

Tar Heels top Wake Forest unconvincingly

ACC bottom feeder stays with UNC

BY MARK THOMPSON
SENIOR WRITER

Harrison Barnes is starting to make unsympathetic, timely dunks a habit.

Similar to his late-game dunk on Clemson's Milton Jennings, Barnes threw down a decisive slam and drew the foul with five minutes left in No. 19 North Carolina's 78-

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Wake Forest 64
UNC 78

The three-point play halted a Wake Forest run and gave UNC a 12-point lead. His dunk spawned a 10-0 run and a double-digit lead that held through the rest of the game.

"We always joke around, and (Barnes) talks about how he doesn't have that high school bounce any more," Kendall Marshall said. "When you get in college and you get in the weight room, it basically all leaves you. But you can see him definitely showing his athleticism."

Tuesday's game could have been, and many expected it to be, an emotionless blowout for UNC, but that wasn't the case. The game was never completely out of hand,

even though the final score doesn't necessarily hint at it.

UNC led by 19 twice, but Wake Forest held North Carolina's offense in check with a 2-3 zone and forced the Tar Heels into 27 3-point attempts.

UNC coach Roy Williams was impressed with Wake Forest coach Jeff Bzdelik's strategy.

"Give Jeff and his crowd (credit)," Williams said.

"They came in with a good plan and milked the clock, and got it down a couple of times early in the game — made us play defense longer," Williams said.

Of course, being forced into extended periods of defense isn't the worst thing that could happen to UNC. The Tar Heels have proven to be an adept defensive team, and that was the biggest catalyst to UNC's win.

North Carolina held the Demon Deacons to 37.7 percent shooting. And the shots Wake Forest took in the paint weren't much more efficient.

The Demon Deacons shot 12-of-28 in the paint. Junior Tyler Zeller and sophomore John Henson were a big part of that.

Zeller didn't have any blocks,

but his length and size forced a lot of close shots to fall short or off target. Henson, on the other hand, finished with five blocks, alongside 14 points and 13 rebounds.

"That's a big factor in the game — those kind of stats," Williams said. "That's what helps you win basketball games. John's really been working hard and he's staying so much more focused on what he's been doing too."

Williams believes his team's poor offensive performance could be a side effect of its tough four-game stretch in 12 days that ended with Duke a week ago.

The Tar Heels got fairly typical numbers from Barnes (17 points), Zeller (18 points) and Henson. Leslie McDonald chipped in 13 points. But Barnes took 20 shots to hit that point and McDonald was 3-of-9.

Williams knows poor offensive performances will eventually catch up to UNC, and so do his players.

"You can't take anyone lightly," Henson said. "You have to respect everybody but fear no one, and I think we got a little too comfortable tonight and we've got to work on that, you know, finishing off everybody."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@dailytarheel.com.



DTH/WILL COOPER

John Henson recorded another double-double with 14 points and 13 rebounds against Wake Forest. The sophomore forward recorded five blocks against a Demon Deacon team that went 12-for-28 in the paint.

Woeful 3-point shooting plagues UNC

BY AARON TAUBE
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

North Carolina basketball coach Roy Williams always says teams look a lot better when they're making shots.

But Tuesday night against Wake Forest at the Smith Center, the Tar Heels proved once and for all that looks aren't everything.

UNC shot a hideous 5-for-27 from 3-point range but coasted to a 14-point victory, anyway.

"It's something that you've got to get better at," Williams said. "Guys have been practicing shooting. We're good shooters; we haven't made them. You've got to be tough enough to step up and make them."

Though the evening was notable for UNC's volume of attempts — the most the Tar Heels have taken in a game all season — the

performance was not altogether surprising for a team that has now shot just 16.3 percent from behind the arc in its last three games and ranks 11th in the ACC in 3-point field goal percentage.

Despite these recent struggles, the Tar Heels were lured into so many attempts by Wake Forest's 2-3 zone.

Since there is one fewer defender on the perimeter than in the paint, the zone allows teams to find open shooters along the arc.

"Their zone made it hard for us to get inside, so we had to get the ball outside, and that's exactly what we did tonight," UNC forward John Henson said.

So instead, UNC hoisted 16 first-half 3-pointers, most of which were good looks at the basket. But the more the Tar Heels tried, the

smaller the cylinder seemed to get. Excluding sophomore shooting guard Leslie McDonald's two makes, Harrison Barnes, Dexter Strickland and Reggie Bullock combined to shoot 2-for-11 from 3-point land in the first period.

"The main thing we want to do in our offense is get a lot of shots and get a lot of great shots, and we got that," freshman point guard Kendall Marshall said. "I think the conversation would be different if we maybe hit four more threes, but we didn't."

If nothing else, the Tar Heels were persistent. UNC took two 3-pointers, both misses, before a minute had elapsed in the second half. But during a timeout, Williams told his team to try to work the ball inside, where UNC had dominated play to build a 13-point halftime lead.

UNC went six minutes without a 3-point attempt, with McDonald showing a newfound restraint in passing up a 3-ball from the left corner in favor of a pump-fake, dribble-drive that resulted in a shovel pass to forward Justin Knox and a slam dunk that put UNC ahead 55-38.

And yet UNC couldn't quite get the outside jumper out of its system.

Marshall finally managed to drain a trey 10 minutes later, but there wasn't nearly enough make-up in the Smith Center to disguise UNC's unseemly shooting night.

"Shooting is always the biggest variable," Williams said. "When you shoot it, everything looks great."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@dailytarheel.com.



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