

SPORTS

No. 1 Tar Heels winning big, gathering steam

By FRANK KENNEDY
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There's a lot going on in sports this week. The NCAA is meeting to vote on giving college presidents more power to legislate college athletics. The USFL may have signed another Heisman Trophy winner. Billy Martin is still out as the New York Yankees' manager, and the defending NCAA basketball champion is in last place in the ACC.

But one thing that isn't new is that North Carolina is still the nation's top-ranked college basketball team, and the Tar Heels haven't had a close game since November. And, after the Tar Heels overwhelmed N.C. State in Raleigh Saturday, any remaining skeptics were having a tough time finding even a single puncture in the UNC armor.

Wolfpack coach Jim Valvano was certainly awed. "They don't have any weaknesses," Valvano said after the 81-60 drubbing. "In '82 they were national champions with no depth. Last year they didn't have a point guard, but now Kenny Smith is closer to Jimmy Black as a senior. And now, everybody's older, Brad Daugherty is better and they have better depth."

That's not a particularly bad synopsis, but it is oversimplified. Piecing together what makes this edition of the Tar Heels sing to a near-flawless tune is not as easy as the old experience-is-the-best-teacher theory.

Defense. The Tar Heels' rugged trapping zones and strong board play have held opponents to 41.9 percent shooting from the field and 59.9 points per game.

Daugherty, who has become a more intimidating force at center this year, said the tight zoning has cut down on easy shots by the opposition. "We tried our man-to-man defense last year (against State)," he said. "And they threw a few tricks at us. Now we're trying to stop the ball from coming in high and make them take the outside shots."

That was exactly what happened Saturday, as the Wolfpack relied heavily on guard Terry Gannon's 25-footers to stay within range after UNC had widened the margin in the second half. The Tar Heels' double-teaming on powerful forward

Lorenzo Charles all but shut off the inside game, Daugherty said.

Offense. Michael Jordan may have been national player of the year in one publication last year, but "Silent" Sam Perkins has begun to snatch away the headlines. Perkins, playing the best basketball of his college career, leads the team in scoring (16.9), rebounding (9.3) and blocked shots (20).

"Sam is having a great year," Coach Dean Smith said. "Not only is he scoring and rebounding well, but his defense has been outstanding. During his career he has been one of the most consistent players we have had. But, he's better than ever this year."

Against State, an ambidextrous Perkins gracefully dropped in his left-handed hooks from the lane, then added a few right-handers, deflected a State pass and dribbled the length of the court for a slam, blocked three shots, dished out a pair of assists and scored a game-high 22 points before a national television audience.

"He's amazing," forward Matt Doherty said of Perkins. "Sam wouldn't let us relax, not one minute."

Jordan, on the other hand, is supposed to be in a slump, or so the stat sheets say. Hitting on 48.8 percent of his shots this year, Jordan connected on only six of 17 Saturday and is six points under his 1983 average. However, his teammates are miffed by talk of a slump.

"Michael's not in a slump, that's for sure," Doherty said.

He's probably right. After all, players suffering from the effects of a slump don't grab 12 rebounds, score 18 points, dish out three assists and block two shots, as Jordan managed Saturday.

"I haven't been scoring much," Jordan said. "But I think I've gotten over a slump."

Doherty pointed to an even-keel game as the key to more Tar Heel success. "A lot of teams have ups and downs," he said. "But the key to success is to achieve consistency, and that's what we're achieving. There's no time for mental lapses. (Against State) we were going about our business, and we kept our passes crisp and we got back quickly on defense."

And if Perkins, Jordan, Daugherty or Doherty aren't always doing those little



Kenny Smith scored 18 points and recorded nine assists in North Carolina's 81-60 victory over N.C. State Saturday.

DTH/Charles Ledford

things that make big things happen, the freshman Smith can ignite the crowd with his blazing speed and a fast-break slam.

Smith, who is averaging 10 points and five assists per game, was all over the court Saturday, rifling in pinpoint passes to the big men for easy layups and slams. His nine assists matched his total in the 87-64 rout of Syracuse on Dec. 10, when he outplayed the Orangemen's freshman point star Dwayne "Pearl" Washington. "Kenny played with a great deal of poise and confidence," Coach Smith said after the Wolfpack game. "He was impressive."

But Kenny Smith knows he has a lot of games remaining in the toughest conference in the country. "They (the

veteran players) are going to make me prove myself, and it's still too early to say I think I've proven something."

But it is not too early to say that Smith can run the UNC offense.

Depth. The Tar Heels lose little on the court following wholesale substitutions. Buzz Peterson is capable of coming off the bench and throwing kinks into a tight zone defense, as he did Saturday with two outside baskets in a span of about 30 seconds. Steve Hale leads the team in free throw proficiency, and Joe Wolf, Dave Popson and Cecil Exum have done a noteworthy job making up the second-team front court despite their considerable inexperience.

"You can say we're a fundamentally sound team," Doherty surmised.

AP poll

1. North Carolina (39) 10-0	1179
2. Kentucky (21) 10-0	1161
3. DePaul 11-0	1053
4. Georgetown 12-1	1001
5. Maryland 10-1	908
6. UCLA 9-1	835
7. Houston 12-2	815
8. Texas-El Paso 13-0	768
9. Illinois 11-1	578
10. St. John's 10-1	543
11. Louisiana State 8-2	450
12. Wake Forest 10-1	440
13. Fresno State 11-2	376
14. Nevada-Las Vegas 11-1	369
15. Georgia 9-2	364
16. Oregon State 8-2	349
17. Oklahoma 12-1	264
18. Boston College 10-2	213
19. Memphis State 10-3	184
20. Tulsa 13-0	114

UPI poll

1. Kentucky (19) 10-0	551
2. North Carolina (19) 10-0	547
3. DePaul 11-0	458
4. Georgetown 12-1	437
5. Houston 12-2	334
6. Maryland 10-1	311
7. UCLA 9-1	300
8. Texas-El Paso 13-0	274
9. St. John's 10-1	197
10. Illinois 11-1	185
11. Fresno State 11-2	129
12. Nevada-Las Vegas 11-1	105
13. Wake Forest 10-1	85
14. Oregon State 8-2	76
15. Oklahoma 12-1	74
16. Tulsa 13-0	63
17. Louisiana State 8-2	61
18. Georgia 9-2	59
19. Arkansas 11-2	55
20. Boston College 10-2	42

Heels win Holiday Festival and take bite out of Big Apple

By KURT ROSENBERG
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Above all else, it seems, Dean Smith stresses the importance of his basketball players' getting an education. A major concern of the UNC coach is that his Tar Heels learn more in four years than how to set a good screen, fire an accurate outlet pass or master the run-and-jump defense.

So when North Carolina was given a chance to spend part of Christmas Break in New York City, Smith accepted, probably knowing full well his team would get the best of both worlds. Playing in the ECAC Holiday Festival would be good preparation for the ACC season. But, perhaps just as important, spending four whole days in Manhattan would be — well... an education.

The trip was everything Smith might have hoped for as the Tar Heels quieted a hostile Madison Square Garden crowd by beating St. John's to win the tournament championship Dec. 29.

Winning in front of nearly 20,000 fans in basketball's mecca was exciting. But even more exciting for a team that has on its roster players from such towns as Dudley, N.C.; Kohler, Wis.; and Lahti, Finland, were some of the things that happened outside of the arena, in a city containing more people than the state of North Carolina. Experiencing, as Matt Doherty would call it, *New York*.

For instance: Michael Jordan was banned from the starting lineup in the St. John's game for showing up about 90 seconds late for a team meeting earlier in the day. It seems Jordan was doing some shopping and failed to realize how long it would take him to get back to the team's hotel. He was six blocks away and thought it would take only five minutes to get back, but it took 20 minutes. "He should have asked these guys how long it would take to get six blocks in rush-hour traffic," said Dean Smith, pointing to New Yorkers Sam Perkins and Doherty. "Then he

would have been on time." Jordan's explanation? "I got too caught up in the New York life."

"I got a ham and Swiss and it had about 28 slices of ham on it and about 20 slices of Swiss."

— Buzz Peterson

So, apparently, did Buzz Peterson, but on a more positive note than Jordan. Peterson went to New York when UNC played there two years ago, but the way he raved about some of its culinary delights, you'd think this trip was his first. He marveled over the chocolate chip cookies and was even more excited about the city's delicatessens.

"I got a ham and Swiss and it had about 28 slices of ham on it and about 20 slices of Swiss."

But while Peterson was taking a bite out of the Big Apple, it was also taking a bite out of him — or at least his wallet. Eight ounces of Coca-Cola cost Peterson \$2.75, he said, and orange juice in the hotel restaurant went for \$2.95 a glass.

If that wasn't bad enough, Peterson was also taken for a ride by a New York cab driver. He was charged more than \$6 for a short ride from the hotel to the Garden. "He knew we were tourists," Peterson said. "He rode us around everywhere."

He should have just been grateful to get where he was going in one piece. New York City driving was something he wasn't quite used to. "I got a big kick out of it," Peterson

said. "It's amazing they don't have more wrecks."

Included on the Tar Heels' Big Apple itinerary were trips to the Broadway show "Brighton Beach Memoirs" and an NBA game between the New York Knicks and Detroit Pistons; shopping at Macy's and Bloomingdale's; a visit to Rockefeller Center and, of course, the delis.

But all those things were nothing new to three of UNC's starting five. Perkins, Doherty and Kenny Smith, who have spent most of their lives only a few miles from the Garden, had seen it all before. So they chose to spend part of their free time visiting their families and friends.

And for the games themselves, each of the three had a sizeable rooting section — about 45 of Perkins' friends and relatives were there, about 30 were in the Doherty caravan and at least 50 supporters told Smith they would be on hand.

Doherty, welcomed with banners wishing him luck, enjoyed all the attention, rising to the occasion to score 15 points and grab six rebounds against St. John's.

"It's a special feeling," he said afterward. "I saw my friends and I heard people yelling 'Holy Trinity' (his high school) and 'East Meadow' (his hometown). I was out there fired up in warmups."

Kenny Smith got a little too fired up at the start of the first game against Iona. He appeared shaky, and admitted that the crowd affected him.

"Coming back home, your mind wanders," said Smith, who is from Queens. "You start thinking who's in the stands and who's not in the stands. I didn't really see them. I just knew they were out there."

The team left New York on Dec. 30 and Brad Daugherty decided that going to Hawaii last year was more fun than this year's Christmas excursion. "A lot warmer and a lot more pretty girls," he recalled.

Or, as Cecil Exum described New York, "It's another world here." It's nice to be back on Earth.



Tournament MVP Sam Perkins displays the ECAC Holiday Festival Championship trophy.

Photo by B. Scott Luckey