

Heels roll through regionals

Catching some serious Flack

BY POWELL LATIMER
SPORTS EDITOR

CARY — On to the next one. In three games last weekend, North Carolina players showed everyone why they have dirt from Omaha on their old uniforms. First the Diamond Heels dispatched Mt. St. Mary's 16-8 as UNC bats found gaping holes in The Mount's defense. The Tar Heels racked up nine doubles and tied for a school record.

When Mt. St. Mary's loaded the bases and threatened to tie the score in the seventh inning, Rob Wooten came in and left all three runners stranded on base to seal the win for the Tar Heels.

The following two games — both against UNC-Wilmington — featured a little less bat-swinging, in favor of precision pitching.

In UNC's second game, ACC Pitcher of the Year Alex White threw a complete game as UNC won 5-1. The junior made up for his 0-3 record in the 2007 postseason by striking out eight and giving up only one earned run in his 2008 NCAA debut.

"You know it is a well-pitched game when you can take the box score and fold it in half," UNC coach Mike Fox said after the game. "The game started for us just like we wanted and ended just about the same way. ... That's why

Alex is the ACC Pitcher of the Year. We have no problems giving him the ball in big games, and it was a great win for us."

Throughout the weekend, UNC pitchers were assisted by the red-hot bats of Tim Fedroff, Dustin Ackley and the bottom of the North Carolina lineup.

Ackley was his usual productive self, pushing his RBI total to 75 on the season — good for fourth on UNC's single-season all-time list — and recording his 100th hit on the season.

Fedroff, on the other hand, wasn't so much stellar as super-natural. The junior right fielder batted 9 of 11 on the weekend with eight runs, en route to garnering regional MVP honors. His performance was such that one reporter exclaimed Sunday: "People just don't do that."

Fedroff's show was matched Sunday at least by DH Mark Fleury. Fleury knocked in a three-run homer in the fifth inning that would give UNC a crucial cushion going forward.

"I almost kind of knew it was coming because he threw me a fastball before, and I think he was going to catch me off guard and beat me again," Fleury said after the game.

"So I was kind of cheating for it and, I was lucky he threw it there,



UNC's Dustin Ackley receives a throw to prevent a runner from stealing against UNC-Wilmington during the NCAA regional in Cary last weekend.

and put a good swing on it."

Adding to the run production was the defensive prowess provided by Fox's substitution of Ryan Graepel into the lineup for Garrett Gore.

"I thought Ryan Graepel was terrific all weekend at shortstop," Fox said. "He played exceptionally well and got a big swing of the bat there in the eighth inning, to add on that seventh run, which proved to be a big one."

Even with Fleury's shot and the contributions of Graepel and

Fedroff, still more work was needed to prevent a third game with UNC-W.

In the seventh inning, again UNC found itself with runners on base and the potential to throw away a late-game lead. And again Fox went to that bullpen to bring out Wooten.

Six more strikes, and it was game over.

On to the next one.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Senior struggles behind the plate

BY MIKE EHRLICH
SENIOR WRITER

It all just seemed so familiar.

Chad Flack stood outside the visitor's locker room of Kenan Stadium on Monday, fielding questions about his sub-par performance in the regional round of the NCAA Tournament.

Well, sub-par puts it pretty lightly. The cleanup hitter went 1-13 for a brutal .083 average during the three-game span, with five strikeouts.

He swung at bad pitches, hit balls right at fielders, didn't knock in a run and looked generally uncomfortable in the batter's box.

And it's really not all that new. For all the records he's set in his four years at North Carolina, for all the big hits he's come up with, he's also had an awful lot of struggles.

"I've done it for four years," the senior said about bouncing back from tough times. "It happens in baseball every year. It's just one of those things that you've got to put behind you, and just go out there and work hard and try to get better."

Easier said than done. The struggles started early for Flack, as he went 0-3 in his Tar Heel debut and managed just one hit in his first 14 at-bats.

After rebounding for a huge first year, many expected the freshman All-American to be drafted after his junior year. A record-breaking sophomore campaign enhanced these notions.

But then those hitting troubles came back, and he struggled to a .247 batting average his junior year before hearing his name passed over in the MLB draft.

The hitting woes continued for most of this year before he finally recovered a bit in the second half — only to flail unsuccessfully at the ball all weekend long in the post-

season.

"I swung the bat decently in some of the at-bats, and in some of the at-bats, I chased some pitches," he said. "It's more about getting myself out."

Even without the help of Flack's bat, the Tar Heels cruised through the Cary regional and into a super regional matchup against Coastal Carolina. And the super regional round is where Flack has had some career-defining moments.

In each of the last two seasons, the third baseman has hit the game-winning home run in the decisive game of the super regionals, including a blast against Alabama two years ago that arguably revitalized the entire Tar Heel program.

It is the senior leadership he's provided and those timely hits that still have Flack's teammates believing in him.

"It's been rough, I guess, the past few years," fellow senior Seth Williams said. "But Chad, his leadership, just him being out there. He's going to come through with one of those clutch at-bats. You know Chad's going to come through."

And his coaches believe, too. "That's baseball — you're going to have those weekends where you're just not seeing it right," said coach Mike Fox. "But he's been there before. He's a veteran."

"A guy that's done it like he has over his last three years, we've got to put him in there and put him in that situation again and trust that he'll come up with some big hits again."

Fox insisted that in spite of what some critics have suggested, the cleanup spot in the order will still belong to Flack. And against a Coastal Carolina team that put up 47 runs in the three games of its regional, the guy that's been Mr. June the last two years might need to deliver.

And if he's demonstrated one thing in his time at UNC, it is that he has learned how to respond to adversity.

"It's something you have to learn as a baseball player," Fox said. "Managing failure is the hardest thing that you have to do in this game. So it takes some mental toughness, but he's been through it before."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Catching up with UNC's Greg Little

As the UNC football team prepares for its second season under coach Butch Davis, DTH staff writer Christian Wisseh sat down with projected starter Greg Little. Little chatted about himself and his transition to college life at UNC.

DTH: How would you describe your UNC experience thus far?

GL: I think that everybody knows that I made the decision to come here at the very last minute. And being here, being around my teammates and being around the campus life and atmosphere in Chapel Hill, I feel that I made the right decision.

I mean it's just amazing, you know, how you can come and meet new people and just like fit right in like a piece to a puzzle. It just works.

DTH: Who has been the biggest influence on your athletic career?

GL: I think my dad has. He never missed a practice or a game. Whether it be baseball, football, basketball, track, he's never missed anything. And he's always instilled hard work into me. So I feel like the only way I can repay him is to perform on game day.

DTH: Is there a professional whose game you model your's after?

GL: I like to nitpick off of different guys and what they do.

I mean guys have various speeds and strengths and different moves and I just like to pick from different people and make my game.

DTH: Like you said earlier, you

committed to the Tar Heels late. Did the hiring of Butch Davis play a factor in that decision?

GL: I would say it did. His ability to change programs around and make them win championships is tremendous.

I don't think that many guys have that. But Carolina hasn't been known for winning in football and that's one thing I wanted to come do also was make Carolina known for something more than basketball.

DTH: How would you describe Coach Davis?

GL: Coach Davis, he's the kinda guy that always has his arm around you or always wants to shake your hand and make eye contact. And that's a guy that I know is not going to backstab you or turn his back on you. He's always gonna be very up front in everything that he does, and he's not gonna sugarcoat anything.

DTH: Coming out of high school, did you have any difficulties learning (offensive coordinator John Shoop's offense)?

GL: Oh yeah, I would always line up wrong, always be in the wrong place and always run the wrong routes for those first couple of weeks. He was always on me. He'd said, 'Greg, you need to study more, and you need to put more time into it.' And I was like, man, you know, this is tough. But being at this level there's so much time and so much effort you gotta put in to it.

DTH: Was there a veteran that took you under his wing and showed you the ropes?

GL: Hakeem Nicks, we played



Greg Little stretches for extra yardage against Duke last season. The two-sport athlete had a chat with the DTH to talk about his experience at UNC.

the same position for a while. And he kinda taught me the things to focus on and stay away from. He told me, 'Don't be late for class, sit up front,' and those type of things; the things that you should do right."

DTH: You also played basketball for UNC. What was that experience like?

GL: To play for North Carolina basketball, which has so much history, it was a dream come true. I feel that I've helped some of those players to the next level. I've guarded Ty (Lawson), Wayne (Ellington) and Danny (Green) at times, and they're all trying to move to the next level, and I feel like I've helped them.

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Level: 1 2 3 4

2	7	9			
1		4	7		
9	3	1			5
6					7
8		7		2	
1					4
3			5	4	2
	8	9		3	
		3	1	5	

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit 1 to 9.

Solution to last week's puzzle

7	6	5	8	1	2	3	4	9
2	4	1	3	9	6	5	7	8
3	9	8	5	4	7	1	2	6
9	8	2	7	5	3	6	1	4
4	1	7	6	2	9	8	3	5
6	5	3	1	8	4	2	9	7
8	3	4	2	7	5	9	6	1
5	7	6	9	3	1	4	8	2
1	2	9	4	6	8	7	5	3

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ACROSS

- Even more saccharine
- Top trump
- Educ. group
- Baltic republic
- Advanced deg.
- Actor Tom
- Start of Abram Chasins quote
- "The Bells" poet
- 19th mo.
- Replace padding
- Like some humor
- Dental exam?
- Commotions
- Colorful salamander
- Part 2 of quote
- Biol. or chem.
- Bring up
- Supermarket passage-way
- Synagogue singer
- I'm all ears!
- Be part of the cast of
- Less common
- Actor Mineo
- Part 3 of quote
- Withered
- Game point situation
- Night hunters
- Compared, as costs
- Uproarious commotion
- According to
- Blue hue
- End of quote

DOWN

- Subway system
- Theater worker
- Inscribed pillar
- Inspirational discourse
- Privy to
- Hibernia
- "Norma"
- OK
- Take one from Column B
- Idyllic place
- Puts through a procedure
- Muscle spasm
- Well-suited
- Wedding exchange
- Indigenous Canadian
- The Greatest
- Novelist Cather
- Immune syst. component
- Maine college town
- Egypt and Syr., once
- Native New Zealander
- Skeedaddles
- Hidden hoard
- Give meaning to
- Specialized clock
- Moines, IA
- Overnight flights
- In the center of
- Launch, as a program
- Cacophony
- Calm yourself!
- Complete
- Rod of tennis
- Molts
- Man or Dogs
- Make a point?
- Throw out
- Soft drink
- Ernie of golf
- Word of agreement

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IDO PRIDE POLAR
COTTAGE INDUSTRY
KNEES NORTE
LINE CHAINS RAP
EST JOANS LEVI
LAURA SPIGOT
SHEDLIGHTUPON
MOONED RAINS
MILD STARNING BRA
ELI EXEMPT REID
SOLON FACTO
HUTTWO THREEFOUR
ANITA ABOVE FAN
DECOY SOWED ELS