Looking back at field hockey’s perfect season

By Holt McIntosh
Assistant Sports Editor

The No. 1 North Carolina field hockey team won its 23rd game of the season and the 2018 NCAA Championship on Sunday by defeating No. 2 Maryland, 2-0. It is the Tar Heels' 10th shutout of the season — they did so in dominating fashion, outscoring the opposition by a 103-16 margin.

The unblemished mark for the team was not just about talent. It was about the formula that head coach Karen Shelton and her coaches set out for their team.

"Don't take anything for granted, don't go into any games underestimating any opponent," Evert said, "so I think our coaches did a great job of telling us we have to work hard and that we have to put all the effort in to be at the top at the end."

But for the team to fully buy into that strategy from the coaching staff, it would take more than their words. It meant the senior class would have to lead the way. With Hoffman, they did.

"Ashley Hoffman has been a leader since day one," Shelton said. "We've got Eva van't Hoog, we've worked for four years now on this team and building a culture and building this team and I think we've accomplished all the goals we've set this year."

The win against the Terrapins came a year and a day after falling to Connecticut in the Final Four at the same site on Nov. 17, 2017. After that game against the Huskies, Hoffman and her fellow seniors, van't Hoog and Malin Evert, vowed they would refuse to lose all season, 'Hoffman said. "And that pretty much was the mindset the whole time."

And they didn't lose again. Twenty-three games later, the Tar Heels did not just achieve a perfect season — they did so in dominating fashion, outrunning the opposition by a 103-16 margin.

The Tar Heels knew it from the very beginning. It started with a season-opening victory over Michigan, who was ranked No. 5 in the country at the time. The Tar Heels took down the Wolverines, 5-1, in the first game in the now-named Karen Shelton Stadium. After the win, junior forward Megan DuVernois hinted at how good UNC knew it could be.

"This year our team is super special because everyone really connects on the field and off the field, so it's a very good start," she said on Aug. 25.

This team, indeed, has been special. North Carolina scored 122 goals all season and allowed only 16. It gave up more than one goal only three times, and still won those games by a combined 11 goals.

UNC's blistering start against Michigan foreshadowed how they would dominate other top-ranked teams throughout the season, but it wasn't all smooth sailing. The team nearly stumbled in a 2-1 overtime win against Iowa. North Carolina conceded an early goal, and trailed for most of the game. Yet a trend that would become familiar emerged: First-year Erin Matson and senior Ashley Hoffman were the heroes. Matson scored an equalizer in the 62nd minute, and Hoffman closed out the win with a penalty goal in overtime.

"I felt ecstatic, but I was also thinking that this is early in the game, there is a still a lot to play," DuVernois said. "We have to keep going, pushing, and keep trying to score because we were not going to be able to let up at all."

With less than five minutes left in the first half, first-year forward Erin Matson joined in, scoring off her own rebound, and doubled her team's lead.

"I saw the goalie come out so I was thinking to pull right," Matson said. "I saw the goalie come out so I was thinking to pull right." Matson said.

"I felt like a dream come true," said senior midfielder Eva van't Hoog. "We've worked for four years now on this team and building a culture and building this team and I think we've accomplished all the goals we've set this year."

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"Don't take anything for granted, don't go into any games underestimating any opponent," Evert said, "so I think our coaches did a great job of telling us we have to work hard and that we have to put all the effort in to be at the top at the end."

But for the team to fully buy into that strategy from the coaching staff, it would take more than their words. It meant the senior class would have to lead the way. With Hoffman, they did.

"Ashley Hoffman has been a leader since day one," Shelton said. "We've got Eva van't Hoog, she's awesome in the midfield, Malin Evert — she's been with us. I have the strongest midfield in the nation by far and Eva and Malin are part of that midfield. Ashley anchors the back. The rest of the seniors, it's just been an amazing year for us."

"After defeating Wake Forest, 4-1, on Friday, the scene was set. UNC faced Maryland, the fourth time the programs have battled in the National Championship since 2009. Hoping to become the third team in program history to finish undefeated, the Tar Heels completed their 10th shutout of the season with members of the 1995 and 2007 undefeated squads in attendance.

So as the final seconds ticked off the clock in the second half, Hoffman had many thoughts — she wanted her team to get possession and run out the rest of the game, but once she knew her team was going to achieve perfection, she thought something else.

"Hug someone, honestly," said Hoffman, who was named the NCAA Championship MVP. "That was my first thought, is Where's Coach? Where are my friends? I just couldn't believe it."

At the final whistle sounded, the bench converged onto the field and Hoffman found her teammates. She doesn't remember who she hugged first. But she certainly remembers the feeling of knowing she and her teammates achieved perfection.

A feeling that can never be erased for the rest of their lives.

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Board of Aldermen allocate funds for new MLK Jr. Park

On the morning of Monday, Sept. 17, an Orange County Schools bus full of drenched and shivering students encountered high water when driving through a flooded section of Old N.C. 10. Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and Wake County Public Schools opted to cancel class that day, which kept their students and staff safely indoors, but that three districts each a total of three school days missed during Hurricane Florence, all of which have to be made up.

This is a dilemma that many school districts in North Carolina face, according to Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools spokesperson Jeff Nash. Nash stated that school districts in that day because of the possibility of flooding, but he said some school districts have a minimum of 185 days must have a minimum of 185 days during August and June, respectively, and schools calendar flexibility for makeup days. Some districts in the Triangle missed four in five days total from Florence and Michael. These districts were able to use the unused makeup days for the days they missed during Hurricane Michael. Some, like Wake County Public School System, missed two days during Michael, so they waived two makeup days. North Carolina school calendars typically have five to 10 days set aside to be used as makeup days when severe weather hits. This year, the one-two punch of Florence and Michael caused some school districts on the coast to miss more than 20 school days.

“You're kind of beating your head against the wall when you're trying to schedule everything when in the world are we going to do about missing this many days?” said Otis Sammy Slade, the only Board of Aldermen. “We will have to rebid it, and it will cost you more than the number you are here to address. ’cause we've already brought out heavy equipment.”

“We're really hoping that the General Assembly will in the future provide more flexibility to the school calendar law so these districts can make their own adjustments for natural disasters or whatever their community needs are and not just for hurricanes that hit the coast, but also for winter weather in Western North Carolina and other cases of severe weather.”

“Schools can't make up days missed after hurricanes

The town began implementing its master plan for the park in 1999.

By Crystal Yu

At its Nov. 11 meeting, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen voted 5-1 to approve a budget amendment to allocate more funds for the construction of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park. The amendment includes reallocation of $863,542 from the town’s $2 million fund balance for future capital projects, which will allow the town to reduce the lowest construction bid of $8,193,200. It also includes an estimated $92,352,000 in revenue for future unforeseen expenses.

The town received sealed bids on Oct. 15 for the construction of the park, although all bids exceeded the estimated cost prepared by Stewart Inc., the development partner for the project. Bethany Chaney, a Board of Aldermen member, said the cost has been increasing quickly. "Because we can't afford not to build it, because I think the price is not going to go down," Chaney said. Alderman member Jacquelyn Gist said the price is skyrocketing for a reason.

"It's basically because the cost of equipment and materials are going up, and that is being driven by two things," she said. "The first one, we're looking at that represent a lot of money for the town, I still have yet to see the cost for our implementation our climate change action plan." Gist said. "I feel very uncomfortable voting on anything that costs a lot because, for me, that is the highest priority over everything."

She said the budget amendment is a red light for future projects because in the future, it will come down to choosing between raising taxes and implementing a specific project.

The project has come a long way.

In 1999, the town began implementing its 1994 master plan for the park by purchasing 10.16 acres of land on Hillsborough Road. In spring of 2006, a park planning committee was named and the park designer, Site Solutions, was hired. The developers, came on board in 2008. Jennifer Wagner, planning and design project manager from Stewart Inc., said construction will begin very soon and is expected to last at least 12 to 14 months.

"We have a couple project, a light touch on the land. We will be upgrading the parking lot, adding the pump track and walking trails, so I think it will be a really wonderful park for the community," she said.
North Carolina rejected the legislature’s thinly-veiled amendment power grab.

This Thanksgiving, the Editorial Board is thankful for the preservation of democratic norms and institutions — and you should be too.

On Nov. 6, 2019, North Carolinians checked and balanced the power of the North Carolina General Assembly. Voters rejected an attack on separation of powers given by the General Assembly, new constitutional amendments. These amendments would have allowed the state’s executive power by giving the General Assembly more of a say in filling judicial vacancies. Needless to say, it was a successful, and we should collectively relax in our failures.

Luckily, the General Assembly’s attempt to foist voters with state law changes was unsuccessful, and we should openly among us self-control. For many, the political equivalent of being grounded by your parents or with your boss. We refuse self-empowerment, and we do the right thing even around. For some, it’s just found out that the world doesn’t evolve around us. The world still evolves around us. Shocked and upset.

We have the largest single-story mall in the country. One time I got $290 Kate Spade value wallet from Yves Salom. I’m thinking I can do anywhere else.

Our most celebrated artists are North Carolina has a beach for everyone. There is a bizarre mound of sand, which in this midterm election we did not include the $175 she will spend on $3,000. This total included $190 for the UNC sophomore who had no more influence to a legislature that the General Assembly actually was unsuccessful, and we should openly among us. The world still evolves around us. Shocked and upset.

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Dems win vote majority, seat minority in N.C.

By Michael Taffe

Although the Democratic Party received the majority of votes statewide for both the state Senate and state House, the Republican Party still holds the majority in both N.C. chambers for the next two-year cycle.

Although they lost the statewide vote for both chambers of the General Assembly, Republicans will hold onto 29 out of 50 seats in the N.C. Senate and 66 of 120 seats in the N.C. House.

Despite losing the popular vote in both state legislative chambers, State House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger, both Republicans, released a statement claiming success in response to the midterm election results.

"North Carolina voters issued a clear mandate to continue Republican policies that are benefitting the workforce, improving schools and delivering a pro-jobs agenda for families," Moore and Berger said in their joint statement.

Patrick Gannon, spokesperson for the State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement, said the 2018 midterms saw historic turnout. The NCSBE also made efforts to ensure that victims of Hurricane Florence were not prevented from voting.

"This agency spent $400,000 in late October/early November on TV, radio, newspaper, online and social media advertising reminding voters in eastern North Carolina of their voting options," Gannon said. "The General Assembly provided that funding in hurricane recovery legislation."

But despite the unusually high turnout, the gerrymandered legislative maps prevented results from matching the vote.

"Districts were redrawn after the 2010 U.S. Census, as is customary, to reflect population shifts," Gannon said. "There have been modifications to the congressional districts and state legislative districts since then as a result of litigation."

Bob Phillips, executive director of Common Cause North Carolina, a nonpartisan group that focuses on election enforcement and fairness, said North Carolina saw the effects of gerrymandering in the 2018 midterm election.

"We have 13 congressional seats in North Carolina, and one party took 10, and the other party took three, and yet the vote share overall was about 50-50 across the state," Phillips said.

"To us, that’s an egregious example of what partisan gerrymandering does — it protects the incumbents of the majority party that drew the maps."

Common Cause has filed lawsuits in an attempt to overturn North Carolina’s legislative maps.

"The Common Cause v. Rucho case was the very first federal court in North Carolina to ever consider and rule favorably in a partisan gerrymandering lawsuit," Phillips said.

"And the challenge we’ve just filed on Tuesday of this week, which is Common Cause v. Lewis, is the first partisan gerrymandering challenge on state legislative maps to be filed ever in any court in North Carolina."

"So it has a bit of history to it as well." Phillips said Common Cause is trying to educate the public and force the General Assembly to pass redistricting reform by the 2020 general election.

While Democrats received 50 percent of the votes for the N.C. Senate, they received only 42 percent of seats. And while they received 50.5 percent of the votes for the N.C. House, they received only 45 percent of seats.

"In our minds, this speaks to the fact that lines are drawn to protect the party in power. Democrats did it when they were in charge, Republicans are doing it," Phillips said.

Although Phillips spoke out against the disproportional outcome of the 2018 election in North Carolina, he clarified that his organization’s motivations are not partisan.

"Common Cause is not an organization that is focused on the outcome of elections, but we are focused on the process, and we feel like we have a broken process that produces a bad outcome," Phillips said. "North Carolina, legitimately and truly, is a highly competitive political state that is purple in its hue, not red and not blue. And yet, the congressional and legislative delegations don’t reflect that."
Manny Miles watches from the sideline as his son throws the pass at the start of the second quarter of Saturday’s game.

“Manny was super excited,” said father Les Miles.

Miles contributed to the game as a placekicker and punt returner.

“I was hoping he’d get in there and get a chance to put a finger on a football,” said senior tight end Jake Bargas.

Bargas, a 19-point lead at the half, but more importantly, it turned a dream into a reality for Manny Miles.

When Manny Miles grew up, he watched his father coach LSU to two Southeastern Conference Championships and one BCS National Championship in 2007. Manny Miles dreamed he would be like the players his father coached and score touchdowns.

“Sometimes, you feel like a broken record,” Kathy Miles said. “Always saying, ‘Stay ready. Stay ready!’ He wants to be out there throwing the ball. And then, he finally got a chance. It was great to see it happen.”

Before his touchdown pass against Western Carolina, Manny Miles’ career highlights both happened in 2017: a 2-point conversion run against Old Dominion and a completed pass to two Southeastern Conference

Fedora praised Manny Miles for his willingness to take on any role assigned throughout his time as a Tar Heel.

“Dad,” he said, “is a dad first, not a coach,” the younger Miles said. “He’s more proud of me than anybody else here, being a father. And that’s the only thing I can ask for.”

The touchdown throw made Manny Miles the ninth Tar Heel to throw for a touchdown this season.

North Carolina’s quarterback carousel has spun all year. Even with injuries to redshirt sophomore Chazz Surratt and true first-years Cade Fortin and Jace Ruder, it didn’t stop on Saturday.

When the Tar Heels found themselves lined up at the Catamounts’ 38-yard line with just seconds left until halftime, head coach Larry Fedora chose to give Manny Miles a chance to sling the ball as far as he could.

“We just felt like we knew Manny could get it there for sure, and we were going to have an opportunity,” Fedora said after the game.

Manny Miles has spent more time holding the football for field goals and extra points than he has behind center in his four years in Chapel Hill. But no matter what position he played, his mother, Kathy Miles, always preached the importance of preparation.

“I think I’m the first one in the family to do it,” Manny Miles said.

When one of his sisters jokingly asked where he thought his performance lined up with other Miles family performances, he reminded everyone that his father never scored a touchdown as an offensive lineman at Michigan in the 1970s.

His brother, Ben Miles, also has yet to score a collegiate touchdown in his first year as a fullback at Texas A&M.

“I think I’m the first one in the family to do it,” Manny Miles said with a smile.

But Manny Miles isn’t satisfied yet. After all, he does have one game left in his Tar Heel career.

“I’d love to get the chance to do it again,” he said.

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Case compared the language of Scalise with the language that Nazis used about those of Jewish faith. "The more you think about the relationship between what it is to be gay in Amendment Two's Colorado and Jewish in Nazi Germany, there are parallels," Case said.

The third panel of the symposium discussed the intersection of sex and the internet. Professor Mary Anne Franks of the University of Miami School of Law addressed free speech culture in her discussion. "I want to talk about what I call 'First Amendment orthodoxy' or the cliché that freedom of speech is that we often have, especially in popular understanding of free speech," Franks said. Franks continued with discussion on the impact of conversation about sex in cases of unauthorized distribution of sexually explicit imagery. She acknowledged that the objection to the circulation of these images is prevalent across all countries. "As opposed to this vision of robust and uninhibited conversation about sex, what we often find is incredibly typical, redundant, patronizing assumptions about sex, and that tends to be most of what we talk about and emphasize," Franks said. "The ability to share naked pictures of people with their consent has been perceived as a free speech issue and that any attempts to try to regulate that conduct would be violations of freedom of speech."

Eric Goldman, professor at Santa Clara University School of Law, and Jeff Kosseff, an assistant professor of cybersecurity law at the United States Naval Academy, continued the panel's discussions on internet law and cyber security. The process of organizing this symposium began last year. Keri Rowsey, the symposium editor of the First Amendment Law Review, headed planning for the symposium. "It's just really a lot of emailing back and forth to panelists and coordinating and doing the logistical stuff like setting up the Carolina Club, making sure there's people to pick them up at the airport and things like that," Rowsey said. "And then we also publish some of our scholarly articles, which will come out this March. I believe."

After spending eight months working on the event, Rowsey felt satisfied with the outcomes of the symposium's panel discussions. "I think the last panel highlighted that perfectly," Rowsey said. "I hope that even though there are differences in opinion and what the role of sex and the conversation about sex should be, that we can all come together and work towards creative solutions in some of the problems that they talked about today."

Mary Anne Case took the lead in language in specific court cases. She discussed Romer v. Evans, a case dealing with Amendment Two's ban on gay rights and the Freedom of Expression," Franks said. Following the first panel, "Sex and the Freedom of Expression," Mary Anne Case took the lead in the second panel of the day, titled "Sex and Religion."

Case, a professor at the University of Chicago Law School, discussed Justice Antonin Scalia's use of language in specific court cases. She acknowledged that the objection to the circulation of these images is prevalent across all countries. "As opposed to this vision of robust and uninhibited conversation about sex, what we often find is incredibly typical, redundant, patronizing assumptions about sex, and that tends to be most of what we talk about and emphasize," Franks said. "The ability to share naked pictures of people with their consent has been perceived as a free speech issue and that any attempts to try to regulate that conduct would be violations of freedom of speech."

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Michael Gerhardt, Mary-Rose Papandrea, Claudia Haupt and Clay Calvert take part in the first panel discussion of the Sex and the First Amendment symposium.

Channning Der, UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center member and Kenan Distiguished Professor, researches a way to decrease the rate of pancreatic cancer and produce new therapies for patients. He received the National Cancer Institute Outstanding Investigator Award, given to researchers who study the genetic basis of risk and develop potential new treatments for patients. He recognized his own talents on the piano to a friend 13 years ago. Beery said that though the festi-vals aims to showcase many different types of films, it occasionally takes on the nature of the things the worldwide filmmaking community is primarily portraying. He noticed one theme in particular that became especially prominent in the last year, and that was "Sex and the Freedom of Expression," Franks said. Following the first panel, "Sex and the Freedom of Expression," Mary Anne Case took the lead in the second panel of the day, titled "Sex and Religion."

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The Daily Tar Heel

SEASON RECAP FROM PAGE 1

‘Kind of a perfect season’

The Tar Heels ran through the nation’s top conference. Including the ACC Championship, North Carolina went 9-0 against ACC foes and only conceded nine goals in those games. The ACC slate gave North Carolina a chance to cut its teeth against top competition and emerge as a title favorite.

Throughout the regular season, Matthew Matson emerged as one of the top players in the country. Matson led UNC in goals scored, assists and total points. She joined a trio of Tar Heels who swept up the ACC awards. Matson was named ACC Freshman of the Year and ACC Offensive Player of the Year, while Hoffman was named ACC Defensive Player of the Year, and head coach Karen Shelton was named ACC Coach of the Year.

UNC’s dominance peaked in the ACC Championship, an event the top-seeded team had never won since the conference’s expansion. The Tar Heels headed that trend, and defeated Wake Forest, 2-0, in the ACC title game. After the win, the emergent star reflected on UNC’s regular season.

“I think it has been kind of a perfect season so far,” Matson said. “It has been exciting every single day.”

From Page 1

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The Chapel Hill YMCA is seeking after leaders. 261 South Elliott Road next to O2 Fit-Friday 9-5 and Saturday 9-1. Schedules are interested please apply in person Monday, November 19, 2018. The Daily Tar Heel is opening soon and seeking energetic hard working/entry-level employees.

Maryland took 10 shots on goal, and the Tar Heels were unable to score in the second half, their defense, which has been dominant all season long, kept the Terrapin attack at bay and secured the victory, 2-0.

“Toward the second half, it was not pretty,” head coach Karen Shelton said. “We had a two-goal lead and kind of held on. Maryland was chasing the game, put a lot of pressure on us but we were able to get the shutout.”

North Carolina answered the call defensively. The Tar Heels did something that hasn’t been done to Maryland since Sept. 1, 2007. They shut them out.

North Carolina has shut out 10 opponents in 23 games this season.

The stalwart defensive unit was anchored by Ashley Hoffman, who was named NCAA Tournament MVP. Hoffman was joined on All-Tournament team by teammates Matson, Hendry and senior midfielder Ria Harting.

As time ran out, and North Carolina’s defense had secured the win, the players on the Tar Heel bench reacted to the field with smiles on their faces and hugs for their teammates. In the stands, UNC fans who traveled to Louisville had a similar reaction.

“It was a perfect ending to a perfect season,” Matson said. “I couldn’t have asked for anything better.

We had no hard games that we fought through together, we fought through overtime, through strokes, cards, games that were won at halftime, and all of the above.

- Terez Neatruth

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Aries (March 21-April 19)

Jonah was named undergraduate scholar of the year in psychology, sociology, OT/PT, or other human service fields.

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HELP WANTED: Math & reading with a 5th grade boy in Chapel Hill. Special education training preferred. $20plus/hr. M, W, Th 3-6pm.

 Gastropub / Restaurant Bartender. 261 South Elliott Road next to O2 Fitness. Monday- Friday 9-5 and Saturday 9-1. Schedules are interested please apply in person Monday, November 19, 2018.

Maryland answered the call defensively. The Tar Heels did something that hasn’t been done to Maryland since Sept. 1, 2007. They shut them out.

North Carolina has shut out 10 opponents in 23 games this season.

The stalwart defensive unit was anchored by Ashley Hoffman, who was named NCAA Tournament MVP. Hoffman was joined on All-Tournament team by teammates Matson, Hendry and senior midfielder Ria Harting.

As time ran out, and North Carolina’s defense had secured the win, the players on the Tar Heel bench reacted to the field with smiles on their faces and hugs for their teammates. In the stands, UNC fans who traveled to Louisville had a similar reaction.

“It was a perfect ending to a perfect season,” Matson said. “I couldn’t have asked for anything better.

We had no hard games that we fought through together, we fought through overtime, through strokes, cards, games that were won at halftime, and all of the above.

- Terez Neatruth

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Woods has career-best performance in win over TTU

By James Tatter
Senior Writer

In a fluid motion, Seventh Woods gathered the ball in front of him and twisted it behind his back, snapping it perfectly to a waiting Cameron Johnson in the corner. The North Carolina fans watching drew in their breath in reaction.

Johnson rewarded them, splashing home the 3-pointer to put the Tar Heels up by 25. The crowd erupted in one of the loudest moments of a night full of impressive plays as the Tar Heels (4-0) ran away with a 108-58 victory over Tennessee Tech.

“I honestly didn’t know I had it until after I did it, so I guess it was natural,” Woods said of the behind-the-back pass.

Moments later, after a missed jumper by Tennessee Tech (0-4), Woods dished the ball off to junior Cameron Johnson who flipped in a lay-up to complete Woods’ career-high seventh assist of the game. The point guard added another dime on a jumper by first-year Nastie Little late in the 2nd quarter. He got all eight assists in just 17 minutes on the floor.

“The game has definitely slowed down to me,” Woods said. “I realize how good my guys are, so I can get the ball inside to them, nine times out of ten they’re going to score the ball. So that’s an easy assist for me. And I realized that early on.”

The junior found six different players on his assists: big men Sterling Manley, Luke Maye and Garrison Brooks—as well as Johnson, Robinson and Little.

Woods also connected on three of his five shots for seven points. For his head coach, there was one stat that was more impressive than anything else.

“No turnovers,” Roy Williams said. “That’s an easy deal. I’ve been preaching for three years, stay in front of the ball and don’t turn the sucker over and you get to play more. It’s pretty easy.”

Establishing a right to playing time is something that is important to Woods, as he is competing with first-year Coby White for time at the point guard spot. In the 1st half, Woods struggled to stay healthy in his first two years in Chapel Hill, and when he fell he struggled to avoid turnovers. Early in his junior year, neither issue has held him back. He is having perhaps his best start to a season since arriving at UNC, and said he is the healthiest he has ever been since “maybe my sophomore year of high school to be honest with you.”

“I think he knows what his role is, and he’s really playing at a high level and doing it,” Maye said.

That is crucial for the Tar Heels, for whom the point guard spot was a daunting task. Woods was questionable himself with a spotty track record in his first two years in Chapel Hill. But what he and his coach look at is the progress of his main ball handler.

“I was really just not trying to make mistakes. So you just gotta move as quickly as possible, focus on the next play.”

The game has certainly trickled down to Woods. As White has made the jump to the next level of basketball, Woods has led by example.

“He’s helped a lot,” White said. “I’m trying to follow his lead. He teaches me a lot on and off the court, and I’m just trying to get a grasp of it.”

For a head coach that doesn’t tend to heap on praise, Williams said he has been impressed with the progression of his main ball handler. The evolution of Woods’ plays certainly helps. After the game Friday night, Williams looked at the stat sheet.

“I’m pretty damn pleased with our point guard position,” he said. “Reading off the stat lines for Woods and White, he smiled.

“Do I feel pretty good about that?” he asked.

Woods has career-best performance in win over TTU

By By Brian Keyes
Senior Writer

CATY — In the NCAA Tournament, there are no easy outs, especially when playing one of the most aggressive teams in the country.

The North Carolina women’s soccer team’s senior leadership already knew this, but was reminded of it in a slow first half against Virginia Tech on Sunday.

Having defeated the Hokies twice already this season, the No. 3 Tar Heels looked complacent at times. At least, that’s what head coach Anson Dorrance saw after the game.

“You don’t want to play a team you’ve already beaten twice, because motivation is an issue,” Dorrance said.

“I thought that was an issue for us in the first half. Obviously motivation for them is not.”

Lack of motivation aside, North Carolina (20-3-1, 10-0 ACC) still found itself up 1-0 at the end of the first half after a goal by redshirt senior Alex Kimball.

It’s a testament to the culture the team’s leadership has built this season that Woods was able to put the game away against the Hokies (11-7-3, 5-5 ACC) in the following 45 minutes. They won the game, 3-0, advancing to the NCAA quarterfinals.

Kimball got her assist on a goal from first-year midfielder Brianna Pinto less than four minutes into the second half of play. In the 58th minute, senior midfielder Dorian Bailey put the exclamation mark on the win with her fourth goal of the campaign.

For UNC, a strong team culture is what has helped the team throughout ups and downs of the season. First, the Tar Heels traveled to California and lost two games in a row to No. 7 Santa Clara and No. 1 Stanford.

However, North Carolina didn’t lose a game for the rest of the regular season.

The team lost star sophomore forward Alessia Russo in the last game before the ACC Tournament. It responded by making it all the way to the ACC Championship before falling to Florida State, 3-2.

North Carolina’s senior leaders have certainly stepped up since that game against the Seminoles.

“We just have such a great group of girls,” said senior Julia Ashley.

“It’s such a huge part of why we’ve been successful this year.”

For the Tar Heels, it’s been Kimball, who replaced Russo, that has brought a burst of energy and tenacity to the team.

She tallied not only a goal, but also made an assist and had three shots on frame in her 47 minutes on the field.

The redshirt senior knows she has her work cut out for her, replacing one of the most valuable players the team has in the starting lineup.

“It was really just not trying to be Alessia, but just to be Alex,” Kimball said.

We have very different styles. And I knew, as a redshirt senior, what Anson wants out of me. To just basically give my team all I have,” she said.

Giving it her all has become Kimball’s calling card on the field in the six games she has started since Russo’s injury. This is also what has helped her earn the respect of her coaches.

“Alex plays with her heart,” Dorrance said.

“The thing you’re going to get out of Alex every single game is, she’s gonna push her heart up against the four sides of the field. That’s a human quality that all of us can respect and admire.”

Energy is infectious, and Kimball brings plenty of it. It’s the kind of thing that can help a team like UNC wake up after a less than stellar first half.

“When AK (Kimball) is up there, she just runs all over the place,” Ashley said. “When she’s going after the ball, you can’t double down with her. It’s just an amazing aspect about her, I don’t know anyone else like AK, she runs her butt off.”

Kimball will have to keep that energy going for the remainder of the tournament for North Carolina. She, along with the other seven seniors, made it to the NCAA semifinals back in 2016. While they knew they could make it there again remains to be seen.

If they do, it’ll be a product of the team’s leadership showing the way.