

Carlton Ward/Old Gold and Black

Air Arinze

Freshman Niki Arinze skies for a thunderous dunk in the Demon Deacons' Feb. 21 game at home against Florida State. The Deacons survived another close game, defeating the Seminoles 69-68. The Deacs host N.C. State March 1 for Senior Day. The game, which starts at 4 p.m., may be the team's most significant of the season. A win would raise the squad's shot at getting a bid to the NCAA Tournament.

DEACON NOTES

Slavic's heroics in ninth inning Deacs victory at Hooks Stadium

Freshman Corey Slavic's sacrifice fly with the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth inning broke a 4-4 tie with Appalachian State Feb. 25 at Hooks Stadium and gave the Deacs a 5-4 win.

The Deacs improved to 7-2 on the season. Deacon starter sophomore Mike MacDougal, entered the ninth with a 4-3 lead.

A lead-off single to Appalachian State's Matt Dalton brought in sophomore Jeremy Ward for relief.

Ward allowed a single that scored Dalton from the second and tied the game at four.

In the bottom of the ninth, junior Scott Daeley led off with a walk. Daeley moved to second when freshman Danny Borrell also walked.

The bases became loaded when junior Ben Danosky was hit by a pitch.

Slavic hit a sacrifice fly to the left to score Daeley from third.

O'Kelley named Rookie of the Week in the ACC for fourth time

For the fourth time this season, freshman Robert O'Kelley was named ACC Rookie of the Week.

O'Kelley, who hails from Memphis, was phenomenal for the Deacons in their two games against Maryland and Florida State. The guard scored a career-high 31 points in the team's 83-79 win over them 25th-ranked Maryland at College Park. He followed the performance with 26 points in the Deacs' 69-68 victory over the Seminoles at Joel Coliseum.

In the two games, O'Kelley was 19 of 38 from the field and 11 for 20 from behind the three-point arc.

Deacons ranked in recent Rolex collegiate tennis polls

Members from both the men and women's Demon Deacon tennis teams were ranked in the latest Rolex Collegiate Tennis Rankings.

For the women, senior Lule Aydin moved into a tie for 87th in the country. She previously was ranked 96th. The doubles team of junior Nicola Kaiwai and freshman Dorothee Kurz moved up one in the rankings to fifth overall.

For the men, junior Myles Clouston and freshman Raul Munoz continue to ascend up the rankings. They are now 32nd in the country.

Gioffre leads Deacs to seventh-place finish in Puerto Rico

The men's golf team finished in a tie for seventh place with the University of Florida at the Puerto Rico Classic Feb 22-24.

North Carolina won the the 54-hole event held at the par-72 Rio Mar Country Club in San Juan with an overall score of 875, 11 strokes over par.

The Deacs finished 17 strokes behind the Tar Heels with a three-day score of 892.

Leading the way for the Demon Deacons was senior Ryan Gioffre.

He shot a 74 on the final day to finish in 11th place at three-over par.

Georgia Tech's Matt Kuchar was the individual champion with eight-under par 208. He defeated Columbus State's Wilfredo Morales in a one-hole playoff.

Senior Ray Floyd, Jr, was second for the Deacs as he finished in 15th place with a score of 220, four-over par.

Senior Todd Lynch and junior Oscar Sanchez struggled throughout the event. Lynch finished 57th overall, and Sanchez finished 72nd overall.

The Deacons finished fifth of the seven ACC teams competing.

North Carolina State and Clemson tied for second, and Clemson finished sixth.

Seeds and games set for Women's ACC Tournament

The pairings for the Women's ACC Tournament, which begins today at the Greensboro Coliseum and concludes March 1, were announced Feb. 22.

The Demon Deacons, who were winless in ACC play this season, look to salvage a sub-par season when they play Georgia Tech at 4 p.m.

The Deacons lost both games to Tech this season, an 80-60 loss at home and a 58-53 defeat on the road.

The Deacs are seeded last and the Yellow Jackets are seeded eighth.

Duke earned the top seed for the tournament. They will face the winner of the Demon Deacon-Georgia Tech game Feb. 27 at 2:30 p.m.

Deacons keep NCAA hopes alive with two wins

Team wins nail-biters over Seminoles and Terps for back-to-back ACC victories

By Paul Gaeta
Acting Sports Editor

Following the Demon Deacon men's basketball team's tough 78-47 loss to Duke Feb. 14, head coach Dave Odom did something he never had done in his nine years coaching the team — he gave the squad two days off.

The rest from basketball couldn't have been better for the Deacs.

The team won two huge conference games in a span of 36 hours, defeating 25th-ranked Maryland on the road Feb. 19, 83-79, and then coming home to beat Florida State Feb. 21 in another close one, 69-68.

The two wins pushed the Deacs record to 6-8 in the ACC and 14-11 overall.

More importantly, the Demon Deacons, currently tied for fourth in the ACC with Georgia Tech, fought their

way back into contention for a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

Like so many times this year, freshman star Robert O'Kelley was the offensive hero in both games, scoring a career-high 31 points in the win over Maryland and coming back to score 26 points against the Seminoles.

A well-rested Demon Deacon team looked poised to defeat the 25th-ranked Terrapins for the third straight time at Cole Field House.

Early on, the Deacs dominated play. Behind the sharp shooting from the perimeter by O'Kelley and senior guards Tony Rutland and Steven Goolsby, who had 18 and 13 points, respectively, the team took a commanding 44-28 lead into halftime.

The Deacons continued their strong play for much of the second half.

After back-to-back three-pointers from Goolsby and Rutland, the team opened up its biggest lead of the game, 68-49, with 6:56 minutes left to go.

Just as much of the sold-out field house began filing out the doors, the

Terrapins mounted a tremendous comeback that brought them back to just three points down.

Poor Deacon ball-handling, a suffocating Maryland press and a handful of timely threes enabled the Terps to go on a 10-1 run in 18 seconds to close the score to 80-77 with only 34 seconds remaining in the game.

The Deacs, however, weren't about to let such a significant game slip through their hands.

After a Laron Profit air ball and ensuing Terrapin foul on the next play, freshman Niki Arinze sealed the victory with three of four free throws in the final 11 seconds.

The Deacs escaped with an 83-79 win. Maryland, which was plagued by turnovers and poor shooting from the perimeter, fell to 8-6 in the ACC, 15-9 overall.

The Deacs came home for their game against Florida State and found themselves once again in a battle that wouldn't be resolved until the game's final seconds.

Unlike the Maryland game, the Deacs and Seminoles battled back and forth throughout the game.

There were 12 lead changes and 11 ties between the teams on the day.

The Deacs opened up a three-point lead with 2:37 remaining in the second half on a Rutland three.

Rutland then came up big on the defensive, forcing a turnover that led to an O'Kelley three pointer.

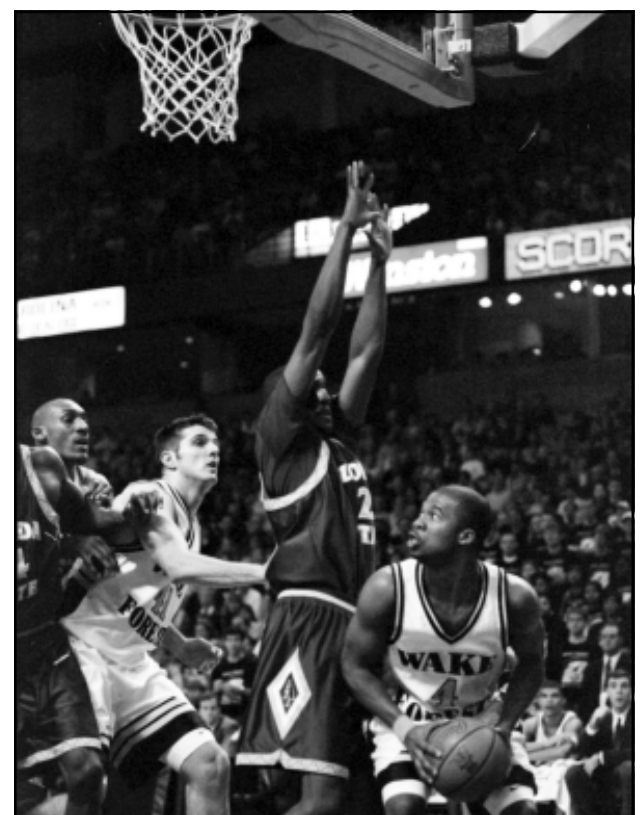
The three gave the Deacs their biggest lead of the game, 69-63.

The Seminoles, led by one of their big-time players, Terrell Baker, charged back. Baker scored the team's next five points to bring his team to within one. But that was the closest it would get.

Lamar Greer missed a 12-foot jumper and Corey Louis was unable to tip in the rebound on the last possession of the game as the Deacs put together their first two-game winning streak in over a month.

O'Kelley led the Deacs in scoring with 26, followed by Goolsby with 15.

Rutland chipped in with nine points in the win.



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Freshman Robert O'Kelley gets caught among the big men in the Deacs' game against FSU.

Deacons falter in must-win game

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"We didn't tell the team to quit shooting," Odom said.

"I think that we knew if we ever missed one or two and they were in the zone they would keep coming with it, and eventually you got to solve it."

During the half, someone must have reminded Williams and Ndiaye that it was their last collegiate home game, because when the second half rolled around, the seniors became a two-man team.

Williams scored 13 of Carolina's first 19 points of the half, including three long-range bombs from behind the arc.

His points coupled with four from Ndiaye down low, erased the Tar Heel deficit and gave the team a 44-39 lead.

"I think the story of the second half, and thus the game, looked to me like Shammond Williams just said I'm not going to lose this basketball game," Odom said.

"In the first six possessions he hit four

"We needed this game more than they did. I don't care what they say, they're in (the NCAA Tournament) and we're not, and it would have really helped us."

Dave Odom
Head Coach

shots, and that kind of set the tone for the second half."

Carolina continued to apply defensive pressure that limited the Deacs to only six points in a span of nine minutes.

Meanwhile, the Tar Heel offense flat-out dominated the Deacs. In the game's final 10 minutes, the Heels scored as many points — 25 — as they did all of the first half.

Junior Vince Carter highlighted the run with a monstrous slam over Deacon freshman Rafael Vidaurreta that brought all 21,572 people watching to their feet.

Player of the Year candidate Antawn Jamison also scored nine of his 15 points in the final ten minutes as the Heels coasted to the 72-53 victory.

Senior Steven Goolsby led the way for the Deacs with 11 points and Robert O'Kelley kept his double-digit scoring streak alive at 21 straight games with 10 points.

"I think it was a good night for us, not a great night because we didn't win the basketball game," Odom said. "We needed this game more than they did. I don't care what they say, they're in (the NCAA Tournament) and we're not, and it would have really helped us. I'm still very pleased and very proud that our team came in here determined and felt that they could win."

The Deacs head into their March 1 home game against N.C. State needing a win to keep alive any hopes of a berth in the NCAA tourney.

"We now face the toughest battle that we will have faced all year long and that is N.C. State, a team that is probably the most improved in the league," Odom said.

Track finishes season at ACC Championships

By Sean Blue and David McGlinchey
Old Gold and Black Reporters

The women's and men's track teams finished their injury-plagued indoor season with last-place finishes in the ACC Indoor Track and Field Championships, held in Blacksburg, Va., on Sunday and Monday.

One of the few bright spots for the Deacs came from Janelle Kraus, who finished second in the 3,000 meters with a time of 9:57:37.

The finish earned Kraus, a sophomore, All-ACC honors.

Sophomore Jill Snyder ran a time of 2:11 in the 800 meters. Snyder placed fourth overall and recorded the female Deac's second highest finish of the day.

Summer Shaw recorded a vault of 9'02.25".

She placed fifth overall in the ACC.

The women's distance medley relay team also finished fifth with a time of 12:02.27.

While the meet wasn't a total success for the men, a few individuals did take the opportunity to shine.

Senior Ben Boyd of Marietta, GA, finished fifth overall in the 3,000 meters. His time was 8:22.21.

In the 5,000-meter run, senior Hunter Kemper finished eighth with a time of 14:55.25.

Also placing was the Deacs' 4x400 meter relay team with a time of 3:19.76.

The time was good enough for seventh in the tourney.