

CAROLINA

Tar Heel Men's Tennis • 2016-17 Season Review

Recapping an Outstanding Year

The 2017 season was filled with firsts for UNC. The Tar Heels advanced to the NCAA Championship match for the first time in school history, finishing as national runner-up after a 4-2 loss to Virginia in the title match. It was the first time Carolina had advanced past the NCAA quarterfinals. For the first time, a Tar Heel – freshman William Blumberg – made the NCAA singles championship match. And the Tar Heels achieved their highest-ever season-ending rank, No. 3 in the final ITA poll. They also won a school record number of matches, finishing 29-5 in Sam Paul's 24th season as head coach.

Fast Facts on UNC

2017 record: 29-5 (10-2 ACC)

Final ranking: No. 3

Head Coach: Sam Paul (24th season)

Current record at UNC: 444-195

Associate Head Coach: Tripp Phillips (11th season)

Team Captains: Jack Murray and Ronnie Schneider

Home Facility: Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center

Quick Hits

- UNC set a program single-season record for wins with 29. The record-breaking victory came in NCAA semifinals against Georgia. The 2016 team established the previous mark with 28.
- The Tar Heels advanced to the NCAA title match for the first time in program history. Prior to 2017, UNC had never advanced past the quarterfinals, but had reached that spot four years in a row. Carolina is one of just two programs to have reached the quarterfinals in each of the past four years.
- UNC finished the season ranked No. 3 in the ITA poll, the highest season-ending ranking in program history.
- Tar Heels earned three ITA national awards, with Ronnie Schneider named ITA National Senior Player of the Year, William Blumberg named ITA National Rookie of the Year and Sam Paul named ITA/Wilson National Coach of the Year.
- In addition to the national honors, Schneider was the winner of the Carolina Region ITA/Arthur Ashe Leadership and Sportsmanship Award.
- Blumberg was named Most Outstanding Player of the NCAA team tournament and joined on the All-NCAA Tournament Team by Robert Kelly (No. 3 singles) and Blaine Boyden (No. 6 singles). Blumberg and Kelly also were honored at No. 1 doubles.
- Blumberg and junior Robert Kelly reached the NCAA doubles tournament quarterfinals, earning All-America honors.
- Blumberg finished ACC dual meet play undefeated at 11-0, winning more conference matches in a single season than any player in school history.

2017 SCHEDULE

Jan. 14	Bucknell	Chapel Hill	W, 6-0
	Wofford	Chapel Hill	W, 4-0
Jan. 16	UNC Greensboro	Chapel Hill	W, 7-0
Jan. 22	UT-Chattanooga	Chapel Hill	W, 6-0
	Citadel	Chapel Hill	W, 7-0

ITA Kickoff Weekend

Jan. 27	Notre Dame	Chapel Hill	W, 4-0
Jan. 28	Vanderbilt	Chapel Hill	W, 4-1

Feb. 4	At #17 Illinois	Champaign, Ill.	W, 5-2
Feb. 11	Ole Miss	Chapel Hill	W, 6-1

ITA National Team Indoor Championships

Feb. 17	#14 Georgia	Charlottesville, Va.	W, 4-2
Feb. 18	#4 California	Charlottesville, Va.	W, 4-2
Feb. 19	At #1 Virginia	Charlottesville, Va.	L, 4-0

Feb. 27	At #27 Vanderbilt	Nashville, Tenn.	W, 6-1
March 7	#43 Duke	Chapel Hill	W, 6-1
March 10	At #2 Wake Forest	Winston-Salem, N.C.	L, 4-3
March 15	NC State	Chapel Hill	W, 7-0
March 19	At Virginia Tech	Blacksburg, Va.	W, 4-3
March 25	Tulsa	Chapel Hill	W, 5-2
March 31	Miami	Chapel Hill	W, 6-1
April 2	Florida State	Chapel Hill	W, 5-2
April 7	At Clemson	Clemson, S.C.	W, 7-0
April 9	At #4 Virginia	Charlottesville, Va.	L, 4-3
April 14	Boston College	Chapel Hill	W, 7-0
April 16	#41 Notre Dame	Chapel Hill	W, 6-1
April 21	At #20 Georgia Tech	Atlanta, Ga.	W, 4-3
April 23	At #39 Louisville	Louisville, Ky.	W, 6-1

Atlantic Coast Conference Championship

April 28	#32 Florida State	Rome, Ga.	W, 4-1
April 29	#3 Virginia	Rome, Ga.	L, 4-3

NCAA Championship

May 12	VCU	Chapel Hill	W, 4-0
May 13	#20 South Carolina	Chapel Hill	W, 4-1
May 18	#8 California	Athens, Ga.	W, 4-1
May 20	#1 Wake Forest	Athens, Ga.	W, 4-2
May 22	At #13 Georgia	Athens, Ga.	W, 4-3
May 23	#2 Virginia	Athens, Ga.	L, 4-2

* – Atlantic Coast Conference match

UNC Athletic Communications

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- The Tar Heels' 10 wins in ACC play this spring marked the most in program history. UNC was 10-2 overall in conference play, 6-0 at home.
- Senior Jack Murray earned the 100th singles win of his Carolina career on May 12 against VCU.
- Seniors Chad Hoskins, Jack Murray and Ronnie Schneider were among nearly 4,000 students to receive their undergraduate degrees from UNC at commencement exercises on May 14. Hoskins and Murray both earned doubles majors in economics and history, and Schneider majored in business administration through UNC's prestigious Kenan-Flagler Business School.

Record-Setting Season

When UNC closed out the regular season with a 6-1 win at Louisville on April 23, it established a program record for conference wins in a season with 10. The Tar Heels had won nine ACC matches in six of the previous 11 seasons, including 2016, but had never before hit double digits.

- The 2017 team also set the program record for most wins in a season with 29. The previous mark of 28 was set by the 2016 team, which finished 28-5 overall and 9-3 in ACC play. Prior to that, the high was 27, established in 2014. Seniors Ronnie Schneider, Jack Murray and Chad Hoskins were members of all three of those record-setting teams.

Super Seniors

In their four years as starters, senior Jack Murray and Ronnie Schneider led UNC to a record of 108-27, twice reset the school records for season wins, and advanced at least as far as the NCAA quarterfinals in each season. The two, who played against each other in their junior careers before coming to Chapel Hill, graduated from UNC in May and plan to pursue professional tennis careers. "Ronnie and Jack have done so much for us," said UNC head coach Sam Paul. "You go back and look at their careers – most successful class we've had."

Tournament Tar Heels

The 2017 NCAA Tournament marked UNC's 22nd appearance in 24 seasons under coach Sam Paul. The Tar Heels hosted first and second round NCAA action in Chapel Hill for the fourth year in a row, the fifth time in the past six years and the ninth time overall.

UNC is 32-26 all-time in NCAA Tournament play. The Tar Heels are 14-4 over the past four seasons, including the five wins in 2017.

Outstanding Indeed

Several Tar Heels were honored for standout performances during Carolina's NCAA Tournament run. Even though UNC didn't take the title, falling to Virginia 4-2, Tar Heel freshman William Blumberg was selected at the tournament's Most Outstanding Player.

"It speaks volumes about what he did in this tournament in singles and in doubles," UNC coach Sam Paul said. "It's really rare that a player on the runner-up team would receive that award. And for as tremendous of a player as he is, he's even more of an outstanding person. He's just incredible."

The NCAA All-Tournament team, which is selected by position, included three Tar Heels: Blumberg and junior Robert Kelly at No. 1 doubles, Blumberg at No. 2 singles spot, Kelly at No. 3 singles and sophomore Blaine Boyden at No. 6 singles.

Blumberg and Kelly went 5-1 in the tournament, defeating teams ranked No. 1 (Georgia's Jan Zielinski and Robert Loeb), No. 5 (Cal's Filip Bergevi and Florian Lakat) and No. 17 (Virginia's Luca Corinteli and Carl Soderlund). Their sole loss was to Wake Forest's fourth-ranked Skander Mansouri and Christian Seraphim, 7-5.

At No. 2 singles, Blumberg was 5-0 with all five wins against ranked players and only one requiring a third set. After opening with an unfinished match in UNC's first-round win over VCU, he beat South Carolina's Harrison O'Keefe (#71), California's Andre Gorasson (#61), Wake Forest's Borna Goja (#45), Georgia's Wayne Montgomery (#33) and Virginia's Thai-Son Kwiatkowski (#14). All are juniors or seniors except Goja, a freshman. Kwiatkowski hadn't lost since Blumberg defeated him in the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament.

At No. 3 singles, Kelly was 4-1 in the tournament, with his only loss to Wake's Mansouri (#13). Against Virginia Kelly beat Soderlund, who has been ranked among the top 400 players in the world this spring.

"What a tournament Robert Kelly has had – I couldn't be prouder of that young man," Paul said. "He's had an unbelievable season and grown so much. That was a big-time win (against Virginia)."

At No. 6 singles, Boyden went 3-1 including three-set, match-clinching wins against

2017 Honors and Awards

ITA National Senior Player of the Year

Ronnie Schneider

ITA National Rookie of the Year

William Blumberg

Wilson/ITA National Coach of the Year

Sam Paul

All-America

William Blumberg (singles, doubles)

Robert Kelly (doubles)

NCAA Tourn. Most Outstanding Player

William Blumberg

NCAA All-Tournament

William Blumberg (No. 2 singles)

Robert Kelly (No. 3 singles)

Blaine Boyden (No. 6 singles)

Blumberg-Kelly (No. 1 doubles)

ITA Carolina Region Senior of the Year

Ronnie Schneider

ITA Carolina Region Rookie of the Year

William Blumberg

ITA/Arthur Ashe Leadership & Sportsmanship Award:

Ronnie Schneider

ITA Carolina Region Coach of the Year

Sam Paul

ACC Freshman of the Year

William Blumberg

All-Atlantic Coast Conference

William Blumberg (1st); Ronnie Schneider (1st);

Robert Kelly (2nd)

ACC Player of the Week

Ronnie Schneider, Jan. 31

Athletic Director's Scholar-Athlete

Ronnie Schneider

ACC Weaver-James-Corrigan

Honorary Award

Ronnie Schneider

All-ACC Academic Team

William Blumberg; Blaine Boyden; Robert Kelly;

Ronnie Scheider

ITA Scholar-Athlete

Blaine Boyden

Strength & Conditioning Awards

Iron Ram: Blaine Boyden

Most Improved: Jack Murray

Newcomer: Simon Soendergaard

Final ITA Rankings

Team: 3rd

Singles

6. William Blumberg

24. Ronnie Schneider

84. Robert Kelly

Doubles

4. William Blumberg/Robert Kelly

62. Jack Murray/Simon Soendergaard

Wake Forest (quarterfinals) and Georgia (semifinals), two of the most impactful wins in program history.

“He’s grown so much this year and he’s played like a champion,” Paul said. “He’s our hardest worker in the classroom, he’s got the best academic performance on the team, and he was admitted to Kenan-Flagler Business School. In addition to all of that, he’s the first one at practice every single day. What a year he’s had.”

Stellar Start for Blumberg

William Blumberg’s collegiate career got off to an impressive start. The freshman enrolled at UNC in January and played at No. 1 singles in his very first college match, on Jan. 14 vs. Bucknell. He won 6-3, 6-1 and never looked back.

Playing mostly playing at the No. 2, he went 31-3 in singles during his freshman campaign, and carried a 25-match winning streak into the NCAA singles title match. He went unbeaten in ACC regular-season play, finishing 11-0. (He did not play in the season’s final match, at Louisville, but earned wins in all the rest.) For the year, he went 18-2 against ranked opponents, including wins over two in the top five.

Blumberg was named ITA National Freshman of the Year, ACC Freshman of the Year and the ITA’s Carolina Region Rookie of the Year. He finished the year ranked No. 6 nationally in singles and No. 4 in doubles (with Robert Kelly).

Century Club

Senior Jack Murray won for the 100th time in his Carolina singles career on May 12 when he beat VCU’s Ignacio Rivero 6-1, 6-1. A starter throughout his time at UNC, Murray finished with a career singles mark of 102-35. He went 94-33 in doubles.

He’s the second member of the 2016-17 team to reach the century mark during the season. Classmate Ronnie Schneider reached 100 earlier in the spring (Jan. 16 vs. UNC Greensboro) and wrapped up his career as a Tar Heels with a record of 120-48.

With another year to play, junior Robert Kelly is at 96-24 for his singles career and 89-24 in doubles.

ITA Honors for Schneider, Blumberg, Paul

Tar Heel senior Ronnie Schneider was named ITA Men’s Tennis Senior Player of the Year, freshman William Blumberg was selected as the ITA Men’s Tennis Rookie of the Year, and Sam Paul was named the Wilson/ITA National Coach of the Year.

Schneider is the second UNC men’s player ever to claim the senior honor, and Blumberg is the second to earn the freshman honor.

Schneider, from Bloomington, Ind., is a four-time All-Atlantic Coast Conference selection and earned All-America honors in singles in 2016. He finished with a career mark of 120-48 in singles and 93-33 in doubles and helped lead UNC to unprecedented success during his time as a Tar Heel. In his senior year, the team won a school record 29 matches and advanced past the NCAA Elite 8 for the first time in school history.

Blumberg, from Greenwich, Conn., went 31-3 in singles play (26-2 in dual matches) and was undefeated in ACC play at 11-0. He won 25 matches in a row leading up to the NCAA singles title match, and he finished as the national singles runner-up. He was named the Atlantic Coast Conference Freshman of the Year and also named to the All-ACC first team.

The other Tar Heel to earn National Rookie of the Year honors was Brayden Schnur in 2014. The other Senior Player of the Year was Raian Luchici in 2006.

Paul’s honor followed his 24th year as UNC’s head coach.

“The credit goes to my players,” Paul said. “What an amazing ride they took us on this year. Our seniors – Ronnie, Jack and Chad – made such an impact on our program. Tripp Phillips is incredible, one of the best coaches in the world. And Stuart DePaolo was so important to our success, as is our support staff. It’s a village and a group effort.

“In the end it’s really all about the players. They’re the ones who made

this happen. I’m so proud to be their coach. I just feel really fortunate to be at Carolina and to have these guys.”

The 2016-17 season was a stellar one for the program. The Tar Heels finished as the NCAA runner-up, reaching the national championship match for the first time in program history and winning a school-record 29 matches. They finished the season ranked third overall, the highest post-season ranking in program history.

The team also had an outstanding spring semester academically, with a team grade point average of 3.25, the highest semester average since 2012.

Paul became UNC’s all time winningest coach this season with his 419th victory. He will enter the 2017-18 season as the ACC’s winningest active coach with 444 victories.

Academic Excellence

As the Tar Heels were enjoying unprecedented success on the court this spring, they also had outstanding year off of it. The team’s grade point average during the spring semester was 3.255, the highest in the past five years. Ten players earned semester grade point averages of 3.0 or better.

“Academic success is an important part of our program,” UNC coach Sam Paul said. “We want our players to thrive on and off the court, and this year’s team was outstanding in all regards.”

In addition to the team academic success, several Tar Heels earned individual honors:

- Seniors Chad Hoskins, Jack Murray and Ronnie Schneider graduated from UNC in May.
- Schneider was the recipient of an ACC Weaver-James-Corrigan Honorary Award.
- Freshmen Ladd Harrison and Simon Soendergaard qualified for Dean’s List honors by earning a 3.5 or better GPA while enrolled in a full course load.
- William Blumberg, Blaine Boyden, Robert Kelly and Ronnie Schneider were named to the All-ACC Academic Team.
- Blaine Boyden was honored as an ITA Scholar-Athlete.

All-ACC Honors

UNC’s William Blumberg was named the 2017 Atlantic Coast Conference Men’s Tennis Freshman of the Year and was joined on the All-ACC team by senior Ronnie Schneider and junior Robert Kelly, the league announced on May 4. Blumberg is the fifth UNC player to win the honor, the first since Brayden Schnur in 2014.

“I’m really happy for all three of them to have earned these honors in one of the toughest leagues in the country,” UNC coach Sam Paul said. “For Ronnie to earn All-ACC honors four times is an amazing accomplishment. Will has had an outstanding season and it’s great to see him recognized for that. And Robert has been a tremendous player for us in singles and doubles.”

Schneider, from Bloomington, Ind., was named to the All-ACC first team for the fourth year in a row. All-America in singles as a junior, he is a fourth-year starter and team captain. He is the first Tar Heel to earn All-ACC honors in all four years of his career since David Caldwell (1993-96).

Kelly, from Chapel Hill, was named to the All-ACC second team after earning third-team honors as a sophomore. He was All-America in doubles last year.

In earning the Freshman of the Year honor, Blumberg follows Paul Harsanyi (1994), Bjorn Rencken (1999), Chris Kearney (2007) and Schnur. He also was named first-team All-ACC, one of just two freshmen voted to the nine-member first team.

Team Mick

All season, the Tar Heels wore patches that read “Mick” in honor of a young boy who was adopted as a member of the squad. The team was matched with Mick Macholl through an organization called Team Impact, and Mick quickly became a part of the Tar Heel family. Players visited him daily when he was undergoing treatments at UNC Children’s

Hospital, and when Mick was well enough he attended many matches. At the 2016 ITA National Indoor Championship, each player wrote “MM” on his shoes and after the Tar Heels won the title, they dedicated it to Mick. When the team was honored on the court at the UNC-Duke men’s basketball game later that week, Mick joined the fun, accompanying the Tar Heels onto the court, even though it was way past his bedtime.

Mick lost his battle with cancer in December of 2016 and the team played the season in his memory, inspired by their teammate.

Paul Moving Up the Charts

Sam Paul picked up his 419th career victory on Jan. 22 as the Tar Heels beat UT Chattanooga 6-0, making him the winningest coach in program history. He moved ahead of Don Skakle, who coached the Tar Heels to 418 wins in his 22-year career in Chapel Hill, 1959-80.

“Coach Skakle was incredible,” Paul said. “To even be coaching at the same university is an honor – he’s a legend. I just want to say thank you to the players who have been here over the last 24 years. I’ve never won a match here – it’s the players. I thank my staff and especially Tripp Phillips, my assistant, who was also a player here.”

At the end of the 2016-17 season, Paul was 444-195 overall.

Tar Heels Report Stellar APR

The UNC men’s tennis program performed extremely well in the latest Academic Progress Rate report.

- Men’s tennis was one of eight UNC teams to rank among the top 10 percent nationally in their respective sports. The APR measures a team’s academic success by tracking the progress of each scholarship student-athlete, accounting for eligibility, retention and graduation. This year’s award is based on multi-year rates from data including the school years from 2012-13 to 2015-16.

- Men’s tennis was one of 16 UNC teams to score a perfect 1000 for the 2015-16 school year, the most recent one for which APR scores are available. This APR report is the sixth time in a row that the Tar Heels have earned a perfect score.

UNC in the Rankings

The Tar Heels spent the season ranked among the nation’s top teams and finished the year ranked No. 3, the highest postseason ranking in school history. During the season, they were as high as fourth and as low as 13

- UNC has been ranked in the top 15 continuously since April 21, 2015. The Tar Heels haven’t fallen outside the top 25 in more than three years, since Feb. 4, 2014.

UNC in the rankings in 2017

Jan. 4	9
Jan. 18	9
Jan. 25	7
Feb. 1	7
Feb. 8	5
Feb. 21	4
Feb. 28	6
March 7	5
March 14	4
March 21	9
March 28	11
April 4	11
April 11	13
April 18	12
April 25	12
May 4	9
May 24	3

Tar Heel Family

The spirit and strength of the Tar Heel family was evident earlier this spring when every player on the team had his head shorn in support of Pam Boyden, the mother of sophomore Blaine Boyden.

Pam, who lives in Raleigh, is undergoing treatment for breast cancer. As a show of support for her, Blaine (whose teammates call him Bo), shaved his head. And after he did that, the whole team jumped on-board.

“A lot of these guys, they care a lot about their hair,” Blaine Boyden said to the *Daily Tar Heel*. “For them to do that for me, it meant the world, and I know it meant the world to my mom.”

Back on the Court

Stuart DePaolo is back on the court a year after his senior season, this time in a different role. After wrapping up his playing career in 2016 and graduating from UNC, DePaolo joined the team this spring as a volunteer assistant. A Spanish major from Asheville, N.C., he plans to eventually attend medical school.

- DePaolo’s addition made two alums on the UNC staff. Associate head coach Tripp Phillips played for the Tar Heels from 1996-2000, earning All-America honors as a senior. He joined the Tar Heel staff in 2006 and was promoted to his current position in 2013. In 2016 he was named the National Assistant Coach of the Year by the ITA.



Sam Paul Head Coach • 24th Season

- Is 444-195 in 24 seasons as UNC’s head coach
- 2017 Wilson/ITA National Coach of the Year
- Spent four seasons as an assistant at UNC before becoming head coach
- Six-time ACC Coach of the Year (1996, 2000, ’02, ’04, ’07, ’14)

- Led UNC to the 2016 ITA National Indoor Team Championship, the program’s first national title
- Has led UNC to the NCAA Tournament in 22 of 24 years as a head coach



Tripp Phillips Associate Head Coach • 11th Season

- ITA National Assistant Coach of the Year in 2016
- As a UNC player, earned All-America honors as a senior in 2000
- As a pro, ranked as high as 29th in the world in doubles. Reached the doubles semifinals at the 2006 U.S. Open.

2016-17 Roster

Name	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown (High School)
William Blumberg	6-2	Fr.	Greenwich, Conn. (Greenwich)
Blaine Boyden	6-3	So.	Raleigh, N.C. (Wakefield)
Ladd Harrison	6-1	Fr.	Atlanta, Ga. (Lovett School)
Chad Hoskins	5-10	Sr.	Salisbury, N.C. (R.J. Reynolds)
Robert Kelly	6-2	Jr.	Chapel Hill, N.C. (Cardinal Gibbons)
Anu Kodali	6-1	So.	Durham, N.C. (IMG/Florida Virtual)
Kavir Kumar	6-3	Fr.	Charlotte, N.C. (Charlotte Country Day)
Jack Murray	5-11	Sr.	Beverly Hills, Mich. (The Roper School)
Joshua Peck	6-5	Fr.	Calgary, Alberta, Canada (National Sports School)
Arturo Schmidt	6-0	So.	Barcelona, Spain (Europa International School)
Ronnie Schneider	5-9	Sr.	Bloomington, Ind. (Bloomington South)
Simon Soendergaard	6-3	Fr.	Frederikssund, Denmark (KVUC)

Head Coach: Sam Paul

Associate Head Coach: Tripp Phillips

Volunteer Assistant Coach: Stuart DePaolo

Tar Heels by Major

Business: Blaine Boyden, Ronnie Schneider

Economics: Chad Hoskins *, Anu Kodali, Jack Murray*

Global Studies: Robert Kelly

History: Chad Hoskins *, Jack Murray*

Undeclared: William Blumberg, Ladd Harrison, Kavir Kumar, Joshua Peck, Arturo Schmidt, Simon Soendergaard

* – Double major

Pronunciations

Stuart DePaolo: de-POW-lo

Anu Kodali: a-NEW kah-DOL-ee

Kavir Kuma: kuh-VEER coo-MAR

Simon Soendergaard: SONE-der-gard



William Blumberg
Freshman
Greenwich, Conn.



Blaine Boyden
Sophomore
Raleigh, N.C.



Ladd Harrison
Freshman
Atlanta, Ga.



Chad Hoskins
Senior
Salisbury, N.C.



Robert Kelly
Junior
Chapel Hill, N.C.



Anu Kodali
Sophomore
Durham, N.C.



Kavir Kumar
Freshman
Charlotte, N.C.



Jack Murray
Senior
Beverly Hills, Mich.



Joshua Peck
Freshman
Calgary, Alberta,
Canada



Arturo Schmidt
Sophomore
Barcelona, Spain



Ronnie Schneider
Senior
Bloomington, Ind.



Simon Soendergaard
Freshman
Frederikssund,
Denmark



Sam Paul
Head Coach
24th Season



Tripp Phillips
Associate
Head Coach
11th Season