

Softball year concludes Lacrosse

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From staff reports

MACOMB, Ill. — A pair of one-run losses, including a 1-0 heartbreaker to eventual champion Michigan, forced North Carolina to settle for fourth place in the inaugural National Invitational Championship softball tournament last weekend.

Coach Donna Papa's team thus concluded its season with a 36-11-1 record, the best in the program's four-year history.

The Tar Heels were eliminated from the double-elimination, 16-team tournament when they dropped a 3-2 decision to U.S. International in 11 innings Sunday. The NIC is similar to the NIT in basketball: a tourney designed to reward those teams which had good seasons, but missed out on the big ball nonetheless.

Against U.S. International, North Carolina scored two runs in the top of the first inning but was stymied offensively the rest of the way.

Carla Shaw's single in the 11th scored Adrienne Mason from second base with the eventual winning run. UNC threatened to tie in the bottom half of the inning, putting runners on first and third with no outs. But a fly out and a double play, in which Tracey Beine was caught in a rundown between third and home, ended

the Tar Heels' season.

North Carolina won its first three games in the tournament before falling to Michigan on Saturday. Senior hurler Virginia Augusta allowed just five hits, but one of those was a solo home run by opposing pitcher, Sharon Clark. Clark's fourth-inning blast proved to be all the offense Michigan would need.

Left fielder Sharon Ross, who letters in field hockey during the fall, had a big day at the plate Saturday. Ross rapped five hits and had three RBI for the Tar Heels, who took 2-1 and 7-2 victories over Iowa and Akron, respectively.

UNC opened the tournament Friday with a 5-0 zonking of Toledo. Maria Powers drove in two runs and Augusta pitched a three-hitter.

The Tar Heels won their way to Baltimore with a first-round demolition of Michigan State on May 13 in rainy Chapel Hill. The game was not as close as the 21-5 final score would indicate.

Corey Gavitt and Mark Tumillo scored hat tricks as UNC raced to a 9-1 halftime lead and never needed to break a sweat against the Spartans, who represented the West Region in the new 12-team tournament format.

Despite the slick conditions, UNC officials decided against moving the game to AstroTurf Field. When the rain picked up pace in the second quarter, the game slowed down accordingly. Once the skies cleared somewhat, however, there was no stopping the Tar Heels on offense.

The third quarter proved to be

North Carolina's strongest as the Tar Heels outscored the visitors, 10-2, in the period. Gavitt and Chris Hein each had two goals in the quarter as blowout first became runaway and then laughter.

Michigan State's freshman goalkeeper Chris Barber had all kinds of trouble against his high-powered opponents. In his

defense, however, no goalie can be expected to continually stop point-blank shots when the defense softens in the crease area.

The highlight of the fourth quarter was unquestionably the appearance of a pair of dogs on the field. The canines raced around the Michigan State goal once or twice, but neither attempted a shot.

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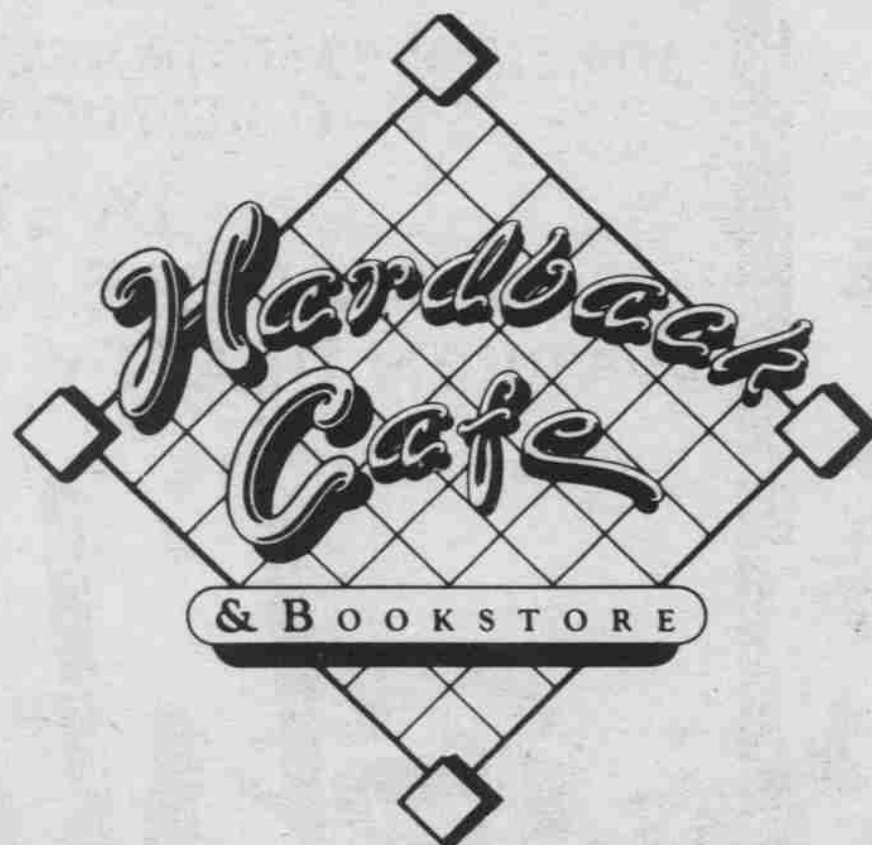
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