

'North-Middle-South' Doubleheader

carolina

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The Doubleheader comes at a convenient time during the grueling ACC season. Carolina has played eight straight conference games and survived a scare Monday by Mercer before taking the week off to rest.

"In the past it's been a warmup," Zaliagiris said. "It was a chance to get out some of the bugs before we go down the final stretch toward the rest of the ACC season and the (ACC) tournament."

But things are different this year. Carolina's games with Virginia Tech in the past have been close, with the Tar Heels squeaking by, 81-77, last year in Blacksburg. Carolina hasn't lost a game in the Doubleheader since a 104-95 loss to Georgia Tech in 1970. Georgia Tech upset State in 1976.

"A lot of people think we'll lose one of these games," Zaliagiris said. "It's going to be a challenge."

The Tar Heels, in the past week, lost to Wake Forest in Winston-Salem and were shaken by Mercer but defeated Clemson 98-64.

"Hopefully, we'll win both games," Zaliagiris said of the North-South. "Anytime you go into a game, you feel like you're going to win. But this is going to be a challenge, just like it is anytime the outcome is in doubt."

The week of rest is important this year, just as it was last year. Carolina had suffered conference losses to Wake and Clemson before the North-South but started putting things together and didn't lose another game until the finals of the NCAA tournament.

"This week gives us some time off and a chance to rest," Zaliagiris said. "When we come back, we're ready to play. When you play basketball almost 12 months a year, you get stale. That's the way we were against Mercer. We were coming off eight ACC games and played a team we didn't know that much about. It was a little hard to get up for it. But, as basketball players, that's our job. When we're put in that situation, it's our duty to get up for the game. There's nobody to blame but us. The Doubleheader might be tougher than usual. This time off is going to help, though. Last year, it lifted our spirits."

State plays Virginia Tech at 7 tonight followed by Carolina and Furman at 9 p.m. State takes on Furman at 7 p.m. Saturday and Carolina and Virginia Tech square off at 9 p.m.

Want win against ACC

Gobblers pose upset threat

If Mercer had incentive to leave the nationally-ranked Tar Heels red-faced, the same goes double, or maybe even triple, for the Virginia Tech Gobblers when they face Carolina in the final game of this weekend's North-South Doubleheader at 9 p.m. Saturday.

The Gobblers are what coach Dean Smith considers a dangerous team to play at this juncture of the ACC schedule.

Coach Charlie Moir led Tech to a 19-10 record his first year as coach and has his team looking even better in his second. The Gobblers recently shredded 18th-ranked Syracuse, 87-71, at home to raise their record to 15-3. They've lost to Duke, Virginia and by one point to South Carolina.

After the win Monday over Syracuse, VPI is idle until it plays N.C. State in the opening round of the Doubleheader in Charlotte. Moir remarked, "It's the first time Tech will have played three nationally ranked teams in a row. N.C. State isn't ranked now, but it was a while back. And Carolina is way up there."

The Tar Heels and Gobblers used to have some good games, usually playing each other early in the season, but this is the first year for VPI in the North-South. Georgia Tech had been the other "Southern" representative but dropped out after last year.

The Gobblers are dangerous because of the running series they've had with UNC, but they've got much more than emotion going for them this season.

All five of Moir's starters are averaging in double figures, an



Senior Tom Zaliagiris once looked at the North-South Doubleheader as a rest in the ACC schedule. With Furman and Virginia Tech in the event this year, however, he sees the tournament as a real challenge to the Tar Heels. Staff photo by Andy James.

Moore big plus for Furman

By LEE PACE
Assistant Sports Editor

It's not that Furman's Jonathan Moore doesn't like to shoot. After all, the 6-foot-8 center averages 18.5 points a game.

But when Moore gets the ball at his low-post position, he'd just as soon pass to an open teammate than take the shot himself. "Jonathan has got to be the most unselfish

player that ever lived," Paladin coach Joe Williams said.

Williams hopes that Moore's unselfishness and scoring ability, as well as his strong rebounding, will pay off Friday when Furman meets Carolina in the North-South Doubleheader in Charlotte. Tipoff is 9 p.m., following the N.C. State-Virginia Tech game.

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night in Raleigh. "One of the two Carolina teams is ranked and everybody gets a kick out of beating ACC teams, so there's a lot at stake."

State forward Hawkeye Whitney knows the magnitude of the doubleheader for both Furman and Tech, but at the same time calls the Doubleheader "a confidence builder."

It helps us to get ready for the other five ACC games," Whitney said after State's 73-69 win over Clemson Tuesday night. "It gives us a break while some of the other conference teams might be losing."

Whitney admitted that the natural tendency would be to let down, especially since the two non-conference games are sandwiched around six league contests.

"We're going to go in and play them like we would any conference team," Whitney explained. "We're not going to take them lightly just because it's a non-conference game."

The 6-foot-5 sophomore spoke confidently about the upcoming weekend despite being in the throes of a slump. Whitney fouled out at Virginia last Saturday after playing only 17 minutes and suffered through a 6-for-22 shooting night against Clemson.

"I feel like I'm taking good-percentage shots," Whitney said. "They're just not falling. I can't let it discourage me."

"I think at Virginia we played the best basketball we've played all year," Sloan said. "We made no errors, we were so solid and so sharp. But we lost. Then in the Clemson game we played one of our worst games of the year and won."

State opens the North-South Doubleheader at 7 p.m. Friday night against a Virginia Tech team hoping to make Feb. 3 a red letter day in Gobbler basketball history.

"Yeah, I remember Moore," Tar Heel center Rich Yonakor said Monday night following UNC's 73-70 win over Mercer. "He was a really good jumper and shooter. But if Wolfie (Jeff Wolf), (Geff) Crompton and I do what we're supposed to do — keep him from getting the ball and keep him off the boards — we'll be alright."

When Yonakor and the Tar Heels disposed of Furman 88-71 last season, Moore was one-half of a quick, talented and tall front line. The other half was 6-foot-10 pivotman Jim Strickland.

Strickland, however, dropped out of school this fall and has transferred to South Carolina.

"It puts a burden on me rebounding," said Moore, whose 13.8 rebounding total is among the nation's best. "I don't get that much help because we've got a fairly small team. But because we're not that strong rebounding we're a little quicker than most teams. We play good team ball."

Moore's rebounding help comes mainly from 6-foot-4 high-post man Al Daniel, who's grabbing 8.5 rebounds.

Moore, Daniel and guard Bruce Grimm all average in the 18-point range. Freshman forward Rodney Arnold chips in with 13.5 points and point guard Ron Smith adds 5.5.

The Paladins prefer a man-to-man defense, but they've been using a zone much more in the last few games. Furman publicist Art Black said the Paladins play with a lot of spunk and like to fast break.

Their 90-points-a-game average proves it. "I don't know if we can match up with North Carolina real well," Moore said. "We don't have as much talent. But I think we can play them a pretty good game."

"We're always looking forward to playing Carolina. They've always got a good team, and they're ranked pretty high. We like a chance to see how we compare. This is about our only chance to prove ourselves."

Furman is 12-5 overall and 6-3 in the Southern Conference. Its biggest wins of the season include an 87-68 victory at Clemson last week and a 92-83 win at Georgia early in the season.

impressive statistic when considering the Tar Heels have only three. Guard Ron Bell, at 6-foot-1, leads the Gobblers with a 17.6 average. Tic Price is averaging 14.2 and Les Henson, 13.8. Wayne Robinson, Moir's 6-foot-9 center is scoring at a 12.8 clip and the other guard, Marshall Ashford, is at 11.7.

This might be Moir's last shot at the ACC this year. His Gobblers played well against Duke and Virginia, but a win over the ACC in basketball is what Moir really wants. Tech was rejected by the ACC last year when it applied for membership.

— PETE MITCHELL

O'Koren leads ACC in FG percent mark

Mike O'Koren, Carolina's sophomore forward from Jersey City, N.J., is leading the ACC in field-goal percentage through January. O'Koren has made 126 of 189 attempts for a .667 clip.

Second is N.C. State's Tony Warren, who has hit on 57.5 percent of his field goal attempts.

Phil Ford ranks third in league scoring at 20.4 behind Rod Griffin and Jim Spanarkel. O'Koren is sixth, averaging 17.7 points. Ford leads the conference in assists with 125 (6.3 per game). A distant second is Clemson's Derrick Johnson with 91.