

Ackley & Co. excel in Cape Cod Hansbrough, Dawson up for ESPYs

BY POWELL LATIMER
SPORTS EDITOR

Dustin Ackley spent the first part of the summer shelling hitters in Omaha, Neb., as the leadoff hitter in North Carolina's College World Series arsenal.

The rising junior is now spending the last part of his vacation tearing up the Cape Cod summer league.

In the most prestigious of the collegiate summer leagues, Ackley's numbers closely resemble his UNC statistics: .415 batting average, tied for second in RBIs on the Harwich Mariners, with a .707 slugging percentage.

"It's been great; I mean, it's just like a baseball town," Ackley said of Cape Cod, Mass. "Everybody comes to see the baseball."

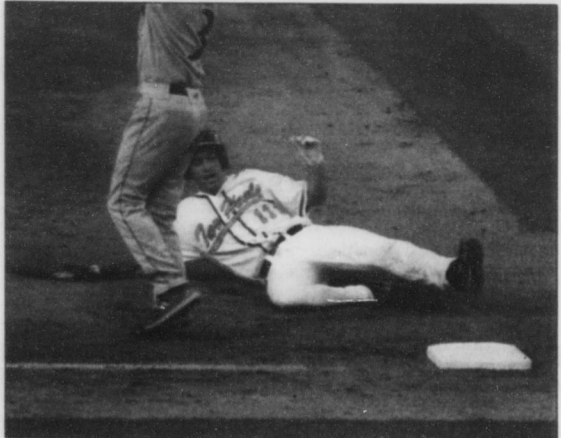
After playing first base for his first two years at UNC, Ackley has spent much of the summer in the outfield, at his natural position of left field.

The switch is significant, as the Tar Heels already lost centerfielder Seth Williams and left fielder Kyle Shelton to graduation, and could lose Tim Fedoroff if the All-American right fielder signs with a pro team, which would require some major shifts in UNC's defensive alignment.

"It seems all the outfield positions are open," Ackley said. "So I'll go wherever they want to put me."

Ackley knows the openings are there and is using the summer to try and brush off the rust from his outfield skills.

"It's been good," Ackley said of the position switch. "Especially since next year I'm hoping to play there. Just getting out there and catching fly balls, making good



DTH FILE/RACHEL RODEMANN

Dustin Ackley closed his sophomore season with a 13-game hitting streak and has continued swinging effectively in the Cape Cod summer league.

reads. That's the main thing I think; getting out there will help me improve."

Ackley is joined in the Cape Cod league by a host of UNC teammates, including second baseman Kyle Seager.

Seager, by contrast, struggled during the College World Series, but in a league peppered with names from Omaha, he has found success.

Seager is batting .357 in 12 appearances. He has nine RBI and one home run, with most of his time coming at shortstop.

"It's great to look over and see guys you played with. Kyle's doing really well," Ackley said.

Ackley also has faced down UNC's freshman pitcher Matt Harvey, who dominated Wake Forest in the ACC Tournament for eight innings.

"It went alright; the count went pretty deep," Ackley said of his

matchup with Harvey, who is 0-1 with a 1.54 ERA for the Chatham Athletics.

"I think I managed to ground it ... and it turned into an infield single."

UNC players litter the Cape Cod league, including pitchers Colin Bates, Adam Warren and Nate Striz.

Bates, a freshman All-American with Harvey, has 16 strikeouts in 17 innings of work and three games for the Hyannis Mets, with a 3.18 ERA.

Warren is 1-1 in two starts with the Chatham As, with nine strikeouts and a 2.45 ERA. Striz has 4.1 innings of work with no runs allowed in three appearances.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu

BY MARGOT SCHNEIDER
STAFF WRITER

Two UNC athletes are in the running to earn college athlete of the year awards July 20.

Rising senior Tyler Hansbrough and recent graduate Rachel Dawson are up for Male and Female College Athlete of the Year awards, respectively, in the ESPYs, the annual sports awards ceremony determined by fan votes and hosted by ESPN.

Last season the Associated Press named Hansbrough its Collegiate Player of the Year. He also won the Wooden and Naismith awards.

Hansbrough helped lead the Tar Heels to an ACC title and the NCAA Final Four, averaging 22.6 points and 10.2 rebounds per game.

But it is not the statistics that stand out in the forward's repertoire; it is the records he already has broken — and the number he is in line to break this season.

He is on track to become the ACC's all-time point and rebound leader during his senior season.

Hansbrough said joining the ranks of college basketball's greatest means a lot to him.

"I feel very honored to be up there with those guys," he said.

And though Hansbrough said winning awards, such as the potential ESPY, is an honor, he has his eyes on more than individual honors in his last year at North Carolina.

"Right now I'd say that a national championship would be a great way to end," he said.

Though Hansbrough might be sticking around for the title, fellow ESPY nominee and Kansas State freshman phenom Michael Beasley was drafted No. 2 overall by the Miami Heat in June. Beasley finished third in season scoring with 26.2 points per game and first in



UNC All-American forward Tyler Hansbrough is nominated for best college male athlete.



All-America Rachel Dawson is up for best collegiate female athlete of 2008.

rebouncing with 12.4 per game.

Rounding out the nominees is Florida quarterback Tim Tebow. Tebow won the Heisman Trophy last season, the first college football player to both throw and rush for 20 touchdowns in one season. The sophomore Gator helped lead his team to a national title.

And though much can be said for a national title, North Carolina field hockey standout Dawson makes the case that winning one game is not enough.

As National Player of the Year, Dawson led her team in to an undefeated national championship season, 24-0.

Dawson scored 19 goals this season and earned ACC Defensive

Player of the Year for the second time. She now is playing with the U.S. national team in Beijing.

The Tennessee women's basketball team might not have been undefeated, but the Lady Vols did win their second national championship in a row, led by ESPY nominee and Player of the Year Candace Parker.

Parker was drafted No. 1 overall by the Los Angeles Sparks in April.

Also nominated is Virginia Tech pitcher Angela Tischer, who led her team to its first College World Series on a 49-19 season.

The ESPYs will air at 9 p.m. July 20 on ESPN.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu

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