

SPORTS

Competition should help Heels

UNC golfers to face nation's best

By BOB YOUNG
Staff Writer

After a short fall schedule, the North Carolina men's golf team was ranked sixth in the nation and first in the Southeast district. The Tar Heels will have more than enough chances to prove themselves worthy of the ranking this spring, as their schedule includes competition against the giants of collegiate golf.

And Devon Brouse wouldn't have it any other way.

"Any time we have a chance to compete against the best in the country, it's to our advantage to do so," the North Carolina coach said. "The experience should help the team a lot."

The Tar Heels have already competed once this spring, finishing second to host Clemson in the Hilton Head-Palmetto Dunes Invitational at Hilton Head, S.C. Brouse said the Tigers could have beaten any team in the country the way they played in the Feb. 18-19 tournament.

"There seems to be a great deal of parity in college golf this season," Brouse said. "Any of the top 15 teams in the nation have a legitimate chance to win a tournament on any given week."

The Hilton Head Invitational was the only real chance that the team had to test the waters of this year's schedule before plunging headfirst into the thick of competition.

This weekend, UNC will travel to Lakeland, Fla., to compete in the Imperial Lakes Classic, where the best golf teams in the East are expected to contend. The following week the Tar Heels travel to Guadalajara, Mexico, to compete in the Oklahoma State Invitational. Brouse expects at least 12 of the top 15 teams in the nation to compete.

Two weeks later, the team travels to the Southwest again for the Houston All-American Invitational in Texas, the site of this year's NCAA championships.

As far as this year's lineup goes, John Inman, Davis Love, Bryan Sullivan, Jack Nicklaus Jr. and Kurt Beck won the starting spots for the first competition, and Brouse expects that they will see the most action. Greg Parker and Todd Thiele will also contribute.

Inman was a second-team All-American last season and will provide senior leadership for this year's squad.

Love, a sophomore, was a third team All-American and was UNC's low scorer in last year's NCAA tournament.

All of the other starters, plus Thiele, are returning lettermen. Parker is a freshman who saw some play in the fall season. The performances of these players will go a long way in determining what kind of season it will be for UNC, Brouse said.

"We can usually count on good performances from John (Inman) and Davis (Love), but we'll have to be consistent from (golfers in positions) three to five if we're going to reach our goals."

Smith ready to see action for UNC as Heels prepare to face Jackets

By FRANK KENNEDY
Assistant Sports Editor

On Jan. 29, just hours after North Carolina point guard Kenny Smith had taken a nasty tumble on the court in Carmichael Auditorium before a national television audience, and just after the announcement was made that Smith was out of the lineup "indefinitely" with a fracture in his left wrist, armchair critics bemoaned the loss as the end to UNC's national title hopes.

So much for the end-of-the-world theory.

The Tar Heels, 24-1 overall and 7-1 since Smith's tumble, don't appear to have lost any of the chemistry that got them off and running to the best start in the school's history. Smith's replacement, sophomore Steve Hale, has kept the offense flowing, as evidenced by an 18-assist weekend against N.C. State and Maryland, and a 12-point, six-assist effort against Clemson Sunday.

Tonight, Smith will be able to see action for the first time in a month when the Tar Heels face surging Georgia Tech at The Omni in Atlanta. The way Smith sees it, neither team has changed a whole lot since the Jan. 28, 73-61 UNC win.

"This is just like any other game," Smith said. "It means a lot to us and to them. We're still working on our goals and just trying to get a lot better every game."

The injury has naturally been a source of frustration for Smith, who was averaging 10.1 points and 5.2 assists per game before the collision with LSU's John Tudor sent him to the bench.

"The hardest part of it was sitting on the bench and watching the game," he said. "When you're with the team when you're traveling you feel like a

part of the team, but when you get down there on the court you don't. Sometimes, I'd feel like an outsider."

Now that he is back (he'll play with a rubber cast on his left wrist), Smith said he doesn't want to rush things. That's probably just as well, because the Tar Heels are hardly in desperate straits.

"We've been on a pretty good roll lately and I just want to help out in any way I can," he said. "Steve and Buzz (Peterson) have both been great. We haven't lost anything since I've been out."

Smith said he has not been at all surprised by Hale's performance in a starting role. "In fact, the only thing that has surprised me even a little is when he doesn't do as well in practice as he is capable of."

Hale's matchup against Tech's prize sophomore guard Mark Price could be the key matchup in a game in which the Tar Heels have the upper hand elsewhere.

Price, the Yellow Jackets' all-purpose leader, is averaging more than 40 minutes of playing time, 15 points and five assists per game. And Price is commanding a team that not only snapped a 19-game road losing streak in the league by beating Duke Saturday, but is 18-8 and hunting for an NCAA tournament invitation. A win over the Tar Heels might be exactly what the Jackets need to fulfill that goal.

"They played us very tough up here when we had Kenny Smith and were really playing well," UNC coach Dean Smith said of Tech. "This will be a special challenge for our team — to see if we can win all of our conference road games."

For Kenny Smith, this will be a different sort of challenge. "Physically, I'm in shape because I've been working out," Smith said. "I feel like I'll be able to at least give it a go."

AP Poll

1. North Carolina	24-1	1240
2. Houston	25-3	1133
3. Kentucky	21-3	1078
4. Georgetown	24-3	1072
5. DePaul	21-2	1015
6. Oklahoma	24-3	888
7. Nev.-Las Vegas	25-2	863
8. Texas-El Paso	24-2	773
9. Tulsa	23-2	671
10. Illinois	20-4	658
11. Purdue	19-5	657
12. Arkansas	22-5	586
13. Washington	20-5	415
14. Memphis St.	20-5	408
15. Duke	22-6	283
16. Syracuse	18-6	188
17. Wake Forest	19-6	187
18. Temple	21-3	169
19. Maryland	17-7	159
20. Oregon St.	19-6	151

UPI Poll

1. North Carolina (40)	24-1	628
2. Houston (2)	25-3	535
3. Kentucky	21-3	507
4. Georgetown	24-3	505
5. DePaul	21-2	487
6. Nevada-Las Vegas	25-2	356
7. Oklahoma	24-3	344
8. Texas-El Paso	24-2	339
9. Purdue	19-5	275
10. Illinois	20-4	231
11. Tulsa	23-2	217
12. Arkansas	22-5	183
13. Washington	20-5	104
14. Memphis State	20-5	74
15. Temple	21-3	31
16. Wake Forest	19-6	30
17. Syracuse	18-6	28
18. Duke	22-6	26
19. Maryland	18-7	25
20. Oregon St.	19-6	20



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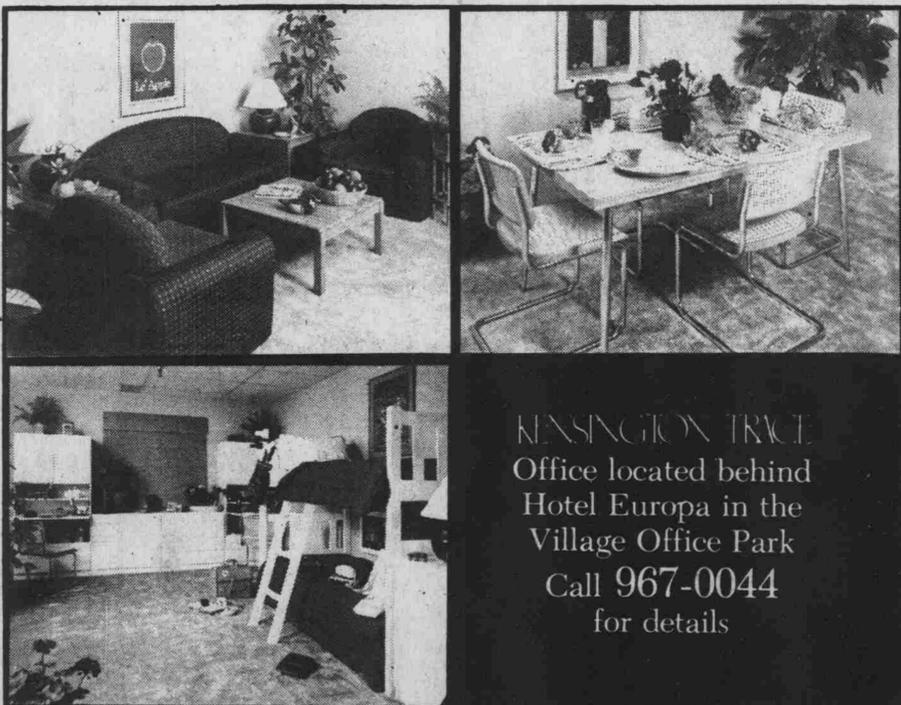
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