

McAdoo Leads Heels To 76-59 Win

Written by Staff Reports

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James Michael McAdoo set career highs with 26 points and 14 rebounds to help No. 11 North Carolina beat Gardner-Webb 76-59 on Friday night. McAdoo shot 10 of 20 from the field in the first game of the season for both teams. Dexter

Strickland added 13 points for the Tar Heels (1-0), who improved to 91-12 in openers. We did try to do a lot of things with a lot of different lineups," said UNC coach Roy Williams. "Four freshmen, first time they were in there, so I think it was good for them. Gardner-Webb had an experienced team, and they made us look bad at times. I am disappointed in how we played, but I'm not disappointed in my team."

North Carolina overcame 18 turnovers, 1-of-12 shooting from 3-point range and a 9-of-19 mark at the free throw line to win for the 80th time in its last 82 home openers.

Donta Harper and Max Landis cored 13 points each to lead Gardner-Webb, which dropped to 0-16 against ACC competition. Mike Byron added 10 for the Bulldogs. North Carolina took its biggest lead at 57-39 midway through the second half. The Bulldogs cut the deficit to 63-54 on a 3-pointer by Isaiah Ivey with 4:55 remaining before the Tar Heels answered with an 8-0 run. North Carolina led 38-26 at halftime, pulling away midway through the first half with an 8-0 spurt. McAdoo scored on a putback dunk and added a turnaround jumper from the left baseline as the Tar Heels turned a three-point advantage into a 30-19 lead with 5 minutes remaining. The outsized Bulldogs leaned heavily on the 3-point shot as they tried to beat North Carolina for the first time in five tries, but the long-range jumpers misfired. Gardner-Webb shot 6 of 22 on 3-pointers, including 3 of 14 in the first half.

"I think it was a good night for us, and I think we learned a lot," Williams said. "Hopefully, we'll be able to do some things tomorrow morning in practice to help us get better, and we need to be better on Sunday. We talked about earlier this week, six games in 12 or 13 days.

"James Michael [McAdoo] 26 and 14, those are pretty big-time numbers. I'd like him to do it without having to take 20 shots. We've got to have the other guys be more active on the backboards and not just him. I've been saying, with Leslie [McDonald] and Reggie [Bullock] and P.J. [Hairston] that we're a good shooting team. One for 12 from the three-point line doesn't look like it, but Reggie was almost unselfish to a fault tonight. He's got to take a couple more of the shots and guys have to get be willing to screen for him to get him open too."

North Carolina got off to a slow start with four new starters, including freshman point guard Marcus Paige, a season after winning the Atlantic Coast Conference regular-season title. The Tar Heels had three turnovers and an airball during a five-possession span early as Gardner-Webb took a 13-12 lead 7 minutes into the game.

But Joel James answered with a putback and a jumper as part of a 6-0 spurt to put the Tar Heels ahead 20-14 midway through the half, and they never trailed again.

The Tar Heels will play Florida Atlantic Sunday at 2:30 p.m. in Chapel Hill in the opening round of the EA Sports Maui Invitational. Coverage begins at 1:30 p.m. on Mix 102.3 FM.

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Photo Courtesy: James Michael McAdoo, UNC Athletics