

# Swimmers aim for improved conference play

BY KEVIN MINOGUE  
STAFF WRITER

The North Carolina swimming and diving teams made their official returns to the pool this weekend, marking the culmination of what has been an unusual off-season for the Tar Heels.

The temporary closure of Koury Natatorium early in the school year forced the team to adopt a limited practice schedule in preparing for the season.

"Our training has been a little different this fall with the pool being under repair, so we were using some off-campus sites," coach Rich DeSelm said, adding that "the team did great with it."

But these setbacks have failed to hamper DeSelm's optimism for the upcoming season.

The Tar Heels are looking to build upon an impressive 2007-08 campaign in which both the men's and women's teams took home second place at the ACC championships, the highest finish for the men since 2001.

"We're excited about the team. There's been a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of great energy," DeSelm said.

"The infusion of a big, talent-

ed freshman class has definitely helped the upperclassmen do a little reality check and has been good for everybody."

The rookie talent was on full display at Friday's annual Blue-White Intrasquad meet, as first-years Evan Reed and Steve Cebertowicz took home first-place finishes in the 50- and 100-yard freestyles, respectively.

But the team remains driven by a bevy of returning talent, including sophomores Joe Kinderwater, a U.S. Olympic Trials finalist in the 1500-meter freestyle, and Chip Peterson, who returns this year after taking a redshirt season to focus on open-water swimming events.

Both Kinderwater and Peterson were at open-water events Friday and could not be in attendance, but the duo gives the Tar Heels a menacing one-two punch in the male distance events.

Sophomore Tyler Harris is another underclassman to watch, especially in the butterfly and individual medley events, and DeSelm identified senior captains Yi-Khy Saw and Brad Mitchell, junior captain Jeff James and sophomore Tommy Wyher as several men who

look poised for big seasons.

On the women's side, the Tar Heels return senior captain Whitney Sprague, the ACC record-holder in the 1,000- and 1,650-yard freestyle events, along with several other veterans who DeSelm will be counting on to lead the team.

"Whitney Sprague is an NCAA high-caliber swimmer, and (junior captain) Alison Clemens ... I know that she's going to have her best year ever," noted DeSelm, adding that senior captain Lindsay McIlvain also has been impressive despite battling injury.

With the return of much of the core of last year's team, as well as the arrival of a highly touted rookie class, the team looks poised to make a run at the ACC crown. But a conference title isn't its only goal.

"I think the mark of a good season is that everyone puts in their best effort at all times," Sprague said.

"Even if we don't achieve everything, if we know that we've put everything into it — that would be successful."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.



DTH/ERIC VELARDE

The Blue-White Intrasquad meet this weekend opened the season for the Tar Heel swimming team. The Blue team narrowly won for the men, while the women's White team won handily, giving it the overall victory.

## SCOUTING REPORT

# Heels must stop ND's skilled receiving corps

BY POWELL LATIMER  
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Most of the press for North Carolina's Saturday matchup with Notre Dame has gone to quarterback Jimmy Clausen's golden arm, but the real precious

metal of Notre Dame's offense just might be wideout Golden Tate.

Tate is the most electrifying of Notre Dame's receivers, and he leads the team with 23 receptions and also has three touchdown grabs.

He's also the only ND player to

break a play of more than 50 yards this season.

"The thing that really has impressed me is the explosive play-making of the wide receivers on the outside," UNC coach Butch Davis said Monday. "They're talented kids."

While Tate is the home-run threat, his fellow receivers benefit from Notre Dame's wide-open passing attack — Clausen has thrown 171 times already this season, compared to 115 for all UNC quarterbacks.

And the fact is that Clausen and Irish coach Charlie Weis are more than happy to spread the ball around.

"We're going to throw it to where

the coverage dictates us going," Weis said. "But now you're finally at a point where we don't have to create a star — just call a play and throw it to the weakness of the coverage."

In Notre Dame's five games, three different players have led the Irish in receptions.

That kind of spread-the-wealth attack will put pressure on the UNC secondary to defend every receiver on the field.

But against the Tar Heels, Notre Dame might be facing a different animal.

So far on the season, UNC has picked off opposing quarterbacks 12 times — the most in the nation. Trimane Goddard himself has

an ACC-leading four picks. UNC repeatedly preys on opposing quarterbacks on third down and passing situations, with ball-hawking linebackers Bruce Carter and Mark Paschal featured.

And when a pass does find its intended receiver, UNC cornerbacks have demonstrated their ability to make one-on-one tackles.

Miami tried to run quick bubble screens for wide receivers against UNC two weeks ago, but cornerbacks Jordan Hemby and Kendrick Burney responded with a combined 13 solo tackles, keeping receivers contained.

Granted, the Tar Heels haven't faced anything close to Weis's schemes or Clausen's arm.

But to garner a third straight win, they'll have to make Golden Tate & Co. look a little tarnished.



DTH FILE/SARAH RIAZATI

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Jordan Hemby and the secondary will face their toughest test yet against Notre Dame's talented passing offense, including standout Golden Tate.



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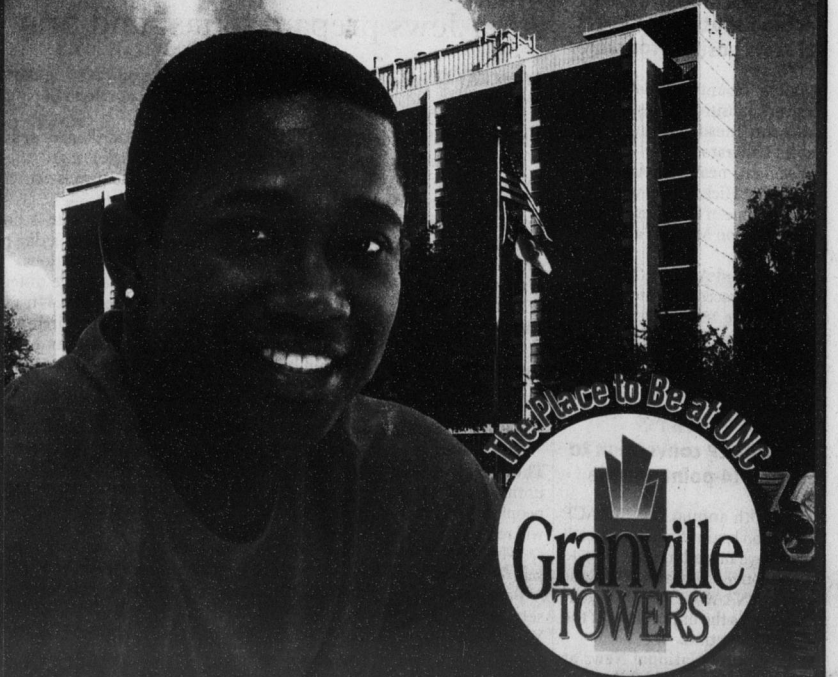
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