

Heels play today

Baseball swings around again

by Carl Neal
Assistant Sports Editor

Baseball. That ageless game of Americana lands back in the public eye again this spring as it has every spring for more years than you and I both have.

Baseball stretches from professional extravaganzas to sand lots. UNC baseball does not have the ballyhoo of the majors but it possesses a quality and style that puts it a long way from the sand lot.

One man has stood at the helm of UNC baseball for 26 years — Walter Rabb. And Rabb has high hopes for his 27th season.

This year's schedule opens today at ECU — if the field at East Carolina can dry out in time. "We hope to get that game in," Rabb said. "We need the in-game practice before our Florida tour." The UNC squad takes an extended tour through Florida and Georgia every year during spring break.

"We'll try to give two or three pitchers some work during the game," Rabb said. "They will probably be Mike Merritt, Jim Chamberlain and John Danneman with three innings each."

"The rest of the starters will be Russ Niller at catcher, Jack Leachman on first base, Dallas Branch at second, Tom Kennedy at short stop, Bobby Guthrie on third, Tom Gillis in left field, Pete Franklin in center, and Dale Lydecker in right field."

ECU will be a solid test for the Tar Heels. Last summer in summer league play ECU was one of the principal contenders for the regular season crown, finishing two games back of the champion Tar Heels.

Rabb did not rule out the possibility of some of today's starters losing their starting roles as the season progressed. "We will give others the opportunity," Rabb said. "There are a number of positions not completely settled. We're fortunate in having a number of young

ball players capable of giving the starters competition."

The Carolina head coach then turned to the backbone of any team — pitching. "Our pitching has looked good up to this point. We've been handicapped by not being able to get on to the field because of the weather."

Rabb said he was pleased by the interest of several football players who are on the team and have been in both football spring practice and baseball practice. "DeRatt, Paschall, and Kupec have demonstrated fine ability and real interest by coming down and working out."

Rabb said he was extremely happy with everyone's attitude and effort so far. "Our older boys are giving some good leadership. They have a lot of respect for the baseball program."

Rabb was optimistic about the chances for an ACC championship. "Our club is capable of competing strongly for the league crown."

Thompson named ACC's best

RALEIGH — North Carolina State star forward David Thompson, leading scorer in the Atlantic Coast Conference, Monday night was named ACC Player of the Year.

The 6-foot-4 sophomore from Shelby, N.C. was a near-unanimous selection, receiving all but eight of the 124 votes cast by members of the Atlantic Coast Sports Writers Association.

Thompson, the most heralded sophomore in ACC history, was one of

the top rebounders and defensive players and a major factor in enabling the Wolfpack to finish its regular schedule with a perfect 25-0 record.

Coach Norman Sloan, who won a hot recruiting battle for Thompson, describes him as "the most talented player with whom I have ever been associated."

Thompson hit 58 per cent of his field goal attempts this season and his quickness was the chief reason many teams used a zone defense against State

during the season rather than battle Thompson one on one.

Thompson joined teammate Tommy Burleson, the 7-foot-4 junior standout for State on the All-ACC first team, with Thompson a unanimous choice. Burleson, the conference's leading rebounder, missed only 10 votes of 124 for the first team.

Also on the first team were Tom McMillen of Maryland, George Karl of North Carolina and Gary Melchionni of

Duke.

Melchionni edged out Virginia's Barry Parkhill for the guard spot, receiving 176 voting points (two for first team and one for second) to 159 for Parkhill, last year's ACC Player of the Year.

Bobby Jones, North Carolina's Olympian, and Parkhill were joined on the second team by Len Elmore of Maryland, Chris Redding of Duke and Tony Byers of Wake Forest.

Of the men on the first team, two were repeaters from last year. Burleson and McMillen were on last season's first team. Karl and Melchionni were on the second team in 1972.

On the second team, only Elmore repeated. Parkhill was a first team selection last year.

Thompson became only the second black to be named ACC player of the year. Wake Forest's Charlie Davis won the honor in 1971.

Heels retain seventh in poll; Maryland drops to thirteenth

The North Carolina Tar Heels maintained their position as the nation's seventh-ranked college basketball team this week.

The United Press International poll, which did not give points this week, rated the Tar Heels seventh again this week despite the fact that Carolina lost to second-ranked N.C. State, 82-78.

UCLA continued to hold first place with its perfect 25-0 record. State was also 25-0 for second place. Long Beach State defeated powerful Marquette to keep hold of third place.

Minnesota, top team in the Big Ten, remained fourth and Marquette stayed fifth after the loss to the 49'ers.

Providence beat ranked St. John's, 93-90, to keep sixth place with a 22-2 mark. Behind the Heels, the other top tenners were Kansas State (21-4), Houston (22-3) and Indiana (18-5).

TEAM	POINTS
1. UCLA (34) (25-0)	340
2. NORTH CAROLINA ST. (25-0)	304
3. LONG BEACH ST. (24-2)	244
4. MINNESOTA (20-2)	240
5. MARQUETTE (22-3)	150

6. PROVIDENCE (22-2)	122
7. NORTH CAROLINA (22-6)	90
8. KANSAS ST. (21-4)	84
9. HOUSTON (22-3)	70
10. INDIANA (18-5)	46
11. MEMPHIS ST. (21-5)	31
12. SW LOUISIANA (23-3)	30
13. MARYLAND (20-5)	19
14. SYRACUSE (22-4)	16
15. MISSOURI (20-4)	13
16. ARIZONA ST. (18-7)	10
17. ST. JOHN'S (N.Y.) (19-6)	9
18. NEW MEXICO (21-5)	8
19. WEBER ST. (19-7)	7
20. ST. JOSEPH'S (PA.) (22-5)	6

SPORTS

Lotz plans to use UNC style of play

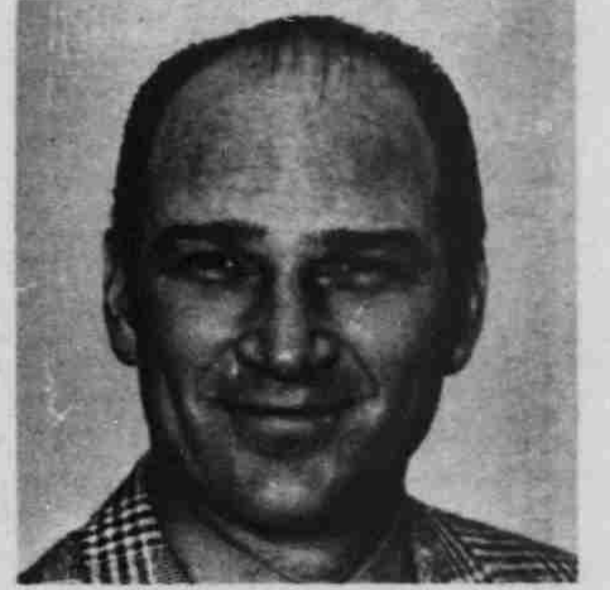
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Graves said the new coach would begin his recruiting for the Gators immediately, but that he would continue as assistant at Carolina until the Tar Heels finish the season.

Lotz said he had no timetable for the Gators to win their first Southeastern Conference championship, calling the SEC a well-balanced, tough league.

The new Gator coach played his college ball at East Texas State. He also attended Baylor University, but did not play basketball there. He began his coaching career at a high school in Norwich, N.Y. His team there won 15 games after having won just one game the previous season.

In addition to recruiting abilities, Lotz was also of value to the Carolina program because of his shooting ability. He has been a leading teacher of shooting techniques, and in his years at UNC, the Heels have consistently led the ACC in shooting percentage. Several times,



John Lotz

Carolina has led the nation in field-goal percentage as is the case this year.

Carolina will take on Wake Forest in the ACC basketball tournament Thursday.

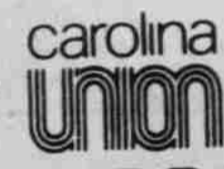
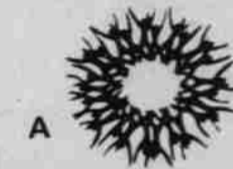
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