

TT No.27: Steve Hardy - Thursday 29th August 2019; **University North Carolina Women v Coastal Carolina**; Colonial Athletics League; Kick-Off: 7.00pm; Result: 3-1; Admission \$7; Programme: Free; Attendance: 564

A family wedding in Wilmington, North Carolina, and by an amazing coincidence, I spotted this match at the University of North Carolina grounds was taking place, close to our hotel.

Just like every other school, college and University we passed whilst we were in the States, the UNCW set up is vast. A full baseball ground, athletics track, American football stadium as well as the 'Soccer' stadium which were all floodlit and played on a 4G pitch. Admission was a flat \$7 for everyone, and an unexpected free double-sided single sheet was issued from a stall which was also giving all children those awful clapper boards to try and create an atmosphere!

In fairness, they didn't need artificial help creating an atmosphere. The home crowd (there were no supporters from Conway in South Carolina which is where the Chanticleers come from) managed to make quite a lot of noise, although it did seem to me that they began getting excited when nothing seemed to be happening on the pitch.

The match itself was very good I thought. The Seahawks took the lead just before half time, only for Coastal to be awarded a dubious penalty a minute later. This was brilliantly tipped round the post by the home keeper leaving us with a 1-0 half time score. UNCW doubled their lead on 53 minutes and should have had several more until Coastal shocked everyone with an 86th minute goal of their own. No sign of last-minute nerves from the home team though who rounded off the game with their 3rd of the night, two minutes from the end.

So, an unexpected bonus game for me, and very good it was too. Just a shame about the heat. When this game finished at 9.00pm, it was still 88 degrees as we dripped our way back to the sanctuary of our air-conditioned hotel.

04/20