



SAM ROSENTHAL
A GARDEN STATE OF MIND

Athletes can be at home in class, too

Once upon a freshman or sophomore year, Kelly Davies approached me, her mind ill-at-ease.

Davies, a volleyball player, needed to vent about a former Sports Desker's article, which struck her as, um, a teensy bit insensitive.

"There was some opinion piece about what student-athletes should be taking at Carolina," Davies rehashed with me last week. "And it said that they should be taking a modified — what does modified mean? — exercise and sports science curriculum."

"And basically the reason that they should take this is that they can't read, and they're incapable — which is bullshit."

Reading that out of context, you might incorrectly label Davies an Ebenezer Scrooge. She's actually as genial as Santa Clause — a bona fide extrovert. But as a varsity volleyball player who also spent one year of college as Jane Student, undue criticism of student-athletes boils her blood.

But this criticism exists because of the noticeable schism on campus between athletes and the rest of us — aka "normies," "civilians."

Athletes walk around in their team gear. (Wearing free Nike gear makes no sense at all.) They live together and throw team parties. (Not like you'd ever live or socialize with people you see daily.) And they even eat lunch together. (Sometimes in large parties.)

Granted, some athletes strut about with more pomp than a peacock, but a few bad apples do not a rotten orchard make.

Yes, some student-athletes ride for free on scholarships, but just as many — possibly more — walk on and pay tuition.

Rachel Schneider, a junior gymnast, said, similarly, "Yeah, people love coming to all the events, but they think that athletes in the class somehow don't do all of the work or aren't as smart."

Said Bobby Frasier, the basketball team's Scholar Athlete of the Year: "Some students don't realize how much time and effort we put into this program, so they don't like it if we get advantages. Like, we get to register for classes early because we can't take any classes between 2 and 5 because we're in practice."

Folks, the yuck stops here. By and large, student-athlete Tar Heels comprise a remarkable group of individuals who must invest more time in their sport than any scholastic concentration.

"I tell people that all the time," Davies said. "People ask me what I'm majoring in at Carolina, and I'm like, 'Uh, volleyball.'"

At UNC, being a student-athlete means sacrificing a part of yourself to a team, 24/7. It means a part-time, volunteer job, often with weekend shifts — during the off-season. It means somehow fitting schoolwork in. And it means forgetting about going home.

"Home? Never," Frasier said. "Fall Break, we're here; Winter Break, we're here; Spring Break, we're here."

Pictures of you line the walls of every Franklin Street restaurant. Six-year-olds wait in line after games — no matter the sport — for your autograph. Each year, thousands of college applicants choose UNC, largely thanks to the prestige the athletic program has conferred upon the University.

Lastly, being a student-athlete means that you can, in fact, read.

"One of my teammates is as pre-med as you can get here at Carolina," Davies said as she concluded her venting. "There's many of us who've gotten into this school without any help from an athletic program."

Let's not forget: There are more than 380,000 NCAA student-athletes, and just about all of them will be going pro in something other than sports.

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Field hockey captures perfection

Shelton, Dawson pile up honors

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The North Carolina field hockey team finished off the 2007 season with its fifth national championship under coach Karen Shelton with a shutout win against No. 9 Penn State on Nov. 18.

UNC's choking defense left even the strongest opposition helpless, as in an Oct. 20 victory when No. 2 Maryland was held without a shot.

Upon the conclusion of the season, the Tar Heels (24-0) have continued to collect accolades. Shelton was inducted into the National Field Hockey Coaches Association Hall of Fame in January, and was also named the association's Coach of the Year.

The team set a school record

for shutouts with 16, while tying the record for wins. The squad's 102 goals on the season was also a school record.

"We're absolutely euphoric to have won the national championship," Shelton said Nov. 18. "We started this campaign a long time ago. From the first practice in preseason, to now, I've had a team that's remained remarkably focused and hard-working."

Two days before the showdown with Penn State, the Tar Heels had to beat No. 4 Connecticut, the only team in the final four UNC hadn't met during the season.

The 3-0 victory against Penn State at Maryland's Field Hockey & Lacrosse Complex sealed the perfect record. The Tar Heels are only the fifth Division I field hockey team to win it all without

losing or tying a game.

"It meant the world because there's always that doubt in your head," senior Rachel Dawson said. "That seed of doubt that says, 'Maybe you're just not able to do it. Maybe it's just not meant for you.'"

"The fact that it did — whew, I'm happy now."

Dawson was at the head of the class this season for UNC. After taking last season off to represent the United States in the World Cup, she tallied a team-high 19 goals, including UNC's second score of the championship game.

The senior took home the 2008 Honda Award as the nation's top collegiate field hockey player. She will hold the honor of being only the third player in program his-

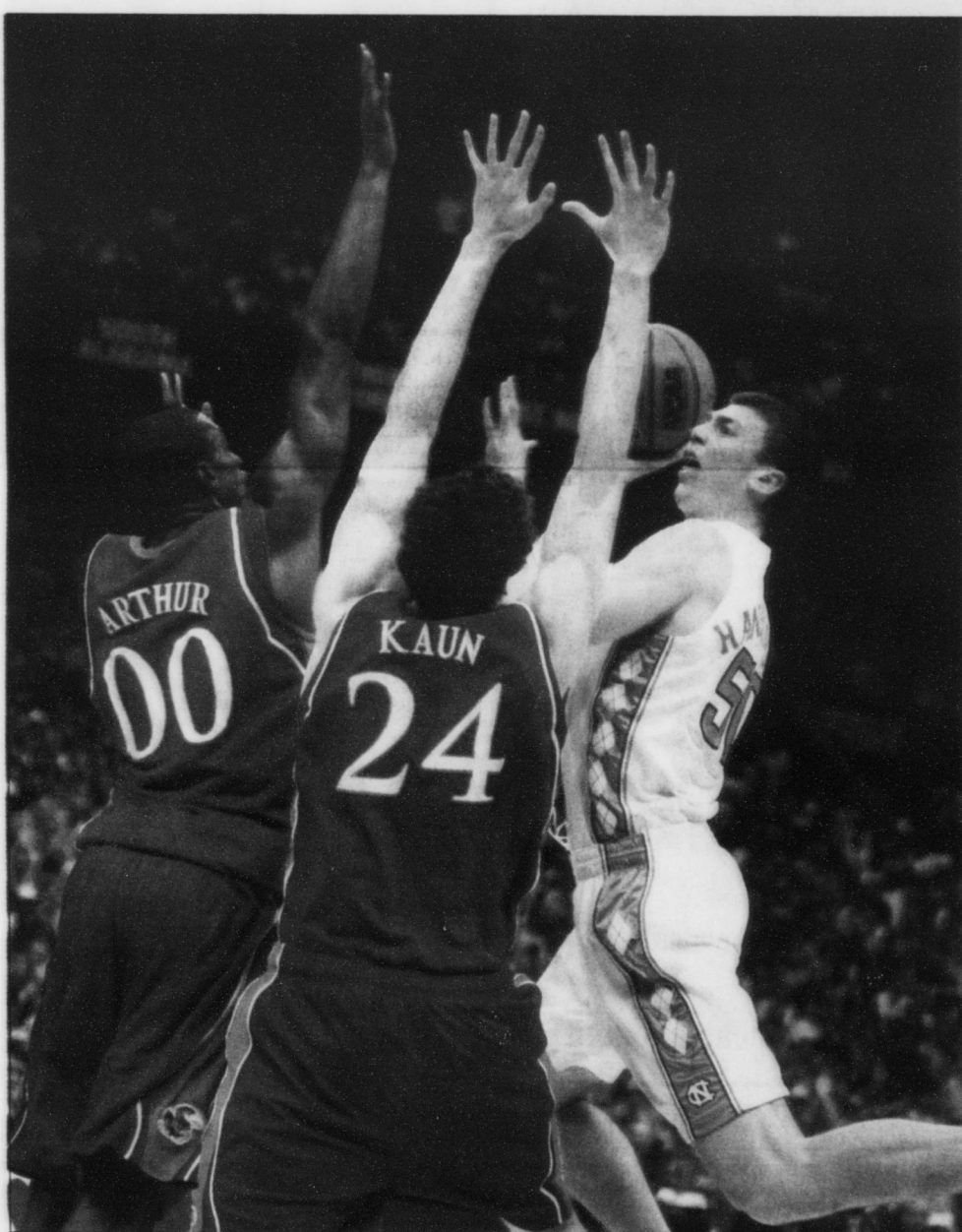
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DTH FILE/DANIEL VAN NIEKERK

UNC's field hockey team completed a perfect season with a victory against Penn State, claiming its fifth national title under coach Karen Shelton.

NBA ON THEIR MINDS



DTH FILE/LAUREN COWART

North Carolina's Tyler Hansbrough led the Tar Heels to a school-record 36 wins this season. The All-American and consensus National Player of the Year has yet to announce a decision on his basketball future along with teammates Ty Lawson and Wayne Ellington.

HEELS FALL ONE WIN SHY OF TITLE GAME

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The North Carolina men's basketball squad began the year ranked No. 1 in the country with dreams of joining the 2005 Tar Heels and becoming the school's sixth national championship squad.

And after claiming the ACC regular season and conference tournament titles, as well as steam-rolling through four NCAA tournament games, it seemed as though all those early season expectations were set to be fulfilled.

That's exactly how North Carolina strolled into the Alamodome. A team with dreams of a national title, visions of completing a magnificent season by hoisting the championship trophy high in celebration.

But after 14 minutes of play April 5, those visions were dashed. Instead, UNC saw a blue-and-red streak of Kansas Jayhawks who stole the ball, raced downcourt and dropped in layup after layup.

Try as they might to mount a comeback that would have gone down as the best in history, the Tar Heels tired out before they could complete the task, falling to Kansas 84-66.

The team finished with a new school record for wins in a season, but its final goal went unfinished.

"This bunch did some great, great things," coach Roy Williams said. "But we're extremely disappointed right now because we had a bigger dream."

Kansas instead seized control immediately by forcing turnovers, attacking at every position and commanding the game's pace.

As the UNC crowd watched in horror and disbelief, the score reached 40-12 with 6:48 left in the first half. UNC (36-3) was getting beaten at its own game.

"It was like, that wasn't North Carolina out there," senior Quentin Thomas said. "I told someone, it looked like we have never played basketball before."

While the Tar Heels were able to muster a valiant comeback attempt, eventually pulling within five during the second half, they were not able to overcome a superior Jayhawk squad that went on to claim the national title with an overtime victory against Memphis.

And after the game, it didn't take long for talk to turn from North Carolina's flameout against Kansas to the speculation of which — if any — of the Tar Heels' standout trio will opt out of college to the greener pastures of the NBA in this June's draft.

It didn't even take an hour.

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Tar Heels rule ACC play

Senior pair go in WNBA 1st round

FROM STAFF REPORTS

This was the year the North Carolina women's basketball team was supposed to fall backward.

After graduating Camille Little and standout Ivory Latta — last year's top two scorers — there were doubts about the 2007-08 squad's potential.

UNC suffered another blow when senior point guard Alex Miller suffered a season-ending knee injury November 16.

It sounded like the makings of a rebuilding year.

Instead, the Tar Heels made program history.

They swept the conference, going undefeated in the ACC for the first time, and they added a fourth consecutive conference tournament title.

"People thought we were going to drop back, step down," coach Sylvia Hatchell said in a news

conference before UNC's season-ending loss to LSU.

"And in some ways we're a better team this year than we were last year."

There's no question UNC's season ended in a letdown, again without a national championship. The tears in Erlana Larkins' eyes after her team's loss to Louisiana State in the Elite Eight showed her disappointment.

But during a season when the Tar Heels easily could have taken a step back, two new senior leaders took the reins.

Larkins and LaToya Pringle increased their individual contributions and fueled the team's success, leading UNC back to a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

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DTH FILE/KATE NAPIER

Senior Erlana Larkins led the Tar Heels with 9.5 rebounds per game and was third in points and assists. She was picked 14th in the WNBA Draft by the New York Liberty.

Boys of summer set Omaha in crosshairs

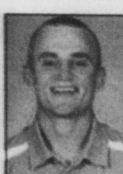
FROM STAFF REPORTS

With the season winding down, the members of the North Carolina baseball team are facing the same question they thought they answered the past two years: Are they good enough?

To answer, the Tar Heels have the same answer: Try and hit us.

UNC leads the nation in ERA with 2.15. That's better than last year's average of 3.52 and even lower than the ERA of the 2006 squad — which boasted first-round MLB draft picks Andrew Miller (Sixth selection) and Daniel Bard (28th) in the rotation.

UNC's 90 earned runs on the season is 32 better than the next-best ACC team and more than 50 runs higher than the other two ACC powerhouses, Miami and



Kyle Seager and his potent bat have helped lead the Tar Heels to a 37-6 record.

Florida State.

But most impressively, North Carolina throws strikes. Constant strikes, as they lead the ACC in strikeouts by more than 40 Ks.

Combine that with the production of Kyle Seager — who is leading the ACC in RBIs — Tim Fedroff and Dustin Ackley, and the Tar Heels suddenly look very formidable.

North Carolina ranks second in the conference in hits, third in

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