

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Tar Heels top Miami to advance in ACCs

UNC makes most of few chances

BY JOE MCLEAN
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

CARY — For the second time in four days, No. 2 North Carolina and Miami battled well into the second half without a goal.

Sunday, the two teams met in the final game of the regular season when UNC (17-1-2) was able to wring out a 1-0 win.

Wednesday at Wake Med Soccer Park, the squads drew each other again — this time in the opening round of the ACC

Tournament. And for the second time, the Tar Heels pulled out a 1-0 victory against a stout Miami defense. UNC advanced to play fourth-seeded Boston College at 5 p.m. on Friday.

The Hurricanes (10-8-3) share the conference lead in shutouts this season with 11 and illustrated why in both meetings.

"It's hard to move the ball against Miami," coach Anson Dorrance said. "They're tough. They're committed to defending. Their kids take physical risks. Their goalkeeper is absolutely superb."

The Tar Heels had difficulty getting behind, around or through the Hurricanes' defense. Miami

cramped the box with nine or more players whenever UNC threatened to push through.

And when they did, goalkeeper Vikki Alonzo, who leads the conference with a .864 save percentage, was waiting.

UNC put up fewer shots and almost half as many shots on goal Wednesday as the team did in the first matchup, but the Tar Heels said they made more of their possessions this time.

"It was a great opportunity for us to learn what we did wrong in the first game and try to correct that," midfielder Tobin Heath said.

Instead of scoring off an opponent's mistake as they did Sunday, the Tar Heels managed to create a goal from scratch in the 66th minute.

Meghan Klingenberg, dribbling on the right at the top of the box, sent the ball through a pair of defenders to a wide-open Heath at the left post.

"I was just like, 'I better get Tobin this ball.' She was screaming for it," Klingenberg said.

A second's hesitation drew Alonzo out, and Heath tapped it by her to the right side-panel for the goal.

Other decent chances included a Yael Averbuch bullet that hit the right post and a header by Ali

Hawkins off a corner that flew over the goal.

Dorrance made it a point to tell his players not to take long shots over the defenders, as they did in the first game when UNC showed Miami with 33 shots.

The total dropped down to 22 Wednesday, but only because the Tar Heels took more of their possessions deep into the box and didn't settle for low-percentage outside shots.

"To use a basketball analogy, we don't have Tyler Hansbrough come outside the three-point line and just dump three-pointers," Dorrance said.

"There's a reason for that. We were much more disciplined in where we were shooting from today."

But while his team held its composure on the field, the coach was sweating it out on the sideline.

The Tar Heels had hoped to avoid a tight game with their No. 1 seeding, but Miami didn't exactly provide Dorrance with a chance to send in his reserves like he wanted.

"Looking back, I'm obviously a lot more relaxed, but if you had taken my blood pressure with five minutes to go, I think my wife would have asked me for an early retirement."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.



Junior midfielder Tobin Heath scored the only goal of Wednesday's ACC Tournament game against Miami, despite 22 shots taken by the Tar Heels. Heath had four shots on the game, two on goal, in her 81 minutes.

Keeper Alonzo leads talented Miami defense

UNC held to two goals in two games

BY LOUIE HORVATH
SENIOR WRITER

CARY — One hundred and eighty minutes, 55 total shots and — wait for it — two goals.

That was the net of the North Carolina women's soccer team in its two matches against Miami this week, both 1-0 UNC victories, with the second on Wednesday in the ACC Tournament's first round.

At first glance, it might seem that the offense was unusually wasteful in these last two games, but that's not the case.

Rather, it was phenomenal play by the Miami defense, which constricted the Tar Heels' advances and slowed the pace of the game to a crawl in keeping UNC from finding the back of the net.

"In the first half (of Wednesday's

game), the ball was out of bounds about 50 percent of the time, so there was no rhythm to the game," UNC junior midfielder Tobin Heath said. "That's just how Miami disrupted our play."

The highly favored Tar Heels were looking to dispatch the Hurricanes quickly Wednesday in order to rest their stars before the presumably more difficult games in the second and championship rounds of the tournament, coach Anson Dorrance said.

The game was scoreless going into the second half, which all but precluded the Tar Heels from making a knockout punch to rest their starters.

"This is a very tough team to beat," Dorrance said. "It's tough to get uncontested shots off, and even

if the shot is a good one, the goalkeeper's not just going to stuff it, she's going to actually catch it."

"So I told them after the game that I'm very happy with a 1-0 win. Against a team like that, you're not going to get much separation — that's how good they are."

But if the Tar Heels managed to build up a solid attack, it was usually snuffed out by Miami's freshman goalkeeper Vikki Alonzo.

Alonzo has been good for the Hurricanes all season, notching a school record 11 shutouts.

The Tar Heels had numerous quality shots, but for each one it seemed that Alonzo was in position, ready to deny any shots outside of very close range.

She made multiple great saves during the course of the games,

"Against a team like that, you're not going to get much separation — that's how good they are."

ANSON DORRANCE, HEAD COACH

highlighted by a diving punch of a Casey Nogueira blast from outside the penalty box.

The North Carolina players were effusive in their praise of Alonzo.

"She's very athletic," Heath said. "She gets to every ball and she catches every ball."

Sophomore Meghan Klingenberg chipped in: "She's awesome in the air, too. Grabbing anything out of the air is what she's really great at. It was good of us to capitalize on the opportunity

against her that we had." Opportunity — singular. The Tar Heels were only able to get one point-blank shot on Alonzo, one Heath capitalized on, much to the relief of the Tar Heels.

"I thought I had a lot of time," Heath said. "The goalie closed on me pretty fast, and I thought, 'Oh shoot,' but I shot it under her foot, thank God."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

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