

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNC ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS Wayne Ellington had a career-high 36 points in Sunday night's narrow UNC victory over Clemson.

# It must be nice to have a ''Plan E'' that works this well.

By Frank Heath Sports Writer

Only the North Carolina Tar Heels basketball team could have figured out a way to win this one. At Clemson's berserker Littlejohn Coliseum, in a contest that had been dubbed there as the "biggest game ever in the state of South Carolina," UNC faced a deep, aggressive and fired-up — not to mention flat-out-good — Tigers squad Sunday night and somehow clawed its way out of the place alive.

That's even after Carolina discovered that its usual solid methods for taking apart opponents — depth, speed, rebounding and Tyler Hansbrough were not quite doing the trick.

With the game winding down Sunday, the Tar Heels held a statistical advantage over Clemson in just one category — foul-shooting percentage — after the No. 19 Tigers had thrown pretty much everything they had into winning the ACC opener for both teams.

With three minutes remain-

ing in regulation, Clemson had out-Carolina'd UNC at nearly everything the Tar Heels have been good at this season: offensive rebounding, turnover margin, scoring in transition and playing a lot of players to keep the first-teamers fresh. Hansbrough had been frustrated inside all night by (count 'em) three athletic 6'9" Clemson defenders, and the Tigers were even Carolina's match in the experience department, where Clemson uses two seniors, two juniors and two sophomores among its eight regulars.

The Tigers were ahead by seven points, which meant they actually had whipped Carolina by nearly 20 while the clock was running.

But Carolina was still within striking distance of the win. And as anyone knows who has either loved or hated the Tar Heels over the past four decades, that meant the outcome was in doubt and that Clemson had better keep doing what it had been doing if it wanted to win.

About this time, Coach Roy must have turned to assistant Steve Robinson and said, "OK, time to cut 'em loose." Because it was at this point that Carolina's most talented players — Ty Lawson, Wayne Ellington and Hansbrough — exerted their wills on the game, and the other guys on the team did a pretty good job of following suit.

Over the final 3:42 of regulation, Hansbrough grabbed two key rebounds, drew a charge on Clemson's next-to-last possession and made three of four foul shots. This from a relentless

player who had been on the court for all but three minutes of a game that was played mostly at breakneck speed and intensity, and who should have been worn out and barely able to move. The guy's determination is unbelievable.

Lawson controlled the tempo of the game, dished three assists and spearheaded a five-possession defensive stand over the same stretch.

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And Ellington scored five points and made a key threepointer with 2:34 remaining - cutting a seven point Clemson lead to four and sending waves of doubt from the Clemson bench all the way up to the Littlejohn rafters.

In case that wasn't enough, Marcus Ginyard grabbed two big rebounds, Danny Green made a three that cut the Heels' deficit to one and Deon Thompson had a steal. On its final possession in regulation, Carolina gaffed and didn't get a good shot off, but the Tar Heels had at least done the work necessary to get the game into OT.

Ellington scored five more in overtime — including the game winning three with 0.4 seconds remaining, which pushed his total for the game to 36. The 27 points he scored after halftime would have been a career high for the silky smooth sophomore. Talk about a strong "Plan E."

When junior Bobby Frasor was lost to an ACL injury two weeks ago, this UNC basketball team lost a big part of its margin for error. No longer can the Tar Heels count on burying every opponent for 40 minutes with waves of fresh, talented, experienced players.

As an example, during the final minute or so of the first half against Clemson, Williams brought Lawson, Ellington and Green — each of whom had two fouls - to the bench, and the Tigers took quick advantage and mounted a 7-0 run, grabbing a halftime lead and the momentum.

There will be times this season when other teams will have a better group of players on the court, and Carolina must adjust to this fact or fall short of its dreams.

Sunday's win at Clemson demonstrated that the Tar Heels, now 15-0 and still No. 1, are at least up for such a challenge.



SPORTS

Liz Holman (10) of the varsity Carrboro Lady Jaguars takes a shot at the basket despite the best efforts of a Raleigh Charter defense during the matchup in Carrboro on Friday, Jan. 4. Carrboro lost the game 59-49.



Daguan Bradley (40) of the varsity Carrboro Jaguars releases a shot at the basket while in traffic with the Raleigh Charter defense. The Jaguars won the January 4 game 61-45.

### **In Brief**

#### **Booster meet**

The Carrboro High School Athletics Booster Club will meet Monday from 6-7 p.m. in the Café Commons at Carrboro High School. The meeting is open to the public.

#### Free physicals

Free sports physicals will be offered to Chapel Hill-Carrboro high school athletes on January 28, from 4:15-6:30 p.m., at Chapel Hill High School.

Students should wear t-shirts and shorts and bring a physical form with the health history section completed and signed by a parent or guardian. Forms are available at high school athletic offices or online at the high schools' websites.

Student athletes are required

to undergo a physical examination prior to participation in school athletics. The physicals will be valid through January 27, 2009. The event will be held in Chapel Hill High's Building B in the Commons.

#### **Coaches wanted**

The Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department is currently accepting volunteer coach's applications for the 2008 Youth Baseball Program and for the 2008 Youth Girls Volleyball Program. Coaches must exhibit the ability to organize practices and communicate effectively with players (ages 6-15 years old), parents, and Recreation Department staff. They must also exhibit the ability to teach proper playing skills, fundamentals, sportsmanship and provide an enjoyable atmosphere at practices and games. Deadline

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for applications is Friday, January 18th. To receive a volunteer coach's application or additional information, please contact the Recreation Department at 918-

#### Sports C.L.A.S.S.

The Carrboro Recreation & Parks Department is sponsoring two C.L.A.S.S. (Children Learning Athletic Sports Skills) for kids and their parents. The program is designed for children 4 to 6 years old. The goal of the program is to introduce the fundamentals of different sports to the participant and parent. Parent and child will be encouraged to practice the skills learned at home. Parent participation is a major part of this program.

The basketball program will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (6:15pm-7:15pm) from March 4th to March 20th.

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The baseball program will be held on Saturday mornings (9:00am-10:00am) from April 5th to May 10th.

The cost is \$47/child. Preregistration is required and is currently being accepted at the Carrboro Recreation & Parks Department, 100 N. Greensboro St. Space is limited. For more information, please contact the Department at 918-7364.

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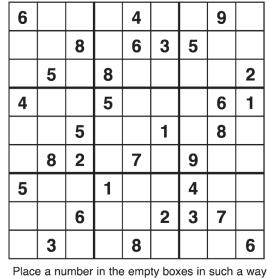
North Carolina Hall of Fame head coach Sylvia Hatchell broadcast her first weekly radio show of the season at Tyler's Taproom on Monday. The show which can be heard Mondays at 8 p.m. each week through the end of the season on WCHI 1360-AM, will feature the coach taking calls from fans about the 2007-08 Tar Heels. Fans can enjoy the show live from Tyler's.

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## Weekly **SUDOKU**

by Linda Thistle



that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging \*\*\* HOO BOY!

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