

## UNC NOTES frank heath



## The men

UNC's men's basketball team fell with a clunk from the ranks of unbeaten on Sunsurprising Boston College, which had been picked pre-season to finish second to last in the ACC. Instead, the Eagles are 13-2, ranked in the Top 25 and, for now, atop the league. Carolina, which dropped from No. 1 in the country to last place in its own con-
ference in the space of two hours Sunday, ference in the space of two hours Sunday
seemed to suffer from the "were too good seemed to suffer from the "were too good
to try that hard" syndrome until after the tone of this game had been set, at which point BC had decided it could in fact compete with the Tar Heels.
The UNC loss has been picked up, ex-
amined and dissected from all different amined and dissected from all different angles over the past few days. The prevailing opinion is that Carolina may not be as
dominant this season as people have been dominant this season as people have been
guessing unless the Tar Heels (a) pick up guessing unless the Tar Heels (a) pick up
their defense and (b) become, or act, tougher and more aggressive.
Boston College seemed to say to UNC, "hey, you guys may be All-Americans and whatever, but we want to win also and if you don't punch back, we're going to take your candy." It remains to be seen how Car-
olina will respond to this loss, which defolina will respond to this loss, which defi nitely qualifies as a "wake-up call." But if comparisons can be made to last season, the
Tar Heels will find ways to at least shore up the problem areas and win a lot of games. the problem areas and win
That is a big "if," of course.

Whether the Heels will bounce back Cants, the Tar Heels have won 14 straight in
well enough to cruise all the way to ACC impressive fashion and have earned the No. 2 national ranking. The Heels begin ACC play Thursday night on the road against 10-4 Clemson and then return home for a couple more tough league games against
Virginia (13-2) and N.C. State before a Jan. 19 marquee showdown with top-ranked Connecticut at the Smith Center.

## The gridiron

And finally, the Carolina football season came a bit more full circle in the past week with the 29-23 loss by N.C. State and the announcement that junior wide and the announcement that junior wide
receiver Hakeem Nicks will be heading to the NFL a year early. Nicks has been Carolina's most focused, consistent and productive player in many years, and no one will be more deserving of a big-time pro career than he is.
And somehow, Rutgers managed to return a bit of balance and perspective to
a football season that saw UNC blast the carlet Knights early, 44-12, on a memorable Thursday night in Piscataway, only o suffer an equally crushing beating (41-10) at the hands of State in Chapel Hill two months later. By knocking off the Wolfpack, the Knights reminded everyone that each game is still decided out
there on the field, not in the stat box or
and NCAA glory remains another ques-
tion. A couple of statistics that might be good indicators to keep an eye on are Carmargin numbers. In 2007-08, the Tar Heels ranked at or near the top nationally all season in both of these focus-and-huste/ toughness stats; right now, through 14 games, they lag behind last year's pace significantly.
It is also likely that Carolina will look more like a team as its toughest and most fundamentally sound player, Marcus Ginind, rounds back into shape from his foot injury -- assuming he is able to fully re-
cover. A good measure of how well Carolina
will identify its mistakes and weaknesses - and work to correct them -- could come this week against College Of Charleston on Wednesday night and then at Wake
Forest on Sunday. The Deacs, one of fou Forest on Sunday. The Deacs, one of four
unbeaten teams remaining, will no doubt unbeaten teams remaining, will no doubt be sky high court.

## The women

The UNC women, thankfully, are still carrying the undefeated flag for Carolina. Led by surprising junior forward Jessica roblem areas and win a lot of games. $\quad$ senior all-star candidate Rashanda Mc-
is a big "if," of course.

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