

SPORTS BRIEFS

Graf takes center stage one final time at MSG

The words came straight and true, just like those fearsome forehands that kept opponents pinned behind the baseline.

Steffi Graf was again on center court at Madison Square Garden during the final tournament of the WTA Tour, an event she has won five times during the length of her career.

This time she wore a formal black sweater and ankle-length black skirt and fought back the tears, especially when she thanked her mother, Heidi, and coach, Heinz Gunthardt.

"I don't only call you a coach," Graf said to Gunthardt, sitting next to Heidi Graf in the first row. "I call you a friend, too."

She paused, regained most of that famed composure, and added: "I knew I would get emotional."

Fans and fellow players who formed a phalanx on the court watched a video of Graf's career. She didn't.

Martinez unanimous Cy Young winner

Pedro Martinez pitched another shutout, winning the American League Cy Young Award in a unanimous vote. Now the question is whether he'll be elected Most Valuable Player, too.

"It would mean a lot, probably more than this Cy Young alone," Martinez said Tuesday after the Cy Young voting was announced. "I've already achieved that, so the MVP would be something different, especially to a pitcher."

Martinez became only the fourth pitcher to win the AL Cy Young Award unanimously and joined Gaylord Perry and Randy Johnson, who won his first NL Cy Young on Monday, as the only pitchers to win the honor in each league.

Martinez, 23-4 with a 2.07 ERA for the Boston Red Sox, received all 28 first-place votes for 140 points in balloting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

MLS abandons shootout, reworks divisions

The shootout is shot.

Major League Soccer said Wednesday it will replace its controversial tiebreaker with two five-minute periods of sudden-death overtime.

The ending of the shootout — in which a player starts 35 yards from the goal and has five seconds to shoot at the goalkeeper — was one of a series of changes by the 4-year-old league.

However, MLS will not award four points for a victory, a format that will be adopted by the second- and third-division United Soccer Leagues next season. Instead, MLS will use the international norm of three points for a win and one for a tie.

Sunday's MLS Cup championship game in Foxboro, Mass. between two-time champion D.C. United and the Los Angeles Galaxy, however, will still use the shootout if the game is tied after 30 minutes of sudden-death overtime.

Karolyi named coordinator of women's team

Bela Karolyi, the bearish-looking coach who helped Nadia Comaneci, Mary Lou Retton and Kerri Strug win gold medals, is taking charge of the U.S. women's gymnastics program less than a year before the Olympics.

Karolyi, who retired after the 1996 Olympics, will be the women's national team coordinator but he will not coach at the Sydney Olympics, USA Gymnastics said Tuesday. He will set the team's training programs and oversee its Olympic preparations.

"We need to make some adjustments to our women's program to improve our preparation for the 2000 Olympic Games," said Bob Colarossi, president of USA Gymnastics.

"Karolyi's efforts will make a significant difference in our ability to train at the highest level during the 10 months prior to Sydney."

Karolyi will advise the gymnasts' personal coaches and have a role in saying who makes the Olympic team.

"This is a special opportunity for me to continue supporting American gymnasts," Karolyi said. "This role suits me best since my retirement from training individual gymnasts. I take great pride in the results of the U.S. team and look forward to contributing to everyone's success."



SIBLING RIVALRY

ECU, N.C. State series has brought moments of beauty, disgrace

Stephen Schramm
SPORTS EDITOR

When it comes to grid iron rivalries, NC has got its fair share. Some of the most storied rivalries date back to the last century. However, the one rivalry that runs deeper than the others and still brings emotion out of the most sedate fans is one of the state's youngest.

"It's like if you and your brother don't get along," said linebacker Jeff Kerr. "It's like a sibling rivalry."

ECU played N.C. State for the first time in football on Oct. 10, 1970, in Raleigh. The Wolfpack whipped the Pirates 23-6 in front of 18,000 in Raleigh's Carter Stadium. The following season under first year Head Coach Sonny Randle, the Pirates beat N.C. State 31-15 and the rivalry was born.

The rivalry that began in 1970 had been an annual affair for 17 years. It had been halted for almost a decade and revived by an act of law. It has been played as season openers, season finales and bowl games. By far, it is the most intense football rivalry the state has seen.

The early years, 1970-1972

Many of the emotions that fuel the rivalry come from before the two teams ever met on the field.

For much of the century, eastern NC was behind the rest of the state in many areas. Eastern NC's feeling of inferiority extended from a lack of economic prosperity in college football.

For years, the "Big Four" dominated college sports in NC. Duke, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, N.C. State and Wake Forest got the exposure and notoriety when it came to college football.

The "Big Four" had their regal rivalries that dated back to the 1890's. They had the tradition, they had the history, they had each other and the prestigious Atlantic Coast Conference.

ECU played in the lower profile Southern Conference. The Pirates faced conference foes such as Furman, The Citadel and William & Mary. The Pirates playing one of the "Big Four" would be a major boost for the program.

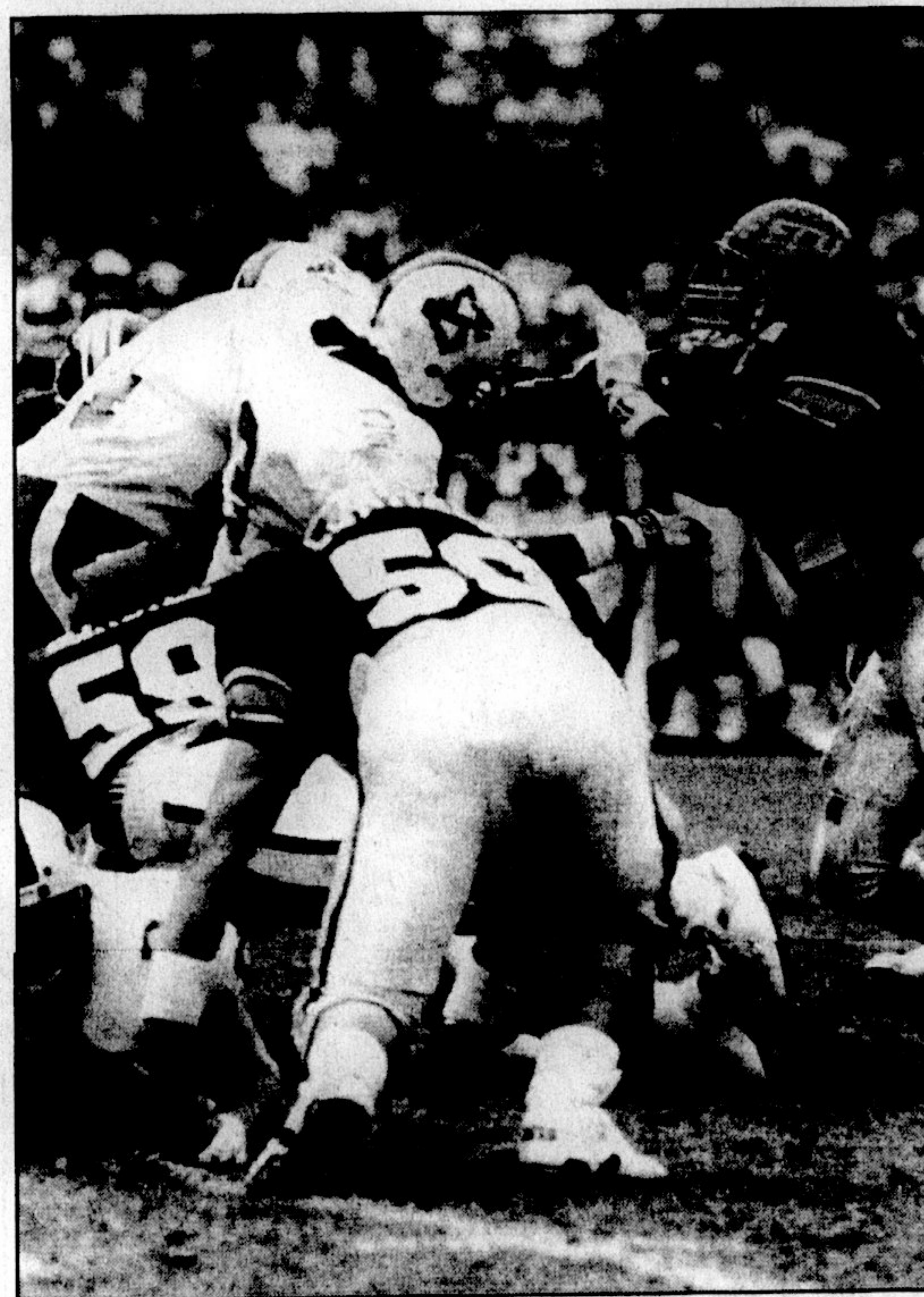
ECU did play Wake Forest once, in Greenville on Sept. 21, 1963. The Pirates beat the Demon Deacons 20-10 in front of 17,000 in the first game ever played in Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

The game marked the first and only time that ECU would play one of the "Big Four" before 1970.

The ECU-N.C. State rivalry owes its origins to a pair of old friends talking over dinner. Former N.C. State Head Coach Earle Edwards and



Jeff Blake (above left) threw for 378 yards and four touchdowns in the '92 Peach Bowl. Luke Fisher (above) caught 12 passes for 144 yards in ECU's 37-34 victory (file photos).



longtime ECU Head Coach and Athletic Director Clarence Stasavich, discussed having their teams play each other, while the two were at dinner during a national coaches' convention in the late '60s.

"They were the first in-state school that agreed to play us," said Henry VanSant, assistant athletic director. "They helped East Carolina a great deal by agreeing to play us."

On Oct. 10, 1970, the two teams finally did suit up and play each other in Raleigh. Edwards was on the N.C. State sideline, while ECU was coached by first year man, Mike McGee. Edwards' Wolfpack stomped the Pirates, 23-6. ECU's lone score coming on an 11-yard pass from John Casazza to Dick Corrada. N.C. State's All-ACC safety, Jack Whitely returned an ECU punt 69 yards for a Wolfpack score.

The next year the Pirates notched their first win against N.C. State. On Oct. 23, 1971 two teams that had not been playing good football that season came into Carter Stadium. Both the Wolfpack and the Pirates were at 1-5 prior to the contest.

"The intent when we went in was not to get embarrassed," said running back Carlester Crumpler. "We wanted to go out and play hard and represent the university well."

The Pirates did just that. On the strength of a 20-point first half, the Pirates cruised to a 31-15 win.

"It was big," Crumpler said, who had 47 yards on nine carries. "Both teams didn't have good years. I think we won four games, but one of those wins was against them."

While the early games drew the fans, it was not yet a true rivalry.

"We thought a lot about it, but it wasn't as hyped up as it is now," Crumpler said. "State and Carolina were the two biggest out-of-conference games that we played while I was there."

The games would be an inauspicious beginning to a series that would provide some magical moments.

Building a rivalry, 1973-1987

In 1972 the Pirates began a string of eight winning seasons. N.C. State and ECU played every year, always in Raleigh. During these years of Pirate success, ECU only beat the Wolfpack twice. In 1976 and again in 1977 the Pirates bested the Wolfpack. By 1980, with over a decade of games under their belts, N.C. State held an 8-3 series lead. The losses continued until 1983, when ECU topped the Wolfpack, 22-16 in Raleigh.

A N.C. State win in 1984, followed by a Pirate win in '85, followed by another N.C. State win in 1986, gave credibility to what once was a one-sided series.

Up until this point the rivalry was a pair of in-state schools squaring off. It made for some good college football games and bragging rights. What made the rivalry run so deep is also what killed it for nearly a decade.

"The rivalry was stopped because of difficulties we had in '87," VanSant said.

See RIVALRY, page 11

Pirates, Pack square off

N.C. State to play in Greenville for first time

Stephen Schramm
SPORTS EDITOR

Since the rivalry between N.C. State and ECU began in 1970, Pirate fans have yearned for the series to come east of Raleigh. Saturday, they finally get the chance to see the Pirates and the Pack go head to head in Greenville.

"It's going to be big," said quarterback David Garrard. "The crowd is going to be in it the whole game. They've been waiting for State to come here for so long, and now they're finally here. They just want to see a good game and a good victory by the Pirates."

The upcoming game sold out almost a month ago. The crowd is expected to be the largest in Dowdy-Ficklen history.

"It will be electric for both teams," said Head Coach Steve Logan. "When we played in Raleigh, they had 50,000-60,000. We played over there and their place was sold-out."

"It will be electric. It will be what college football is supposed to be like."

The game will be the 23rd renewal of one of college football's most intense rivalries. For the seniors on this Pirate squad, it will be the third time they have faced the Wolfpack. For others on the team, it will be the first time playing the Wolfpack. While they have not faced State on the field, the teams are not strangers.

"I know a couple of players on the State team, and I live like, 15 minutes from it," Garrard said. "Actually, that was my school in high school, but it kind of changed a little bit."

For many, including senior LaMont Chappell, the Wolfpack team is filled with familiar faces. Chappell went to high school at Roxboro's Person High School along with State quarterback Jamie Barnette.

"ECU-N.C. State is a big rivalry," Chappell said. "It will mean a lot to me because a lot of those guys are from my hometown, who I grew up with from kindergarten up. I played ball with those guys since elementary school—peewee league all the way up to high school. It will mean a lot and give me some bragging rights when I go home."

Barnette, a senior, will be a concern for the Pirates as they prepare for the Wolfpack.

"We've got to keep Jamie Barnette from running up and down the field on us," Logan said. "He's a run-throw guy; he can do both. People chase him around all the time, but he gets sacked maybe once a game. You've got to trap him with three people. One guy can't sack him. Two guys might have a chance, but it takes three to take him down."

Another point of concern will be the talented corps of receivers Barnette has at his disposal. Koren Robinson and Chris Coleman have helped the Wolfpack offense pass for an average of 201.8 yards per game.

While the Wolfpack offense has caught the attention of Pirate coaches, the defense has not gone unnoticed.

"I know they're going to play man-to-man," Chappell said. "They played Carolina pretty good on defense; they've really played everybody pretty good. I feel they're going to come out and their going to play their hardest, for a few quarters. But if we keep pounding them, we'll come out with a victory."

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