

# Athletes and coaches join media

By NORMAN CANNADA

What happens to an athlete when his playing days are over?

If you have watched much of the college basketball season on television, you might say that they have all become sportscasters. It is a fact that there are more athletes and coaches who spread their wisdom to fans via TV.

There are several reasons for the fact that former athletes and coaches have joined the broadcast media. First and most obvious is the fact that there are simply more chances for employ-

owns WCHL, Village Cable and the Village Advocate.

The athletes turned sportscaster, because of their once affiliation with a certain team, are also more often seen as biased in their sportscasting. NBC's Al McGuire has long been seen as an anti-Atlantic Coast Conference commentator, while CBS' Billy Packer has been accused by UNC fans of being against the Tar Heels for several years

"They thrive on that kind of talk," Heavner said. "It's better for people to talk about them than for fans not to even know their names."

On the other side of the coin, the athlete/sportscaster rarely has all the skills that are needed in all phases of broadcasting a sport. Most of them serve the sportscasting media as analyst rather than with the play by

play. There are some exceptions such as Frank Gifford and Pat Summerall, but for the most part former athletes and coaches give their opinions as the game goes on.

"They rarely have all of the skills, unless they are trained," Heavner said. "I'll bet three of them together couldn't do a very good broadcast because they don't have what is needed."

Heavner has had experience in that area. A few years ago, he hired former UNC football All-America Charlie "Choo Choo" Justice to help with the coverage of Tar Heel football games. That relationship ended after the first year because Heavner was looking for more than an analyst.

"Charlie Justice is a wonderful man, but his skills were confined to explaining what was happening on the field," Heavner said. "He couldn't handle a halftime show by himself and he was limited in what he could do in the booth."

Although there has been a strong influx of former athletes into the broadcast media, relatively few of that breed go into newspapers.

The charisma is not as important in the print media as it is on television or radio," Heavner said. "Maybe they can't write as well as they can talk."

Norman Cannada

## ON SPORTS

ment than ever before. In the recent college basketball season, for example, both CBS and NBC regularly covered games. That doesn't include the local networks or national cable networks such as ESPN and USA.

But even with the large number of jobs available in the field now, one still has to have the knowledge or he will lose the fan's interest.

"Former players have a credibility that might not be found in other announcers," said Jim Heavner who



Jim Heavner (center) at a Tar Heel game with Woody Durham (left) and Bob Holliday (right).

DTH/Photo

## Women's tennis team gains consistency in performance

By BOB HENSON

After playing tough competition earlier in the spring season, the North Carolina women's tennis team has gotten things together and developed a consistent style of play.

Coach Kitty Harrison said the team is just about where she expected it to be at this stage in the season. "We've played some pretty tough competition since we began in January, but the team is coming around."

Since the spring season began, UNC has played six nationally ranked teams. The first test came in the Colorado Intercollegiate Invitational. The Tar Heels played such national powers as Trinity, ranked 4th in preseason polls and San Diego State, ranked 6th.

Although Carolina was beaten 9-0 by Trinity, Harrison was still glad for the opportunity to play them. "Trinity beat us 9-0 but the matches were close," Harrison said. "It was good the girls got to play against good competition early in the season." UNC finished sixth in a field of eight teams.

Harrison said the team started to take form while playing in the Lady Seminole Invitational in Tallahassee, Fla. The team finished fourth out of a field of 10.

"It was really exciting seeing the team take shape in Florida," Harrison said. "I'm really high on them — to put it mildly." Harrison said the entire team never gave up in tight situations and pulled out matches that were near losses.

One bright spot for Carolina in Florida was the No. 1 singles play of sophomore Kathy Barton. Barton, from Cincinnati, Oh., won all five of her matches. Two of the wins were against outstanding players, Lori Mitchell from Oklahoma State and Lee McGuire of Florida State.

Also playing well in Florida was veteran Betsy Heidenberger. Heidenberger, a senior from Chevy Chase, Md., not only won all five singles matches but also won all of her doubles matches with partner Margie Brown. Brown is a junior from Kingsport, Tenn. and plays at No. 3 singles.

Heidenberger attributed her success in Florida to a more relaxed attitude. "I was pleased with my play in Florida,"

she said. "Since this is my last semester of college tennis, I'm taking a more casual attitude. It's important to take it seriously, but a loss is not the end of the world."

The captain of the team this year is senior Katharine Hogan from Raleigh, N.C. Hogan plays No. 4 singles and teams with Barton at No. 2 doubles.

Hogan views her role on the team this year as one of leadership. "Since the rest of the team is young, I have to provide the leadership," she said. "I just try to keep everyone calm before a match."

One of those younger players Hogan was referring to is freshman Pam McNierney. McNierney, from Lighthouse Point, Fla., said the transition from high school to college tennis has not been too difficult. "I really don't feel a lot of pressure — the older players were all freshmen once and they've helped me make the change."

McNierney plays No. 6 singles and pairs up with Julie Kirby at No. 3 doubles. Kirby is a sophomore from Glen-coe, Ill. and plays No. 5 singles.

Coach Harrison said that one weakness of the team right now is in doubles. "It's really hard to put doubles together because the girls just haven't played together long enough."

Harrison said another weakness was a lack of mental toughness in the fall and early this spring, but added the team is working to get rid of the problem. "Elizabeth Sharp (assistant coach) has been working with the girls on a mental toughness program to help their concentration."

The remainder of the spring season will not be easy for the women netters. One highlight on the schedule will be April 2-4 when the team travels to Austin, Tex. to play in the Lady Longhorn Invitational. UNC will also host the NCAIAW State Tournament April 22-25 and the AIAW Southern Region II Tournament May 6-9. The next home match will be against Virginia Tech Saturday at 10 am on the varsity courts. 5

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DTH/Photo

Kathy Barton returns a backhand baseline shot. She won all five of her singles matches in the Lady Seminole Invitational in Tallahassee, Fla.