

Sports

Reflections on four years of sports

The phone jangled among a roomful of dormmates watching television on a winter evening early this semester. I picked it up and heard a low, questioning voice on the other end.

"Is this the same Scott Fowler who writes for The Daily Tar Heel?" the voice asked.

Figuring it was someone calling about a story idea for the paper, I said it was. "Well, this is Derrick Fenner, and I heard about the article you wrote about me. I'm not very happy about it."

And he wasn't. In the first call I had ever received from an irate UNC athlete — usually fans of the athlete are the ones who are mad enough to write or call — Fenner went on to say I had overemphasized his job with a Maryland trash company in an article detailing his departure from UNC. "I don't collect trash. I just set up contracts for the company," said the running back who was All-ACC in 1986 but then flunked out of school.

Fenner, who was living in Oxon Hill, Md., hadn't read the article, but a friend on campus had called him about it. After rereading the article, I agreed that he had a point and published his complaint in another article about his situation later that week.

That anecdote illustrates both the best and worst thing about The Daily Tar Heel sports staff. You can make your views known by reporting the sports news and influence the campus' interpretation of sports events through columns. But absolute power sometimes corrupts absolutely, as my roommate often says, and occasionally the DTH sports columns are used merely to stroke the ego of the writer.

For three years, I have watched the DTH sports staff flounder and flourish through approximately 400 issues of the paper and six achingly unread football and basketball tabloids. I have been a staff writer, assistant sports editor and sports editor. Now that the new DTH

Scott Fowler The Far Sideline

sports administration has taken over, the circle is complete. I am again a staff writer with the DTH, and after this last column I will be a regular student with no connections to the paper.

No one wants to read a treatise detailing the ins and outs of a sports editor's normal day. Suffice it to say you suffer through a lot of press releases and staff writer excuses and saunter through a lot of free press food, press passes and friendships. So here instead is a list of my picks for the highlights and lowlights of the sports staff and the teams they covered over the past year-and-a-half.

Best story — Jim Surowiecki's breaking news story on Tommy John quitting as pitching coach of UNC. The Daily Tar Heel was quoted as breaking the story in newspapers as far away as the L.A. Times, and was mentioned on ESPN for the same reason. **Honorable mention** — Bob Young's off-the-backboard, off-the-wall "Ballad of Tito Horford," which is designed to be sung to the tune of "The Beverly Hillsbillies."

Worst story — Late in the 1986 season, the DTH found out that the No. 1 player on the women's tennis team had quit. The staff writer on the beat managed to put the scoop off for a week before gingerly writing a story that only said how much the team would be improved after its best player's loss. **Honorable mention** — the "story" on Rams Club members who wouldn't cheer in the stands.

Funniest line — Joe Wolf, when asked how he could keep smiling after an hour photo session in the boiling sun with Sports Illustrated and thousands of fans on the steps of South Building. "Girls kept pinching my butt," he said. "At least, I hope they were girls."

Most Tiring Line: "(Fill in blank) played a good game. Give them a lot of credit." Dean Smith and Dick Crum love this one, win or lose. **Honorable mention:** "Our seniors played unbelievably well" — Smith.

Most provocative column: The last time "The Far Sideline" ran, my opinion that North Carolina lost again to a less-talented basketball team in the NCAA tournament did not sit well with a number of readers. Mail ran about 90 percent negative, with about half saying that my basketball knowledge could fit on the head of a pin and still leave room for several angels.

Worst column trend: Notice how many DTH sportswriters now have a column logo that says something like "In your face," or "Painting the Corners?" Who cares what the column is called, right?

Best Prognosticator: Mike Berardino came from nowhere late in the season to beat everyone out in the college football pick games. Berardino, never one to gloat about a victory or lose his cool during a basketball game, said softly afterwards, "I kicked their ass."

Worst Prognosticator: UNC tight end Dave Truitt said before the 1985 season that Kevin Anthony had a chance to be as good as any quarterback in the country.

Best Athlete to Cover: Unquestionably, Derrick Fenner. His collision with Crum, his record-breaking performance against Virginia, his suspension against Kansas because his roommate set the alarm clock to p.m. instead of a.m. — the man is a sportswriter's dream.

Worst Athlete to Cover: Kenny Smith. Always a great quote and a genuine All-American, but he is so glib with the media that it's hard to tell what lies behind one of UNC's most outstanding players. He should run for the House of Representatives, although UNC athletic director John Swofford would prove tough competition.

Best DTH Sports Accomplishment: The '86-'87 basketball tabloid with Kenny Smith and Jeff Lebo

on the cover, now adorning most of your birdcages.

Worst DTH Sports Accomplishment: Two days in the past year there were zero, count 'em zero, sports articles in the entire paper. Inexcusable.

Best Supporting Actor: Bob Young. He may have set a record as the person who has spent the most time on the sports staff. The wrestling, cross country and track teams all owe him a great debt.

That's about it for me. The Far Sideline may appear in another newspaper at some time, but not for awhile. I'm off to the Louisville Courier-Journal to cover the University of Kentucky sports teams. Enjoyed it.

Musical diversity keeps Clefs in tune

By ALSTON RUSSELL
Staff Writer

Three years ago, about 500 people crammed themselves into Carroll Hall to hear a group of 12 boys sing a cappella. Tonight, nearly 1,600 people will pile into Memorial Hall for this same group's 10th anniversary performance.

The Clef Hangers have flourished since their start 10 years ago. Just this spring, they performed at The Breakers, a five-star hotel in Palm Beach, Fla., and at the Epcot Center at Disney World. Clef Hanger President Jeff Sluder said Wednesday that he was "amazed at how far musically they've come."

Other Clefs cited evidence of growth and change in the group's activities and style. "(Our performances) are more organized and much more professional," said junior member Durrall Gilbert. "We're more goal-directed."

"We used to exclude our audience, but we try to relate to the audience now," said senior member Doug Schmidt.

What accounts for the Clef Hangers' popularity? Schmidt said that besides having musical talent,

Baseball, tennis action

From staff reports

The UNC men's tennis team stormed to an easy victory over West Virginia Thursday. The Tar Heels swept past the Mountaineers 9-0, losing nary a set en route to their perfect performance.

The victory upped UNC's record to 20-5, and gave the squad its 13th win in its last 14 matches. The Tar Heels take on Maryland Sunday at home, and a victory over the Terps will give them the second seed in the ACC Tournament.

Leading the way for UNC was Jeff Chambers at No. 1, who defeated Paul Mancini, 7-5, 7-5. David Pollock crushed Joby Foli at No. 2, 6-4, 6-0, and No. 3 Eddie

Chambers recorded his 18th straight singles win with a 6-2, 6-3 handling of Ray Kurey.

Elsewhere, the UNC baseball team put together a seventh-inning rally to knock off Duke, 8-5. The Blue Devils led 5-2 going into the seventh, but quickly committed two errors and a passed ball to spark the UNC comeback, as Jim Stone, Dave Arendas and Darin Campbell banged out base hits.

Freshman Jim Dougherty, who boasts the only ERA on UNC's staff under 4.00, picked up the win to up his record to 3-3, while Don Fowler took the loss to drop to 4-3. UNC is now 18-11 and 5-4 in the ACC. Duke is 14-13, 1-5.

the members are spontaneous, diverse, and fun to watch.

"We'll go to McDonald's sometimes and just strike up a tune because we love to sing," Schmidt said.

The Clefs' diversity results from changing membership every year, Schmidt said. He said that those annual changes account for the group's uniqueness.

"We come together with one common thing — our love for music," said senior member David Venable.

"People like to watch people having fun," Schmidt said.

The concert tonight will pay attention to the history of the group and its alumni. "It'll sort of explain the evolution of the group," Sluder said. Some of the alumni will be honored afterwards at a picnic sponsored by the current Clefs.

"It's so hard to top the concert

before, but that's what we're trying to do." Sluder said about this 10th anniversary show.

Along with the songs, the Clef Hangers use witty skits and introductions to entertain their audiences.

"I'm looking forward to seeing how people respond to the music," junior member David Moffitt said. "I'm going to have a good time. I hope they (audience members) have the chance to laugh and forget about academics for a while."

After 10 years, the Clef Hangers are not merely resting on their laurels. The group has added 12 new songs to its repertoire since last fall, and they will begin recording their second album next week. The first Clef album, "Once in a Blue Moon," was released in the years 1981-82.

The Clef Hangers will perform tonight at 8 p.m. in Memorial Hall. Call 962-2285 for ticket information.

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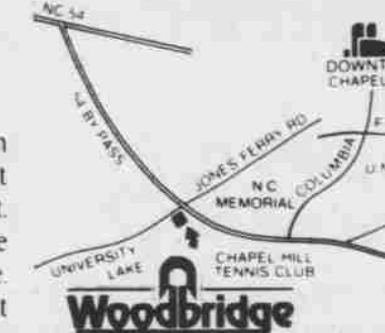
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