lack of hits with runners in scoring position doomed the Tar Heels. UNC (25-7) also failed to take advantage of a hit batsman and two straight infield errors from Elon (26-7) in the sixth inning as a groundout to first by pinch-hitter Mark Fleury left runners on first and second.

"Twenty out of our 27 outs we made too easy for them," Fox said.

Indicative of the Tar Heels' luck on the night, earlier in the same frame a diving catch from Elon center fielder Chris Dove turned into a double play as the junior doubled off UNC's Seth Williams at first base.

Elon, on the other hand, took advantage of nearly every Tar Heel mistake.

An errant pickoff throw to first from starting UNC pitcher Patrick Johnson in the second inning advanced Elon shortstop Neal Pritchard to second. And the Phoenix had no trouble getting him



DTH/ERIN DEBNAM

North Carolina first baseman Dustin Ackley beats out a ground ball during the Tar Heels' 2-0 shutout loss against the Elon Phoenix in Cary.

home, as the next batter — Dallas Tarleton — sent a double to right center, scoring Pritchard easily.

The shutout was also a rarity for the Tar Heels, who hadn't been blanked since an April 1, 2007 contest with Wake Forest.

But it wasn't just the UNC lineup that was responsible for the not-often-seen goose egg on the scoreboard.

The other team had something to do with it. Elon starting pitcher Cory Harrilchak had his best stuff on the mound.

Harrilchak pitched seven innings and allowed just five hits and two walks while striking out three Tar Heel batters.

Five Tar Heels who registered at least two at bats went hitless. Among them was third baseman Kyle Seager, who was in the midst of a 27-game hitting streak.

"I had a pretty good run," Seager said. "I would have liked to get a hit today, not so much for the streak's

concern but just to help the team." One aspect of Tuesday's game that was anything but a rarity was the high strikeout count for Johnson.

Johnson tied his career high for Ks with seven, the fourth time this season that he has struck out seven batters. But despite the strikeouts and lowering his ERA to 1.91, Johnson picked up the loss.

"Patrick couldn't locate his fast-ball at all," Fox said. "But he was able to kind of work around that and get some breaking balls over, and he got some strikeouts. ... After five innings he came out 1-0. You can't ask for anymore than that."

UNC won't have much time to work out of its recent offensive funk. The Tar Heels play four games in the next six days, starting today against North Carolina A&T.

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