



Carolina junior Earl Hassler is one of three Atlantic Coast Conference players being considered for play in the 64-man NCAA individual singles tournament. Hassler was the only

player to defeat ACC singles champion John Sadri of N.C. State during the season. However, Sadri came back to defeat Hassler in the ACC Tournament finals.

Carolina must wait a while longer for NCAA to make tennis choice

By WILL WILSON
Staff Writer

People have not heard much from the UNC men's tennis team since it won the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament two weeks ago. That is because the UNC men's tennis team has not heard anything at all from the NCAA tournament selection committee.

Sixteen teams will be selected for the Division I championship round, to be held May 23-25 in Athens, Ga. Many teams have not finished their regular seasons yet, and the final five-man selection committee plans to wait until about May 14 to choose the teams. Members of the committee are from Utah, California, Alabama, Michigan State and the NCAA.

Carolina is ranked 20th in the nation in the latest Intercollegiate Tennis Coaches Association poll. That poll only included matches through March 27, and the Tar Heels, now 22-1, should move into the top 16 soon by virtue of their win over 18th-ranked Wake Forest and their narrow loss at eighth-ranked Miami, Fla.

But because of the district setup, a top 16 ranking does not insure a bid to Athens. Division I is broken into eight districts. At least one team must be chosen from each district, and the other eight can come from anywhere.

Carolina is in District III, which includes the ACC, Southeastern Conference (SEC), Southern Conference and several area independents, including Miami, Fla. District III is larger than any other, including 56 schools.

Each district has a person who recommends teams from his own district to the national committee. Likewise, each conference has a person who recommends a team from his own conference to the district chairman.

The District III chairperson is Georgia Coach Dan McGill. The ACC chairman is Duke Coach John Lebar, who is bound by a vote of ACC coaches to recommend Carolina.

UNC Coach Don Skakle says he thinks two teams will be

selected from this district. He says that a third team could be selected but that he did not expect it to happen.

Miami is almost certain to be selected, barring a late-season loss to a weak team. The selection process becomes more interesting in the consideration of a second team.

No Southern Conference team is expected to merit selection, leaving Carolina and the team that SEC chairman Bill McClain, coach at Alabama, recommends.

According to the latest information available, Florida, Alabama and Georgia are in a battle for the SEC championship. McClain will make his recommendation based on both regular season and tournament results, so he is not bound by either.

If he recommends Georgia, McGill could recommend his own team and have something to fall back on. But if McClain recommends his own Alabama squad or Florida, McGill might have a revenge motive to recommend someone other than the SEC team—probably Carolina.

In any case, Skakle feels Carolina should be recommended ahead of Georgia, since N.C. State routed Georgia and Carolina easily beat State. He also feels Carolina should be selected ahead of Alabama since South Carolina beat the Crimson Tide and UNC defeated the Gamecocks.

This is the first season the NCAA has conducted a true 16-team tournament. Previously, individual players had played a 128-man tournament, with the team champion determined on the basis of the individual play. This year, regular team matches will be played in a single-elimination team tournament.

A 64-player individual tournament will be held at the same site May 26-30. Selection will be made by the same committees.

From the ACC, N.C. State's John Sadri, the first flight tournament champ, is almost certain to be selected. UNC's Earl Hassler, the first flight runnerup, and Ted Daniel of Duke, second flight champion, are also being recommended, but Skakle said he expected only Sadri to be selected.

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Players no longer go to only UCLA, ACC

In the not so recent past, high school basketball players dreamed of the opportunity to play in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). While UCLA dominated college basketball in the mid and late 60s, Frank McGuire exported New York talent to South Carolina and Dean Smith and Vic Bubas beat the East Coast basketball bushes in search of the mythical "blue chipper." The ACC remained unmatched by any other conference into the mid 70s. UNC placed third in the 1972 national tournament while N.C. State broke UCLA's hold on the national championship in 1974.

UCLA lost its reputation as an endless dynasty when John Wooden retired after the Bruins captured the

1975 NCAA title. Indirectly, UCLA's inability to dominate the NCAA since 1975 has paralleled the ACC's gradual slipping as a conference. During UCLA's reign, high school basketball stars had two real options: UCLA or the ACC. Other teams made cameo appearances in the NCAA tournament, but not as regularly as UCLA and the ACC dominated college basketball.

High school prospects now prefer to spread their talents across the country. The Michigans, Marquettes and Indianas inherited the wealth that previously had belonged to UCLA.

Even when UNC battled its way to Atlanta, past Nevada-Las Vegas and into the title game last month, Carolina didn't possess the second-best overall

talent in the country. Only sheer determination, courage and immaculate coaching from Dean Smith produced the national second-place finish. The days of the ACC garnering the cream of the high school crop on the league's reputation alone are gone.

High school players are staying closer to home. Detroit's Earvin Johnson, easily one of the nation's top five prospects, opted for nearby Michigan State despite repeated overtures from N.C. State. Last year Darrell Griffith narrowly chose home town Louisville over Duke. The California and New York players also are remaining in their home states. Long Island native Wayne McKay signed with St. John's several weeks ago after strong rumors linked him with Norm Sloan's Wolfpack.

Not only are the high school athletes not arriving in droves, but the players already at ACC schools are beginning to leave in semi-epidemic proportions. In March, Norm Sloan lost three front-line players, with two more considering a change of scenery. Sophomores Steve

Walker and Dirk Ewing announced their intention to transfer, as did Steve's brother, freshman Brian Walker. Junior Kenny Carr filed for hardship status in the National Basketball Association's June 10 draft and reliable sources indicate that junior Al Green may be headed out west.

Maryland's designated shooter Brian Magid expressed his desire to leave College Park midway through last season and will attend George Washington in the fall. Terp teammate Brad Davis, like Carr, has thrown his name into the NBA talent pool.

The latest refugee from the ACC emigrated from Chapel Hill when freshman Steve Kracisin decided on Tuesday that he would be happier at the University of Iowa.

Players appear to be changing with the times. Several years ago, merely sitting on the bench in the ACC was good enough. Now with the balance of power that exists in college basketball, players don't hesitate before leaving.

Tremendous high school stars still will play in the ACC. Instead of choosing a conference school because of the ACC name, players select on the basis of the benefits an individual school offers. The wealth of high school talent has grown so immensely that the other conferences are rapidly improving. The balance increases with each additional recruit and transfer.

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ICY PEARL

Seniors Conkwright: great year

After having two seasons at Carolina spoiled by injuries and going into his senior year with several cracked ribs, it appeared as though Tar Heel wrestler Scott Conkwright had hurled his 118-pound body into an opponent for the last time.

As it turned out, this season was the one Conkwright will remember longest. The Virginia Beach, Va., senior carved out a 14-1 dual-match record, won the 118-pound division of the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament and was one of three UNC wrestlers who participated in the NCAA Championships at Norman, Okla.

For Conkwright, the elder brother of Chris, also a wrestler, it was quite a relief to have such success after three disappointing years. Conkwright went to Oklahoma State

his freshman year and transferred to Carolina to become Coach Bill Lam's 126 pounder. After capturing four consecutive state high school championships in Virginia, he felt the pressure immediately.

"When I came here, I expected to do a little better than I did," Conkwright said. "My sophomore year, Coach Lam had me at 126, and I think I'm more comfortable at 118."

He wrestled at the lower weight his junior year and appeared destined for the ACC crown before running into injury problems toward the end of the year.

Conkwright is a botany major at UNC and plans to attend summer school at Longwood Teacher's College in Farmville, Va.

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