

Carolina hosts another Top 10 team

Heels 4-4; see Terrapins as big test

By WILL WILSON
Staff Writer

At 5 p.m. today, seventh-ranked Maryland becomes the second Top 10 women's basketball team to visit Carmichael Auditorium this week, but UNC coach Jennifer Alley welcomes the opportunity.

"If you've got anything to prove, this is how you do it," she said Wednesday while preparing to examine and re-examine a tape of her team's 75-59 loss to fourth-ranked N.C. State Tuesday night, a game that she felt proved to the team it could play with a top-ranked squad.

While Carolina looks to the matchup as one of its big games of the season, Terrapin coach Chris Weller sees it as just another non-region game.

"We're not really emphasizing the ACC schedule," she said Wednesday by telephone from College Park, where she was preparing for a game that night against Kansas.

"It's more of a learning experience," she added. "It's not what's going to get us into the nationals."

Teams qualify for national playoffs through regions set up by the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. Maryland is in a region with schools to the north of it, while the other ACC schools are in a region that comprises North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee.

This year, for the first time, the ACC is sponsoring a regular-season tournament, and all the schools are playing each other prior to it. So Maryland is taking trips to Carolina today and Duke Saturday to get two ACC games out of its way before starting its all-important regional games.

Maryland was 4-0 before the Wednesday game against Kansas, including a 92-88 win over previously seventh-ranked UCLA.

Alley didn't know much about the Terps by Wednesday, but she was calling anybody she could think of to find out something about them.

"It's really kind of a security blanket," she said. "Ideally, you'd like to know everything about your opponents, but after they set up a couple of times, you can usually adjust. You may lose four points, though.

"Now don't get me wrong, scouting reports are very valuable, but we're not lost without them."

Weller, in contrast, sent an assistant coach to scout the Tar Heels earlier this season.

"I heard that some of their varsity players last season are on jayvee, so that shows they are improved," she said.

But Weller also believes her team is better than last year, when it defeated Carolina by 15 points in College Park in the Tar Heels' final game.

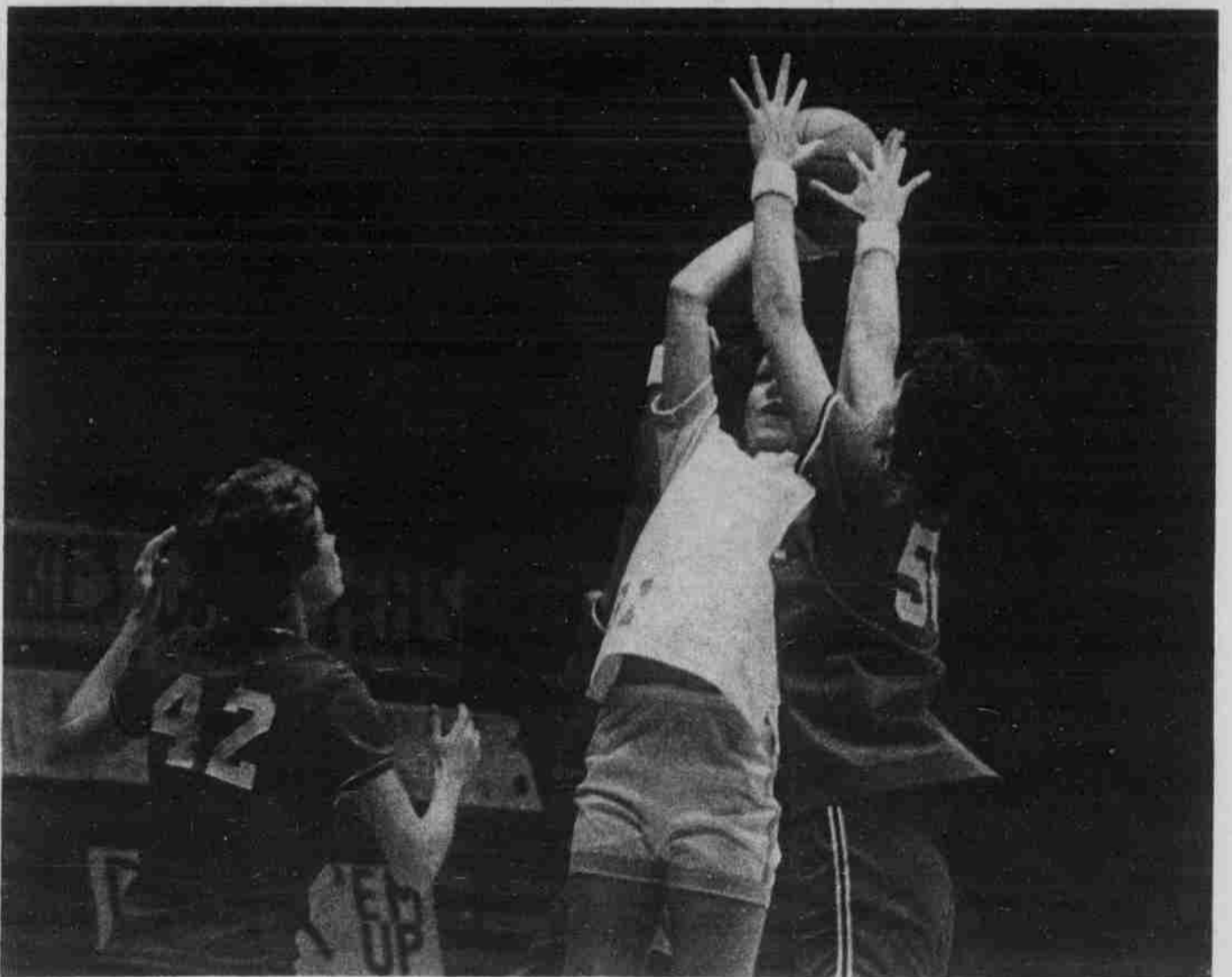
"I feel we're a lot stronger, mainly because we're taller," she said.

They would be even better had not freshman Pam Reaves, a high school



Freshman Kelly Roche (white jersey) fights N.C. State's Ronnie Laughlin for a rebound in Carolina's 75-59 loss to the nationally fourth-ranked Wolfpack Tuesday. Carolina takes on Maryland, another top 10 team, Saturday in Chapel Hill. Below,

Roche, who led Carolina with 16 points against the Wolfpack, shoots over State's Joy Ussery and Christy Earnhardt. Staff photo by Allen Jernigan.



All-America, hurt her knee over the summer. She won't play until later in the season, if then.

Another player the Terps will miss today is 6-foot-5 sophomore center Krystal Kimrey from Albemarle. Kimrey has the flu and will miss the game.

Players who Weller expects to start include seasoned senior guard Tara Heiss, 6-foot-1 junior Debbie Stewart and freshman Beth Bailey.

Although Kimrey will miss her chance to perform before the home folks, Tar Heel freshman forward Kelly Roche will get a somewhat similar opportunity.

Roche, who led UNC's scoring against State to push her average to 9.7 a game, is from Silver Spring, Md., just a few minutes from the Maryland campus.

"I really didn't want to go there," she says. "This was my first choice. I can't

wait for the game. My sister and I played in a lot of pick-up games over there this summer."

Roche has settled into Alley's starting lineup that also includes freshman Aprille Shaffer and junior Linda Matthews at guard, junior Cathy Shoemaker at forward and sophomore Bernadette McGlade at center.

The Tar Heels enter the Maryland game with a 4-4 overall record and 0-1 ACC mark. Carolina is the Terps' first conference foe.