

Tourney time for baseball

BY T.P. LATIMER
SPORTS EDITOR

The No. 1 North Carolina baseball team started its defense of the ACC tournament title Wednesday, sporting the top national ranking after taking two of three games from previous top dog Miami.

You could say that the Tar Heels are peaking at the right time, or even that their confidence must be sky-high right now after winning three straight series against the ACC's three toughest teams — Miami, Florida State and Virginia.

"They really couldn't care less. I don't know if our team needed any more confidence," said a bemused Mike Fox, UNC's head coach. "It certainly can't hurt."

Such is the by-product of two straight trips to Omaha, Neb. — confidence comes with the uniform.

So it didn't really matter that UNC's pitching staff — statistically the best in the nation — got shelled for 29 runs in three games against Miami. They still won the series.

It didn't really matter that UNC entered the tournament as the third overall seed, behind two teams they defeated.

"The seeding's based on numbers," Fox said. "And based on the num-

bers, (Miami and Florida State are) deserving of a higher seed than us."

Again, it doesn't really matter. UNC hasn't lost a series all season, and they just bested the two teams seeded ahead of them. As far as the Tar Heels are concerned, the ACC can put them anywhere in the bracket.

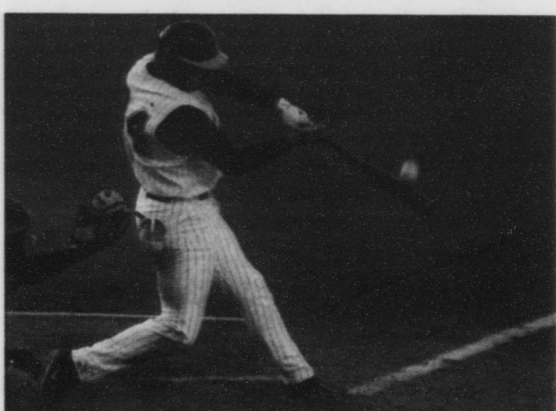
"I don't believe it matters what seed you are or in what bracket you are," senior first baseman Chad Flack said. "You have to be playing better than all eight teams out here to win it, so I don't think we really care."

The reason? No matter what happens in the ACC tournament this week, the Tar Heels have seen it before. Getting to the College World Series two years in a row tends to take a little bit of perseverance.

"We know how to win, first of all," Flack said. "We have a lot of guys who have been in the biggest stage in college baseball a couple of years in a row."

"We've been down in games, and we've been up in games — we've seen everything in the world happen in different games. But we always know how to come out on top."

Even if that includes having a closer pitch middle relief and a catcher close against the top-



DTH FILE/KATE NAPIER

The UNC baseball team is entering the ACC tournament ranked as a consensus No. 1 in the nation for the first time in program history.

ranked team in the nation.

That's exactly what UNC did to close out game three of the Miami series.

Rob Wooten, a candidate for the Stopper of the Year award, pitched the seventh, eighth and part of the ninth innings.

Catcher Tim Federowicz came in for the final two outs.

Unorthodox? Given that

Federowicz had pitched a grand total of 6.2 innings this season, yes.

But, as Fox said, "the best thing about our team the last three years is that we have guys that are unselfish; they just want to win."

And that's the only thing that really matters.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu

UNC bows out of NCAAs to Ole Miss Rebels

Season ends in the round of 16

BY DAVID REYNOLDS
STAFF WRITER

The doubles point didn't provide enough momentum for No. 12 North Carolina (21-6) to sneak past No. 5 Mississippi in the round of 16 in the NCAA men's tennis tournament Friday.

The Rebels (24-4) dominated singles play, winning four out of the first five singles matches to come back against the Tar Heels and advance to the quarterfinals.

The final score was 4-2 in favor of Ole Miss.

Mississippi 4 UNC seniors

David Stone and Tristan Heinrich started off their last match in their respective college careers well for the Tar Heels with an 8-5 doubles victory. Sophomores Clay Donato and Stefan Hardy clinched the doubles point shortly thereafter with an 8-6 win to put UNC up 1-0.

Singles looked to be a dogfight early, with each team claiming three first set wins, but Mississippi slowly began to pull away during the second sets. The Rebels registered three straight set victories in a row at No. 1, 3 and 6 singles to pull ahead 3-1.

The three Tar Heels who had won their first sets all lost in their second sets, setting up a scenario in which UNC would have to win all of the three remaining sets to claim victory.

Donato broke through to snap Mississippi's run and cut the Rebels' lead to 3-2, but Hardy could not hold off Ole Miss' Matthias Wellermann, ranked No. 31 in the country, at No. 2 singles, and Mississippi clinched the match 4-2.

"You have to congratulate Ole Miss," coach Sam Paul told tarheelblue.com after the match. "This was a great match. Ole Miss just played better in the bigger points. I'm just so proud of my team. There were a lot of tears talking to those guys."

The loss concludes a highly successful year for the Tar Heels, who finished the season ranked in the top 12 for the third consecutive season. The team will lose eight seniors, but returns four out of



DTH FILE/KELVIN YEUNG

Benjamin Carlotti and 12-seed North Carolina couldn't pull off the upset at 5-seed Ole Miss in the NCAA round of 16 on Friday.

six starters in both singles and doubles.

The senior starters that will depart are No. 1 singles player Benjamin Carlotti, No. 6 singles player Stone and the No. 3 doubles team of Stone and Heinrich.

The 2008 season saw the Tar Heels compile an impressive 11-match winning streak that stretched close to two months and a near-perfect 9-1 ACC conference regular-season mark that allowed North Carolina to host a regional NCAA match for the fourth time in five years and third consecutive time.

Three UNC players were honored with spots on the All-ACC team: Hardy, Donato, and Chris Kearney. They combine for the most selections UNC has had on the team since 2004.

A victory over rival Duke boosted UNC into the round of 16 in the NCAA tournament for the second time in three years, prompting senior David Stone to call that victory "probably the greatest feeling I've ever had in my life," according to tarheelblue.com.

UNC's only regular season conference loss was to No. 1 Virginia. They also tied a school record with nine ACC regular season wins for the second year in a row.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu

Tar Heel lax falls to 'Cuse in NCAAs

BY ANNA KIM
STAFF WRITER

A 13-11 loss meant the clock struck midnight — time to concede the glass slipper. The unseeded North Carolina women's lacrosse team saw the conclusion of its season and tournament play against No. 5 seed Syracuse in the NCAA quarterfinals Saturday.

The Tar Heels (13-7, 4-4) faced their second consecutive seeded opponent on the road in Syracuse, N.Y.

But a valiant second half offensive charge led by sophomores Megan Bosica and Kristen Taylor was not enough to propel UNC into the Final Four.

"It's always a disappointment to end the season earlier than we hope for," Taylor said. "When you are committed and spend a whole season working for that win, it's a disappointment."

In the first eight minutes, UNC found itself in familiar territory — an early two-goal deficit. But the Tar Heels battled back, answering each Syracuse run with one of their own. North Carolina finished the half trailing 6-4.

UNC began to close the gap less than five minutes into the half with an unassisted goal by Julia Ryan. Bosica made her scoring debut less than one minute later, tying the game at six.

The sophomore tandem of Taylor and Bosica put on some late fireworks, combining for five goals in the second half.

"We both recognized that we need to step up and score some goals," Bosica said. "We got a little momentum."

The duo's attack followed a 3-0 run by the Orange (18-2) with 21:09 remaining. Taylor and Bosica controlled the board for the next eight minutes, with four unassisted goals to put UNC ahead by a goal.

"Meggy obviously had an amazing second half," Taylor said. "Her shots were just falling, and she was taking some great looks on cage."

Syracuse answered the attack with another three-goal run. Bosica netted her final goal and the team's last with 3:21 remaining. One Syracuse goal with less than a minute left sealed North Carolina's two-goal loss.

"I mean, the end score showed that we lost, but we left the game feeling like we did the best that we could possibly do," Bosica said. "I



DTH FILE/MELANIE HAYWOOD

The unseeded North Carolina women's lacrosse team fell just short of the NCAA Final Four with a loss to Syracuse on Saturday in New York.

think that was just as great as the win itself."

North Carolina entered the ACC tournament as a No. 5 seed matched with fourth-seeded Boston College.

UNC avenged a double-overtime loss earlier in the season with a 12-8 upset against the Eagles to advance to the ACC semifinals to meet top-seeded Maryland. UM eliminated the Tar Heels in a 6-4 loss.

UNC received a NCAA bid as an unseeded opponent and met No. 4 seed Virginia in the first round.

UNC upset the Cavaliers in a four-goal win before falling to Syracuse.

"We had a lot of ups and downs, some losses we wish didn't happen," Bosica said.

"But coming close to a Final Four, even though people didn't think we were going to get far, I think everyone is going to look back on our season and be proud of one another and what we accomplished."

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