

Rice, Phelps, Reese return with own team

BY EDDY LANDRETH

Carolina's 102-65 victory against Monmouth on Sunday felt more like a family reunion than just another holiday blow-out. All five of the Tar Heels' NCAA championship teams had representatives in the house.

The coaches on the bench for Monmouth represented two Final Fours and a national title. King Rice is the head coach for the Hawks, his first college head-coaching job. He spent the last few years as an assistant at Vanderbilt.

Rice's assistants, Derrick Phelps and Brian Reese, played with Rice at the 1991 Final Four when they were freshmen, but they were part of the starting lineup at the 1993 Final Four, in which Carolina defeated coach Roy Williams and his Kansas Jayhawks in the semifinals. UNC went on to beat Michigan and the Fab Five in the title game for the national championship.

Rice showed he had a far greater understanding of Carolina history than just the years he spent there and what has happened since.

He had 5-foot-8 Jesse Steele jump center at the opening tap against Carolina's John Henson, who has a reach of 7-4. That was a nod to the 1957 team, when UNC coach Frank McGuire had 5-foot-10 Tommy Kearns jump ball against 7-1 Wilt Chamberlain of Kansas.

"I asked the guys in the locker room, and they said no," Rice said. "Then when we went out there and I saw Lennie Rosenbluth, I said 'We're doing it.' It just didn't work the way it worked in '57."

Rosenbluth was the leading scorer and the star of the 1957 Carolina team that went 32-0 and won the school's and the ACC's first NCAA title.

That's where the similarities ended, however. Carolina's athletes were far superior to what Rice has at the moment.

Henson continued to play the best all-around basketball of his career. He ran the court, blocked shots and sank the baseline jumper that has become such a weapon for him. Henson led the Tar Heels with 21 points on 9-of-12 shooting. He also had eight rebounds and three blocks.

"That is amazing," Rice said of Henson's jump shot. "John Henson just keeps getting better. But every time I see him — it's only once or twice a year — he always comes over and says hello.

He always has a big smile. He makes you feel special, and he's the main dude. He's the star.

"He's improved dramatically on the floor. He makes jumpers now. His free throw has smoothed out. It doesn't look crazy anymore. He is one of the best shot-blockers ever. I know [Sam Perkins] blocked a whole bunch, and we had guys here who blocked them. But this kid is amazing at it. I'm happy he is a Carolina guy."

Rice said it was a totally different experience returning as an opponent. But the crowd treated him as one of the Carolina family, which, of course, he is.

"The ovation at the beginning was unbelievable," Rice said. "I didn't expect that. It was very nice of the fans. I'm a true Carolina guy. What better feeling could you get when the fans give you a standing ovation?"

Now UNC will move into the next phase of the season, when Boston College visits the Smith Center on Saturday at 2:30 p.m. for the first conference game.

"It's been a long stretch here of these nonconference games," Williams said. "Now we're getting ready to start our conference regular season, and our play is going to have to go up a level."



Joe Gaiteri and Carrboro Chess Club founder Jason Casden ponder their next moves at Jesse's Coffee & Bar. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CARRBORO CHESS CLUB

Chessmen in our midst

BY SARAH SPAGNOLA

Courtesy of the Carrboro Commons

There's a cartoon stereotype about chess players — bespectacled, sweater-vested, hopelessly nerdy.

Joe Gaiteri and Ben Busch, with their relaxed demeanors and casual clothing, shatter all stereotypes the moment you meet them. Both are members of the Carrboro Chess Club, a small but thriving group dedicated to playing and talking about the game.

The club, founded about two years ago by Jason Casden of Carrboro, meets every Saturday at 3 p.m. at Jesse's Coffee & Bar. This particular Saturday, the club members present for the day's games sat at a table in the middle of the coffee shop. The blinds were drawn somewhat to protect patrons' eyes from the harsh rays of the afternoon sun, and despite the catchy '70s pop-rock choruses being played over the speakers, it was quiet enough to hear yourself think.

And make no mistake: Chess is a thinking person's game. Gaiteri, 27, stared at the board intently, the silence sometimes stretching into minutes as he considered his next move against Busch before moving his game pieces across the board with astonishing quickness. Busch responded in kind, taking a few minutes to cook up a strategy before making his move. Eventually, Busch resigned from the

game, then went over his moves with Gaiteri to see where he could have done better.

"One of the things that happens a lot is that the game is decided by the person who makes the second-to-last big mistake," Gaiteri said.

To hear club members tell it, friendly instruction and advice among players is fairly common in the world of chess. Member Bill Hargrove noted that chess players have a rating system based on points.

"There is a difference in class every 200 points, with the stronger player expected to win 70 percent of the time," Hargrove said.

At a difference of 400 points, Hargrove said the game ceases to become competition and becomes instruction.

"There is a severe analytic quality about this game, which is to say that it makes self-delusion difficult," he said. "Any chess player knows how strong he is just as well as he knows how to spell his own name."

Despite the passion its players clearly have for the game, chess seems to remain something of a niche hobby in North Carolina, and Hargrove said that it used to be that most prominent players in the United States didn't develop outside of the New York City area. Gaiteri said that there are only a couple of chess "masters" in the entire state.

Hargrove noted that "really strong masters" of the game usually play professionally and don't

have enough people to play outside of major population centers.

Busch offered his own theory: "I think the only reason is the weather."

A native of Akron, Ohio, Busch said he thought that the weather in North Carolina was nice enough that people would rather go outside than sit inside and play chess.

Gaiteri cited the rise of online chess as a reason for the comparative lack of chess clubs in North Carolina.

"I mean, it's nice because you can find people to play whenever you want," he said, but he noted that it was not the same social experience as going to a chess club meeting.

On the other hand, plenty of younger people seem to be taking up the game. For example, Gaiteri noted that Durham Academy has a big club for kids and hosts a tournament every month.

"There are a huge number of children learning to play chess," Hargrove said.

Find out more about the Carrboro Chess Club at meetup.com/carrborochessclub

Sarah Spagnola is a UNC student writing for the Carrboro Commons, a bi-weekly online lab newspaper for Jock Lauterer's Community Journalism class at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

School Briefs

B-ball milestone

Chapel Hill High senior point guard Denzel Ingram scored the 1,000th of his high school career during last week's game against Clayton High in the Holiday Invitational Basketball Tournament. The Tigers are currently undefeated and ranked third in the state in the AAA division.

Volunteer recognized

Mary Andrews of Estes Hills Elementary was recognized by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce for her work with the READ2ME Tailgate Stories program that brings summer reading activities to underserved neighborhoods in our community. She received the Jim Gibson Volunteer of the Year Award at the chamber's annual "Salute to Community Heroes."

Rashkis in the limelight

Rashkis Elementary was featured on NBC 17's morning broadcast as Tuesday's "Cool School" of the day. The story highlighted the school's initiative to implement Lego Serious Play in various subjects. Visit tinyurl.com/76qsp5x to see the segment.

East junior attends anti-smoking meeting

East Chapel Hill High junior Ariel Smith recently attended a day-long Tobacco Prevention and Control Action Planning Meeting sponsored by the Orange County Health Department and the National Association of County and City Health Officials. The purpose of the meeting was to look at current county tobacco policies, identify areas of improvement and form recommendations for policy changes. Smith is a member of Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered. (TRU).

School Lunch Menus

FRIDAY 1/6

Elementary: Chicken Nuggets, Ham & Cheese Wrap, Garden Salad, Oven Fries, Seasoned Green Beans, Pineapple Cup, Fruit Cocktail

Middle and High School: Roast Turkey w/Gravy, Wheat Roll, Mashed Potatoes, Mixed Vegetables, Apple Crumble

Elementary: Macaroni & Cheese, Sloppy Joe on Bun; Turkey Chef Salad, Seasoned Broccoli, Seasoned Cabbage, Blueberry-Peach Crumble, Fruited Jell-o

Middle and High School: Chicken & Cheese Quesadilla, Spanish Rice, Glazed Carrots

Garden Salad, Cole Slaw, Pineapple Cup, Applesauce, Oriental Vegetable Blend

Middle and High School: Thai Peanut Chicken Noodles, Peach Crumble, Locally Grown Steamed Cabbage

WEDNESDAY 1/11

Elementary: BBQ Chicken w/Wheat Roll, Toasted Cheese Sandwich, Taco Chef Salad, Mashed Potatoes, Seasoned Turnip Greens, Orange Smiles, Baked Apple Slices

Middle and High School: — BBQ Chicken, Wheat Roll, Baked Beans, Baked Potato

THURSDAY 1/12

Elementary: Chicken Teriyaki Rice Bowl, Fish Sticks w/Tartar Sauce,

MONDAY 1/9

Elementary: Roasted Chicken w/Brown Rice, Turkey Corn Dog, Fruit & Cheese Plate w/Yogurt, Baked Sweet Potato, Spinach Salad, Baked Apple Slices, Banana

Middle and High School: Toasted Cheese Sandwich, Black Bean Chili, Cinnamon Baked Apples

TUESDAY 1/10

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