

Woods suspended indefinitely Sports/B2

Sports

Deacs dismantle Terps, 72-60

After racing to a 10-0 lead, Robert O'Kelley & Co. held on for their second conference win

By Scott Payne
 Sports Editor

On the final day of one of the most disastrous weeks in the history of the Demon Deacon basketball program, which witnessed a demoralizing 36-point home loss and the indefinite suspension of sophomore center Loren Woods, Head Coach Dave Odom's squad gave a 40-minute virtuoso performance as they cruised to a 72-60 victory over the Maryland Terrapins Jan. 17 at Joel Coliseum.

"We had a lot of people contributing at very, very important times," Odom said. "We hit key threes, we got key rebounds, we got key loose balls, we made key steals, got key charges. A lot of things just happened at the right time for us tonight and truly it was a frustrating night for Maryland."

With four freshmen in the starting lineup along with senior guard Tony Rutland, the Deacons jumped out to a quick 10-0 lead as Maryland took nearly five minutes to register their first points, much to the delight of the raucous 14,055 fans in attendance. The Deacons kept a strangle hold on this lead for the length of the game; the Terps narrowed the score to a single point once but never tied or led.

"It was 10-0 there to start the game. That was a pretty good indication of how Wake was ready to play, and we were not ready and we certainly paid for it," said Maryland Head Coach Gary Williams.

The insertion of freshmen Rafael Vidaurreta, Josh Shoemaker, Niki Arinze and Robert O'Kelley seemed to light a spark under the Deacons, both offensively and defensively, as they burst out of the gate with an intensity that had previously been lacking. For the game the quartet of freshmen along with fellow freshmen Aron McMillian and James Griffin, who provided quality minutes off the bench, combined for 52 points, 36 rebounds, six assists and four steals.

"Maybe we'll start four freshmen, maybe we'll start five sometimes. I don't know," said Odom. "But I'm not gonna do it to get notoriety. I'm just going to try to put the best team we have on the court for that given night and if it turns out to be one or more first-year players than let's do it."

O'Kelley continued to establish himself as a rising star in the ACC, scoring a team high 17 points as he proceeded to give the opposing defense fits, hitting three three-pointers and making four free throws while dishing out four assists.

"O'Kelley's really quick and he can shoot it from outside. So if you get up too tight on him he can get by you and if you lay off he's a three-point threat. So he's got that combination that's really good," said a defeated Williams.

Not to be outdone by his classmate, Arinze poured in 16 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, which earned him the honor of ACC Rookie of the Week.

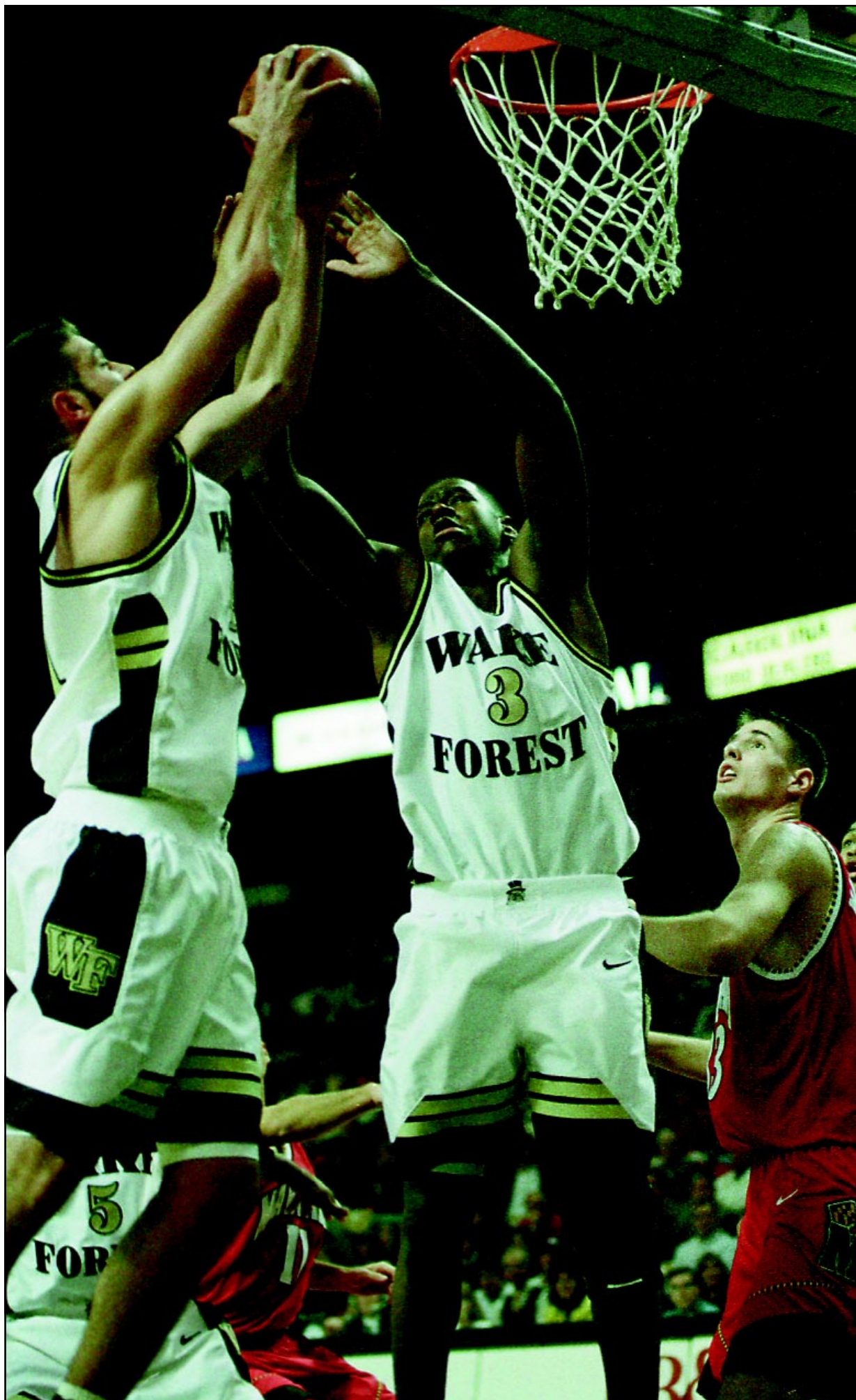
Despite their 11 first half turnovers the Deacons were able to maintain an eight point lead on the basis of 44 percent field goal shooting and all-out hustle.

On one sequence, O'Kelley shot a three-pointer from the right wing but was knocked to the floor by the defender as the shot clanged off the rim, igniting the Maryland fast break.

O'Kelley then sprang to his feet, sprinted down the court, beat his man to the spot and drew a charge from Maryland's Rodney Elliott.

The second half of action featured more of the same for the Deacs, but with just over 13 minutes remaining the Terps had pulled to within one, thanks to the hot shooting of Laron Profit, who finished with 25 points.

Just as the Deacs looked like they might let the lead slip away, senior guard Steven Goolsby brought the wrecking ball from deep on two straight possessions, ending the final Terrapin run. With two free throws by Shoemaker and a three-point bomb by O'Kelley, the



Carlton Ward/Old Gold and Black

Freshmen forwards Rafael Vidaurreta (left) and Aron McMillian team up for a Deacon rebound. Vidaurreta, McMillian and the other Deacon freshmen played a big part in the win over Maryland.

Deacs pushed the lead back to double digits and then coasted home for the 12-point victory.

"Steve Goolsby hit two key threes. Big ones. Big ones. Oh, man! They were big," said Odom of the Marietta, Ga., native who finished the game with 12 points, all on three-pointers.

This victory over Maryland helped to heal the fester-

ing wounds from the Deacs' loss to Duke four days earlier on the same floor at Joel Coliseum.

"(The Duke) game, though, it could have fractured us maybe for a long, long time. I don't think it did. I think our kids came back really strong the next day," said Odom, whose team improved to 9-6 overall, 2-3 in the ACC.

Two wins down, only six more to go

By Scott Payne
 Sports Editor

Saturday evening following the victory over Maryland, I began to ponder the immediate future for the Demon Deacons and what the month of March may have in store.

The sense of euphoria that I experienced following the defeat of the Terrapins, in which the Deacs played their best basketball of the season, had visions of the NCAA tournament, a.k.a. The Big Dance, dancing in my head like sugar plums.

That was until I looked at the Deacs remaining schedule this season and my dreams of an East Regional seed turned into NIT purgatory or even the unthinkable ... that's not possible. Or is it?

Over the last few years the ACC has established itself as the premier basketball conference in the country, bar none, complete with national championships, All-America caliber players, NBA lottery picks and some of the most hostile crowds sport has to offer that are the true definition of home-court advantage.

Based on the high level of competition in the ACC, the NCAA Selection Committee has, in recent years, seen fit to give teams with a .500 record in conference play (eight wins, eight losses) the benefit of the doubt and has granted them a spot among the final 64.

Currently the Deacons stand at 2-3 in a four-way tie for fourth place in the ACC with Clemson, Georgia Tech and Virginia. Meanwhile, Duke and North Carolina begin to pull away, leaving the other seven teams in their wake.

In order to finish with the magic number of victories to ensure a post-season invite, the Deacs must win at least six more times in the conference. Seven would be an added bonus.

Six wins seems like a piece of cake until you figure that the Deacs still must play Duke at Cameron Indoor Stadium and have yet to play North Carolina, which oddsmakers have probably already chalked up as three Deacon losses.

That puts the Deacs at 2-6, meaning they have to practically run the table against the rest of the league, which when coupled with the Deacs' Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde performances of late becomes a mighty tall order.

The last two Deacon home games have witnessed two distinctly different squads take the floor wearing the old gold and black; two teams that are as different as night and day.

The only thing that the team that beat Maryland has in common with the team that Duke walked all over is ... absolutely nothing.

So with this said, there are a few possible scenarios that become apparent. The first such scenario has the Deacons making the NCAA tournament in March.

However, the foundation for this scenario is that the Deacon team that beat Maryland is willing to hang around for a month or so.

Playing it safe and assuming losses at Duke, at North Carolina and at home to North Carolina, and also banking on revenge victories against Virginia and Georgia Tech at home, along with a victory at Joel Coliseum against N.C. State, gives the Deacs a 5-6 record.

The remaining minimum of three victories must come either at Littlejohn against Clemson, which is no cupcake, or in Reynolds Coliseum, where N.C. State is always dangerous no matter what the odds, or in Cole Field House, site of Maryland's recent ambush of North Carolina, or perhaps in one of two remaining battles against the pesky Florida State Seminoles, who beat the defending national champion Arizona Wildcats earlier this season in a most impressive fashion.

The second scenario has the Deacons winning the ACC Tournament in Greensboro and gaining an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament.

Last season N.C. State made a run at the ACC crown, coming up one win short, but they proved that no team can be counted out on that magical March weekend.

With the majority of the Deacon lineup being first-year players, conference road wins may be few and far between, but this freshman-laden team has proven they are capable of looking like seasoned veterans.

It is going to take a team effort for the Deacs to run the gauntlet that is the ACC for the remainder of the season with any success.

Against Maryland the young Deacon team found its true identity: a team that hustles for loose balls, scraps underneath for rebounds, makes the majority of its foul shots, is able to hit a three pointer when needed and, most importantly, has enthusiasm about the game of basketball and is excited about playing day in and day out.

Deacs drop heartbreaker to No. 23 Tigers

By Erin Korey
 Arts and Entertainment Editor

Never judge a team by its record. Keep this in mind when watching the women's basketball team. They proved Thursday night, Jan. 15, that they could play with the best in the ACC. They lost 61-60 to Clemson in a game at Joel Coliseum that came down to a final grab for the ball under the net with 17 seconds left.

In a season full of disappointments, the Deacons played to their potential against nationally ranked Clemson. The Tigers are currently ranked No.23.

They played strong all 40 minutes of the game, not allowing Clemson to pull ahead to far ahead of them during the game.

"We played a top-25 team like we were a top-25 team. We're capable of

playing at that level all the time. They kept their focus. We stuck to our game plan. It just wasn't meant to be," said Head Coach Charlene Curtis.

The Deacons kept strong defensive pressure on the Tigers throughout the first half and were able to answer the Tigers' every shot. The lead changed hands four times during the game and the Deacons never let Clemson lead balloon to more than five.

Down by one point at the half, the Deacons returned to the court with vigor. The Tigers scored first, but then the Deacons took control of the momentum of the game. Junior Heidi Coleman bur-

ied a three pointer from the top of the key to tie the game.

The Deacons managed to hold the lead throughout most of the second half. With 10:40 left, junior Cynthia Kelley stepped up and dropped two consecutive baskets from just inside the three point line.

Clemson was not able to answer Kelley's hot hand, and the Deacons went on an 8-2 run.

Freshman Olivia Dardy, a standout rookie on the team, hit a shot from long range to give the Deacons their biggest lead of the game, 50-43.

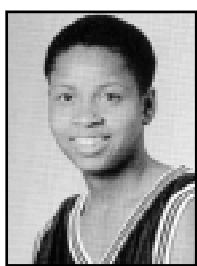
The last three minutes of the game witnessed the lead changing six times. With 39 seconds left, Dardy took a shot from under the basket to give the Deacons a one-point lead. Clemson's captain, Amy Geren, took the ball back down the court and gave the Tigers a

basket to take the lead back.

Sophomore Alisha Mosley took a final shot for the Deacons under the basket with 17 seconds left to no avail. A final scuffle under the basket occurred as the few remaining seconds ticked away and when the final buzzer sounded the Deacons were left stunned in bitter defeat.

The Deacons may not have come out victorious, but they showed a solid effort for the first time this year. Junior Emon McMillian, Kelley and Dardy all scored in double digits and Dardy also led the team with 11 rebounds.

"Our defensive effort was the big part. We were controlling the boards well. We played tremendously well as a team. On the offensive end we got a lot of scoring from different people in different situations, but it was truly a team effort," Curtis said.



Kelley