

Devils will try to ruin Ford's farewell

By EVAN APPEL
Staff Writer

The Duke Blue Devils have rapidly become the ACC's answer to Robin Hood, robbing the rich and righting past injustices.

When Virginia visited Durham two weeks ago, Duke remembering a controversial last-second loss at Charlottesville in mid-January, embarrassed the Cavaliers, 100-75.

Before last week, Duke had not beaten North Carolina State in Durham since 1972, David Thompson's freshman year. The Wolfpack streak, however, ended at eleven last week, 76-64.

Until last Saturday night, Duke had not beaten Maryland twice in a season since 1968-69, the year before Lefty Driesell moved north from Davidson to College Park. Lefty's return was not a happy one as his Terps lost, 81-70.

One of the few streaks Duke has not broken is Carolina's domination over the Blue Devils in Carmichael Auditorium. Duke gets their chance Saturday to break a string of losses dating back to 1966. Duke finished 26-4 that year, placing third in the NCAA Tournament.

The magic so prevalent in the sixties has returned to the Duke basketball program. The resulting enthusiasm and success make Blue Devil Jim Spanarkel believe that Duke can end the Carmichael Auditorium jinx at eleven.

"I don't think they're unbeatable there," Spanarkel said in Durham earlier this week. "I remember we've lost there the past two years. We've just got to play our game like we've been playing the last two weeks."

During that time, Duke has decisively whipped Virginia, North Carolina State and Maryland. That hot streak, coupled

with a rash of adversity in Chapel Hill has Duke and Carolina battling Saturday for the regular season championship.

"I really didn't think it would come down to the final day," Spanarkel said. "I was confident we'd be in there at the end, but I really didn't think it would be as close as it's been."

The race tightened after injuries to Rich Yonakor and Mike O'Koren and Geff Crompton's suspension weakened the Tar Heel frontcourt. Spanarkel said O'Koren's injury affected him more than the other mishaps, since O'Koren and Spanarkel played together at Catholic Central High School in Jersey City.

"I missed the actual play in the Providence game where he got hurt," Spanarkel said. "We're pretty good friends and I feel a lot seeing him having to sit on the bench. I know he feels a lot of pain inside because he's not playing. But

when Mike O'Koren leaves the court, it's going to have to be for a good reason."

A severely sprained ankle suffered late in the Providence game convinced the doctors.

The spotlight in the Duke-Carolina game, however, falls on Tar Heel senior Phil Ford. Saturday's game is Ford's last at home and Spanarkel expects an electric atmosphere in Carmichael Auditorium.

"I'm sure it's going to be the Phil Ford day in his career," Spanarkel said. "He well deserves it. We just can't get involved with it. It's Phil Ford's day, a day for North Carolina. We're going to try to beat them over there and maybe not ruin his day, but ruin his last home game."

And during a year in which Duke has repaid several long overdue debts, another Robin Hood performance Saturday seems only fitting.

Heels fighting for fencing crown this weekend

By DAVID McNEILL
Staff Writer

While Phil Ford & Co. are dueling Duke in Carmichael Auditorium Saturday, the UNC men's fencing team will be fighting for the conference championship in the ACC tournament in Clemson.

The women's ACC fencing tournament will be held Sunday at Clemson and Carolina will try to defend its title from last year, the first year of the conference tournament.

In the eight years of the men's tournament, it has been more like the Carolina Classic than a six-team affair, as the Heels have captured the title every year. The Heels got off to a slow start this season, but after stringing together seven straight wins to post a 10-5 record, Carolina has the momentum it needs as it goes after title nine.

Mark Scott and Frank Blake, both seniors with four years of fencing experience, are two of the top fencers on this year's squad and they will be counted on for strong performances this weekend.

Blake is an all-ACC performer in epee and Scott is the team captain competing in foil.

Carolina has reeled off consecutive wins over William & Mary, Temple, George Mason, Virginia, Duke, Clemson and N.C. State. Also, the last two weeks the Heels have been practicing twice a day in preparation for this weekend. Scott thinks the confidence gained from the winning streak and the extra emphasis on being in top physical condition will aid the Heels in the tourney.

"We are in a good frame of mind as a result of the way we have been fencing the last few weeks," Scott said. "We have won the ACC so we can appreciate it more than the other schools. They are looking to beat Carolina while we are looking to win the ACC. We are in better condition than we were at the first of the year. Practicing twice a day gets us in extremely good condition and this is very important going into the tournament. When you know you are in better condition than your opponent it gives you an edge."

In the tournament each fencer will compete in 17 bouts in contrast to three bouts in a dual meet during the regular season. Blake said the Heels have been concentrating on mental and physical conditioning in preparation for the all day affair. After finishing seventh in epee as a sophomore and in third place as a junior, Blake is anxious to compete in his final ACC tourney.

"I am definitely looking forward to the tournament," Blake said. "I am probably more psyched for it this year than ever before. We know what we need to do and I sure would like to make it nine in a row. The main thing is the team championship and secondary, I would like to win my weapon's individual championship. In the tournament each bout and each touch is important so we have to go out to win them all. The ACC championship has been our goal all season and now it is up to us to go out and get it."

Scott is also anxiously awaiting tournament time. This year, the top four finishers in each

weapon will advance to the nationals. But Scott said no one is looking ahead to the nationals. Instead, the conference title has captured everyone's eyes.

"I am not, and I do not think anyone is thinking about the nationals," Scott said. "The ACC is all-important. We have never lost it. It is a matter of pride. We want the ACC championship. A high national ranking is nice, but most of all we want the ACC championship. This is my last time around so the tournament means a lot to me, particularly to go out with the championship. There are a lot of good foil fencers so the tournament is a chance for me to see the progress I have made in my four years of fencing."

Blake and Scott are 1974 graduates of West Columbus High School in Cerro Gordo, N.C. They were teammates in football, basketball, baseball and golf at West Columbus and fencing offered them the chance to continue to compete on the varsity level in athletics in college.

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