

Sports

A&E	B5-6
Comics	B6
Coming Attractions	B6
Deacon Notes	B2
Perspectives	B4
Scoreboard	B3

Men's cross country takes 20th place at NCAA Championships

By ADAM ROTHSCHILD
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REPORTER

The Demon Deacon men's cross country team closed out an impressive season Nov. 20 by finishing 20th at the NCAA National Cross Country Championships in Ames, Iowa. The meet featured 177 finishers and 22 teams that qualified by way of the various district meets around the nation. The Deacons qualified by placing third in the District III meet at Furman Nov. 11. Arkansas took home the championship trophy, claiming five of the first 36 positions,

including the first and fourth places. The Razorbacks' Godfrey Siamusiye won the individual title with a time of 30:09 for the 10K course at Iowa State University.

As has become customary this season, the Deacons' success came on the heels of an excellent team time split. The top five Deacons finished within 51 seconds of each other, led by junior Jon Russell in 109th place, sophomore Nolan Swanson in 115th and sophomore Eric Dunn in 118th.

Head Coach John Goodridge was more than pleased with his team's final effort of the season. "We're certainly pleased that the team

returned to the NCAA Championship after not qualifying last year," Goodridge said. "That was one of our goals coming into the year."

Goodridge stressed that, although the Deacons finished near the bottom of the standings in that final meet, their finish in relation to the other teams present at Iowa State was not indicative of a disappointing effort.

"Anytime a team can finish in the top 20, it's something to be proud of. It's the nature of runners to wish that they'd run a little faster," Goodridge said. "The team certainly would have hoped to finish higher, and that's the

nature of competitive athletes and competitive coaches, but it's unfortunate to forget about the teams that didn't qualify."

Deacon fans should be excited to know that their squad, ranked 19th in the final coach's poll, will return most of its members next year, losing only senior Steve Guerrini from the squad that ran at NCAAs.

"We're a relatively young group, one of the youngest at the championships," Goodridge said. "It's something we can only be excited about for future opportunities. Hopefully, we can use this experience to qualify again next year and hopefully move up the ladder."

Aside from their performance at Iowa State, this year's squad continued the tradition of excellence associated with Deacon cross country. Dunn and Russell earned ACC Performer of the Week awards, while Russell, Swanson and senior Paul Kinsler won All-ACC honors. The Demon Deacons also won the season-opening meet at Appalachian State as well as the Wake Forest Classic, and they finished second in the ACC Championships and third in District III.

"I'm very proud of this team for maintaining this quality of excellence," Goodridge said.

Duncan's 22 leads Deacs over OSU

By STEVE WELGOSS
SPORTS COPY EDITOR

Junior Tim Duncan — he can beat you with one arm tied (or held) behind his back.

Duncan's incredible offensive rebound in the midst of two Oklahoma State defenders early in last night's game was a signal of things to come as the 10th-ranked Deacons (2-0) rolled to a 69-53 win in the DIRECTV Great 8 Challenge.

Duncan showed the crowd at the Palace at Auburn Hills, Mich., why he is an All-American when he rose between two OSU players to grab an errant shot (while his left arm was being held), tip it to himself and yank it down one-handed. The theatrics continued with a kick-out to sophomore Tony Rutland for a three-pointer.

Just one of many great plays, it was the highlight of a 22 point, 16 rebound, three block and six assist performance for which OSU simply could not find an answer.

Duncan did not do it alone, though, as several other players stepped up and played big. Junior Ricky Peral continued his red-hot shooting from beyond the arc as he nailed four-of-four threes as part of a 16 point effort. He hit six-of-seven shots overall and has now drilled nine-of-11 treys (82 percent) this season.

Rutland showed signs of further settling into the role of floor general. Slowly stepping out of the shadow of Randolph Childress, '95, he chipped in 16 points while controlling a steady offensive attack that successfully connected on 55 percent of its shots. Rutland hit seven-of-11 shots while handing out four assists.

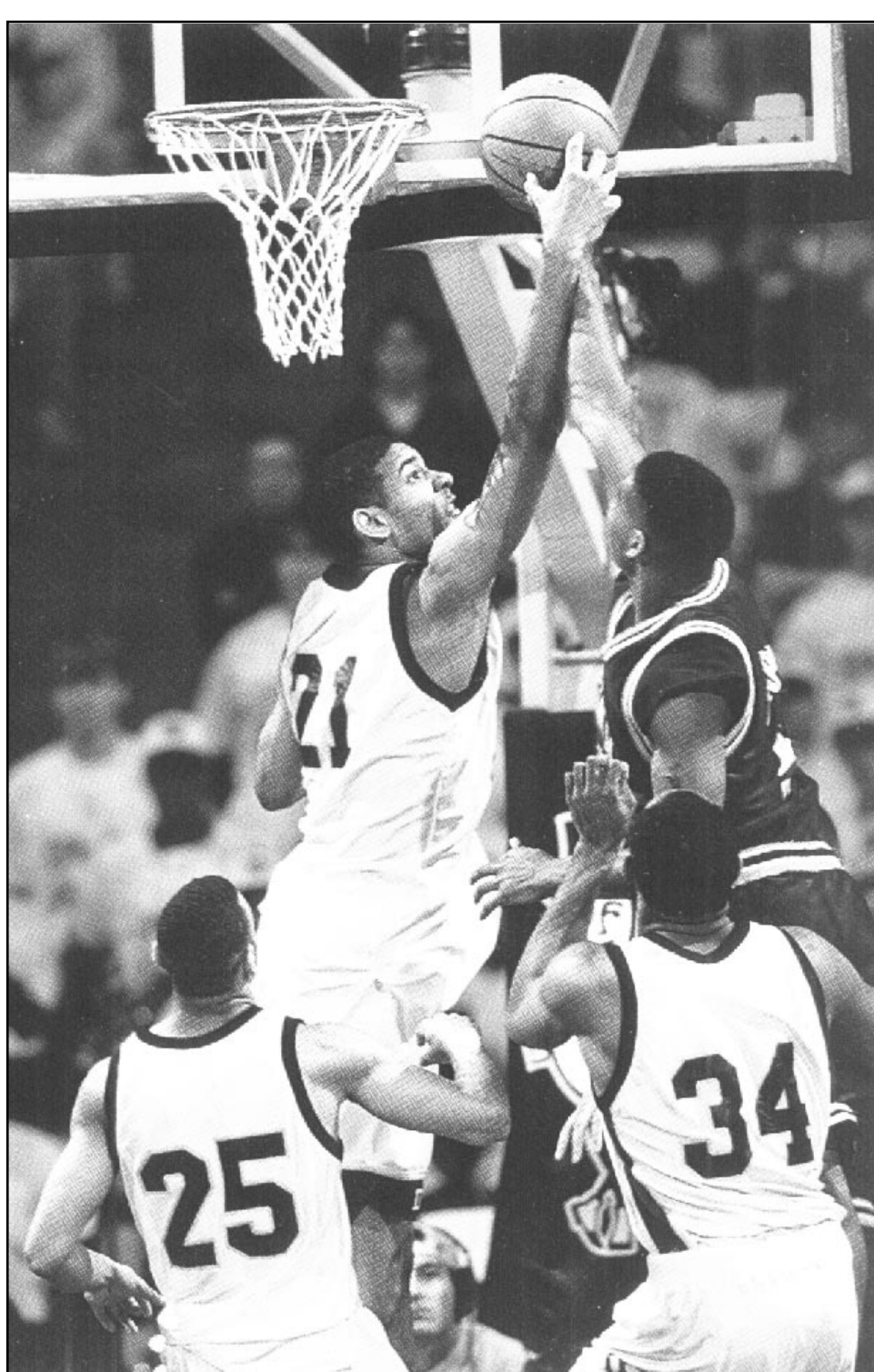
After falling behind 2-0 in the first half, the Deacons scored eight straight en route to a 16-3 run and never looked back. The Cowboys (1-1) eventually pulled to within 19-14, but Duncan and his squad were simply too much and the lead opened back up to 37-26 at the half.

The Deacons played their trademark outstanding defense, limiting the Cowboys to just 38 percent shooting, and OSU was unable to help itself from the charity stripe. The free ones turned out to be even harder than the challenged shots for the Cowboys as they hit a paltry 31 percent from the line.

Junior Sean Allen played big up front as well, adding a physical defensive presence while contributing eight points to the offense. The iron-horse starting frontcourt played 110 of a possible 120 minutes, logging additional time due to the absence of two players. Freshman William Stringfellow and sophomore Antonio Jackson were both suspended for one game for violation of team rules.

Despite the dominating presence of Duncan, there were some telling figures that show that this team is a complete package. Duncan leads the team with 5.5 assists per game, displaying the court presence to find the open man when facing double and triple-teams.

With everyone jumping to the big man inside, the Deacons have found a home outside the arc. They drained eight of 14 threes on the night (57 percent), giving future foes a lot to worry about.



Courtesy of Sports Information

Junior Tim Duncan, shown here last season, blocked three shots last night against Oklahoma State. Duncan added 22 points, 16 rebounds and six assists in a victory that avenged last season's loss to OSU in the NCAA Sweet Sixteen.

Women's basketball lets big lead slip away

By MICKEY KRAYNYAK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

After gliding its way to a 44-27 lead at the end of the first half in last night's game against Florida International, the Demon Deacon women's basketball team shifted gears in the second half, and they let the game slip away in the final minutes.

The Deacons eventually fell to their Sunshine State guests 82-78 after freshman forward Jenn Miklic was unable to convert the front end of a one-and-one to even the score with three seconds left.

The Golden Panthers stayed with the Deacons for the early part of the game, taking their first lead of the contest midway through the first half at 18-16.

However, the Deacons promptly stepped up their efforts and notched eight straight points, spurred by junior RaeAnna Mulholland's four straight tallies, to take a 24-18 lead on the Panthers.

The lead the Deacons began to build at this point ultimately held until the two minute mark of the second half.

Up 24-12, the Demon Deacons again put together a run, as senior forward Val Hodge and Mulholland combined to score another eight consecutive points to push the Deacon lead to 32-21.

The Deacons, thanks to senior point guard Gretchen Hollifield's team-leading 11 first half points, did not surrender their double-digit lead before halftime and went to the locker room with their largest lead of the game.

"We came out with a lot of intensity," junior center Tracy Connor said. "We had people passing and cutting and everything was falling," Connor said.

However, the second half held a surprising plot twist, as after Connor was able to notch the first points of the half, Florida International began to claw its way back into the game.

After Connor's basket, the Panthers reeled off six straight points to

cut the Demon Deacons' lead to 46-33.

The Deacons then swarmed back, as Connor scored six straight points, including four free throws on as many attempts, as the home team reasserted itself and took a 60-37 lead.

Connor then went to the bench for a breather, and Florida International promptly seized its chance at a comeback bid. In a critical stretch of the second half, the Panthers went on an 18-2 run to cut the Deacon lead to 62-55.

"I think we got complacent," Connor said of the team's second-half stall. "I think we took a breath when we went up by 18."

Connor said that the Deacon's problems in the second half were not due to a lack of conditioning.

"In the second half we were still running with them," Connor said.

The teams went toe-to-toe throughout the game's waning moments, until Florida International took its first lead of the second half with a basket to go up 76-74.

With less than a minute to go, the Panthers notched another basket to go up 78-74. Hollifield then drove deep into the Panther defense and dished left to Deacon senior forward Val Hodge. Hodge found the bottom of the basket, and the Deacons cut their opponent's lead to 78-76.

However, Florida International answered with a basket, and the Deacons had to rely on Hollifield's one-and-one opportunity at the foul line to stay in the game.

Hollifield drained them both, pulling the Demon Deacons to within 80-78 with eight seconds remaining in the contest.

Florida International subsequently threw an errant inbound pass from underneath the Demon Deacon basket, and freshman forward Jenn Miklic hustled to recover the pass and was fouled.

With three seconds remaining in the game, Miklic went to the line to shoot a one-and-one, but she missed the first shot and the Panthers were able to escape Winston-Salem with a win.

Football team ends season sans conference win in 52-23 loss to N.C. State

By MICKEY KRAYNYAK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

It was just another day at the office for senior Rusty LaRue.

In the three hours prior to his second-half debut as a two-guard for the Demon Deacon basketball team in Joel Coliseum, the senior quarterback put in a performance so remarkable that, in the context of LaRue's previous two games, it seemed almost ordinary.

Against the N.C. State Wolfpack Nov. 18, LaRue, in his final football game as a Demon Deacon, punched the clock at Groves Stadium to the tune of 545 passing yards on incredible 50-of-67 passing as the Deacons fell to their guests 52-23 in their final game of their season.

The real estate LaRue racked up against the Wolfpack pushed his yardage total over the last three games of the season to 1,523 yards and moved the Deacon quarterback to fourth place on the all-time school passing yardage list.

Amazingly, LaRue's yardage over the past three weeks have accounted for over 30 percent of his career yardage total of 5,016 yards. LaRue also concluded his career as the Deacon signal caller fourth on the all-time completion list with 472 and fourth in

career attempts with 786.

LaRue's completion rate against State enabled him to pass Foy White's, '85, school-record career proficiency rate of 59.2 percent and finish with a new record completion percentage of 60.1 percent.

However, LaRue was not the only member of the home team notching impressive statistics against the Wolfpack, as senior wide receiver Marlon Estes reaped the rewards of the darts LaRue was tossing.

Estes' 15 grabs against the Wolfpack pushed his season total to 68, which broke the team's previous record for catches in a season of 66. The wideout also tied the team record for catches in a game, and his three touchdown catches against N.C. State allowed him to finish with nine on the season, which tied Estes for the third-highest season total in team history.

After the game, Head Coach Jim Caldwell had nothing but laudatory comments about LaRue, Estes and the rest of the senior class.

"I think those guys fought hard," Caldwell said. "It was a group of special individuals. It was a bunch of guys that really tried to direct and



Greg Bayer

Freshman Dameron Daniel attempts to evade an N.C. State tackler Nov. 18.

lead the team."

However, as was the case against the Blue Devils and the Yellow Jackets in their previous two games, the Deacons, for all of their success on the stat sheets, were unable to best

their opponents on the scoreboard.

The Wolfpack came out clicking in the Groves Stadium season finale, smoothly executing their way to a comfortable 35-7 halftime lead thanks largely to quarterback Terry Harvey's

four second quarter touchdown passes. State's field general, before leaving the game in the second half, connected twice each with wideouts Jimmy Grisset and Mike Guffy before the Deacons were able to score their first points of the day.

The game started inauspiciously for the Deacon defense, as State, on its way to moving cleanly down the field for a touchdown on the first drive of the contest, converted five consecutive third down passes while running off almost 8:30 of possession time.

The Deacon defense, though, was not the only part of the team having problems in the first half. LaRue was mostly quiet while Harvey was peppering the Deacon defense with touchdown passes. LaRue went to the locker room having thrown for a mundane 135 yards to Harvey's first half total of 261.

Caldwell spoke harshly of his team's first-half performance. "They did whatever they wanted to," Caldwell said of the Wolfpack. "We didn't slow them down a bit. They were tougher than we were and then just physically beat us in the first half," he said.

"That first half, it wasn't our typical football team playing," Caldwell said. "It was just pitiful."

Upon taking the field to start the second half, the Deacon offense renewed its assault on the record books, as LaRue came out firing. In his final 30 minutes as a member of the squad, the quarterback threw 46 passes and connected on an amazing 34 of them.

For the second straight week, LaRue spread the ball around his receiving corps. Thanks largely to his second half aerial assault, the Deacon quarterback completed passes to 10 different receivers.

The Deacons, thanks to their quarterback's consistent ability to find and connect with open receivers, scored 16 third quarter points to cut the State lead to 42-23 before the visitors put the game out of reach with 10 unanswered fourth quarter points.

The loss dropped the Deacons to 1-10 on the season, and was the last of eight nails in the squad's conference coffin. State, meanwhile, finished at 3-8 overall and 2-6 in the ACC after falling to UNC Saturday.

Afterward, Caldwell spoke determinedly of pushing his underclassmen to a higher level of performance next season.

"I told them we are not going to let this happen to us again," Caldwell said. "This is it. We're not going to ever play this way again."