

# SPORTS

## Women's tennis team's expectations high

By GLENNA BURRESS  
Staff Writer

Senior leadership, togetherness and confidence. Combine the three, and you'll discover not only the focal point of the UNC women's tennis team, but also the primary reason why the squad has high expectations for the 1984 season.

Already four matches into the spring season, the 2-2 Tar Heels are hoping to utilize this asset to overcome a difficult schedule and battle Clemson and Duke for the ACC crown.

The heart of the optimistic outlook lies with the rise of strong senior leadership from Kathy Barton and captain Julie Kirby.

Barton, who earned first-team All-American honors as a sophomore, is the senior to whom head coach Kitty Harrison attributes the emergence of team togetherness.

After leaving the team for a semester last fall to get a break from tennis, Barton had returned to play in the No. 2 singles slot.

"Kathy sets a really fine example for the other girls," Harrison said. "She's playing solidly, with good preparation, and her match plan is always worked out."

Barton, who may alternate with sophomore Eileen Fallon at No. 1, points to her layoff as the major reason for her improved play and sense of leadership responsibility.

"I feel like the layoff helped me," the Cincinnati, Ohio, native said. "I'm more relaxed, and I don't put so much pressure on myself. I feel really strong."

Now that her game is again intact, Barton can concentrate on her role as a leader.

"Last year, we had a young team," Barton said. "I didn't play in the fall, and I was worried about trying to get back into it in the spring. We just didn't have any real togetherness."

"I decided this year that I had to really set the example and tone for everyone else, and hope that they followed."

Barton's senior counterpart, Julie Kirby, is in her second season as captain of the squad. "Julie's in there pulling people together as our captain, and helping bring the younger ones along to show them where the importance in this effort is," Harrison said.

Such strong leadership combined with the contributions of every teammate has strengthened the team's pride and togetherness, Harrison said.

"We've worked on it (achieving cohesion)," she said. "Compromises have been struck, and it's smoothed the way so that each girl is more willing to take the responsibility for the mental and physical preparation for her match."

Liz Wachter, a sophomore from Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich., fills the No. 3 position for the Tar Heels, while sophomore Nancy Boggs is seeded fourth.

Stephanie Rauch usually occupies the No. 5 spot, but she is recovering from knee surgery after an injury suffered Feb. 12 against Georgia. Rauch will return to action for the team's trip to California in early March.

Junior Pam McNierney is in her third season at No. 6. The team will need all of this talent as it takes on a schedule that includes several nationally ranked squads.

Coming off a 6-3 loss to 15th-ranked Indiana in the finals of the Indiana Invitational last weekend, the Tar Heels travel to California over Spring Break to challenge such national contenders as UCLA, Southern California and California-Irvine. The teams' other top 20 opponents include Rice and Princeton.

Do the Tar Heels believe they can rise to meet the many challenges of the 1984 season?

"I think this team's confidence is growing, and they're realizing how good they are," Harrison said.

"They're good enough to be in the top 20, but they've got to play to show it."

## Van Slyke makes comeback after a two-year absence

By KIMBALL CROSSLEY  
Staff Writer

Suzie Van Slyke was there. Almost.

When Van Slyke, a North Carolina freshman, was a freshman in high school, she very nearly achieved a 10-year goal: making the United States Olympic gymnastics team.

But a couple of things got in her way.

First there was the boycott of the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow, and suddenly nobody knew where "there" was anymore. Then came the Olympic trials, which went on despite the boycott, and Van Slyke finished 15th.

That finish — an impressive feat — took years of five-hour practice sessions. But even that was not enough to make the eight-woman squad.

All of a sudden, a goal that Van Slyke had set when she was 5 was shattered.

A year after participating in European trials she earned with her top 20 finish in the Olympic trials, Van Slyke quit gymnastics.

She didn't blame the decision on her finish in the trials, realizing that 15th "was about right." Nor did she blame the boycott. "I still don't believe it was the right thing to do," she says of the decision to bypass the Games.

"I just needed a break," Van Slyke says. "I probably would have gone crazy. I needed that time to grow or do other things."

Now, after two years of not participating in gymnastics, Van Slyke is back.

"I just went out with my friends and did what normal people do — it's what the doctor ordered, I think."

She says she came back to the sport on the college level because "it was more or less a challenge."

"And I heard it was fun."

Van Slyke appears to be having fun now. Last Saturday, in what coach Derek Galvin called UNC's best performance ever, Van Slyke tied the school record in the balance beam with a 9.20 and then watched as teammate Sue Tonietto broke that record minutes later with a 9.25. The team earned a school-record 174.65 points.

"The team atmosphere makes it easier," Van Slyke says. "I was used to not saying anything (during workouts) . . . now I'm there to work out and support other people."

But the road back has not been very easy. When Van Slyke sent out scholarship resumes as a senior, she found that many coaches were hesitant about her because of her long absence.

Van Slyke, who grew up and still lives in New Jersey, says she had heard about UNC but not its gymnastics team.

"Derek said he didn't have the money," Van Slyke says. "He said he thought I could have gotten a better offer somewhere else."

Fortunately for Galvin, Van Slyke was interested in more than money and gymnastics. UNC's campus and academic program affected her decision, and she accepted Galvin's offer of a partial scholarship.



Suzanne Van Slyke

Unlike other coaches, Galvin wasn't concerned about Van Slyke's two-year absence from gymnastics.

"I really wasn't worried at all," he said. She had competed at such a high level, I knew she could add to our program."

And Galvin hasn't been disappointed thus far.

"She's been a champion," he said. "She's helped the attitude of the entire team . . . She's exactly what I wanted as far as the team is concerned."

But Van Slyke says she doesn't want to push her own progress. When she competes in the ACC championships this weekend, she will probably compete in only three events, and she doesn't plan to add a parallel bars routine until the NCAA Regionals March 24.

"This year I just wanted to get the feel of it again," Van Slyke said. "Eventually I would like to get to the Collegiate Nationals."

### CAROLINA SPORTS THIS WEEK

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL vs. WAKE FOREST**  
Wednesday 7:30 Carmichael Auditorium

Last home game for seniors Tresa Brown and Eileen McCann — the ACC's are coming up next week!

**MEN'S TENNIS vs. UNC-CHARLOTTE**  
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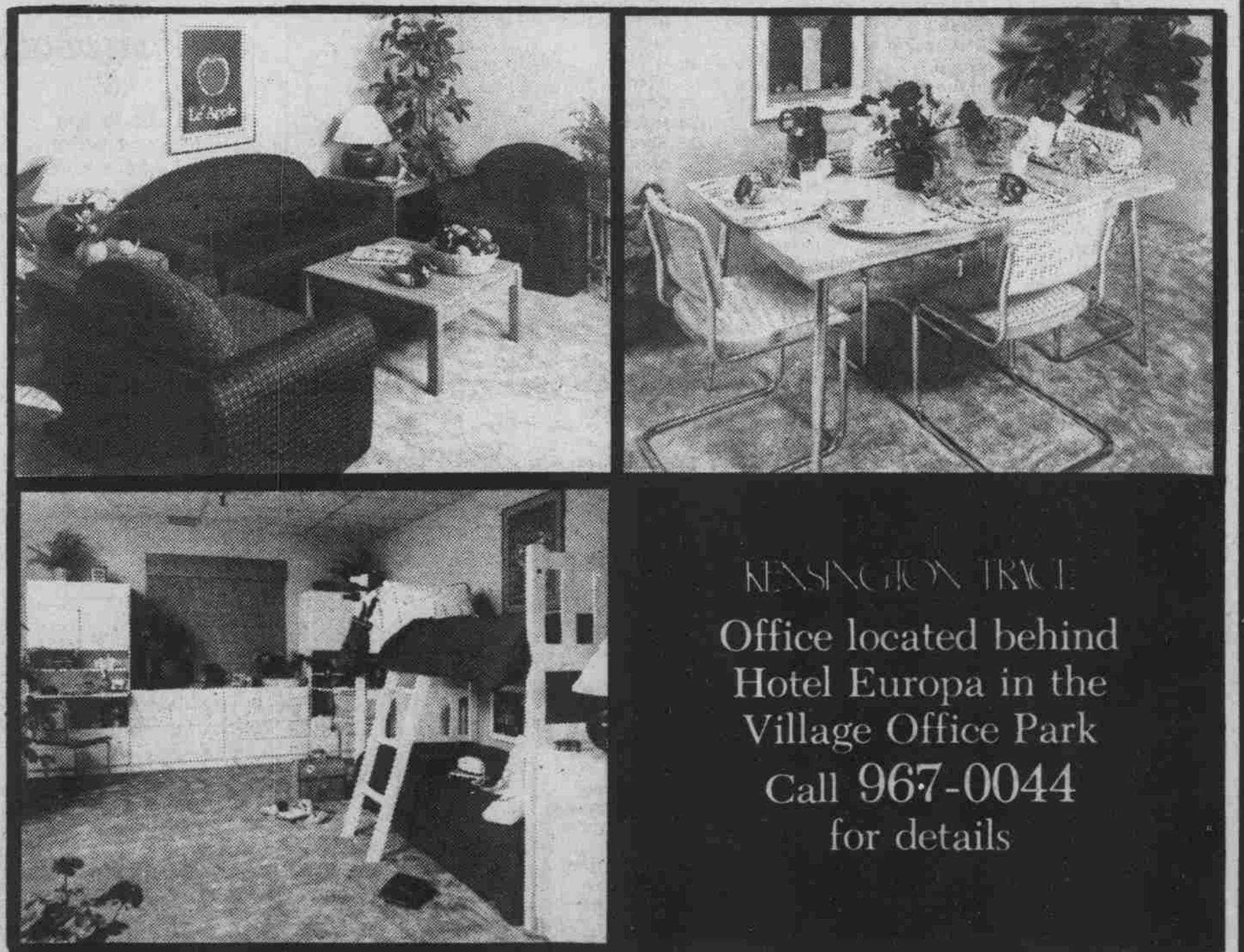
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