

Defense- we will never forget the 'Blue Wave'

By GREG CLAY
Sports Writer

On paper, the 1977 football season appeared to begin like "76" ended, as Carolina met the Kentucky Wildcats and were blown off the field. But that was hardly the case.

Carolina held Kentucky to 10 points in the Wildcats' stadium. This is the same

usually in the backfield as soon as the quarterback takes the snap, and when he's in doubt of who has the ball, Mr. D. will simply tackle the whole backfield until he finds the man with the ball, as he did against N.C. State. One day Hardison may replace Bubba Smith in the beer commercials with the "easy opening" cans.

Junior Ken Sheets, a starter since his freshman year, is a vicious pass rusher

spare time, so that tells you speed is his forte.

Rod Broadway, Dee Hardison's look alike, has been here a while. He's always in the middle of things on the field doing what a defensive lineman should—plugging holes. He was out all last year with a knee injury, but that misfortune definitely hasn't slowed the elderly one in "77". If Broadway can't find a job in the pros, maybe he'll go out west to the cameras and motion picture screens in Los Angeles. If "Broadway" Joe Namath can become "Hollywood" Joe, then I can foresee Rod Broadway under all that make-up and shining lights as "Rod Hollywood."

People say linebackers are supposed to be crazy and out of their minds. I don't know either of the starting linebackers so I can't comment on that accusation. But I do know that Buddy Curry and Bobby Gay are as good as any in the league. Curry is the big play man on defense. He always makes the key interception. B. C. just has the best hands at the right time. The word HAM doesn't always refer to that part of the four-legged animal that we munch on at breakfast time. This time it means, Hostile, Agile, and Mobile and that means Bobby Gay. The man hits on every

friendly skies at Carolina. That means the air lanes in this part of the country are dangerous these days. And that is the truth. I called Bobby Cale "The Thief" after I found out he led the ACC in interceptions last year with five. The Delaware-bred cornerback is a great one. His slender stature belies us on campus when he's in jeans, but when Cale is on the field, the stature theory means nothing.

In 1977 Cale had help at the other cornerback slot. Ricky Barden, the 5-11 sophomore became the "Thief's Accomplice" in his first starting season. Barden has turned in some good games and he'll get better. He's made some spectacular interceptions which means he may become a spectacular cornerback.

According to the language of football, the word "safety" means you keep your end zone safe from the opposition. There are two safety positions and if something goes wrong between the linebacker and the secondary, everyone in the stadium will have their eyes on Number 38 and Number 16.

That's Alan Caldwell and Bernie Menapace, respectively. The All-ACC team cannot exclude "A. C." from the list of top players at the safety position in the conference. His initials should give him a

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Kentucky team that walloped Penn State several weeks later and humiliated the Tar heels in the arctic-like Peach Bowl in 1976.

Although Kentucky won the game, but barely because of key mistakes by the Heels, the Carolina defense set the stage for what was to come as the season progressed. The defense has been spectacular all year.

When you say defense nowadays at UNC, everyone thinks of something special and, of course, with a smile. The defense was truly special this year. Gone are the memorable members of the 1971 defensive team, players such as Burt Grissom, Bill Brafford, and John Bunting, to name a few. Some say this defense was Coach Dooley's best in his eleven year tenure at North Carolina.

But the 1977 defensive unit had some household names that will surely stick in your mind too. The word defense in Tarheelia is synonymous with Dee Hardison. The 6-4, 250 pound strong man is an All-America candidate and is surely in contention for the outland trophy. He's

and overpowering against the run. Number 89 still has a year to go at Carolina and I know the opposition in the conference wished he'd gone to some small college in his native state of Virginia, perhaps William & Mary. They could use some help.

T. K. McDaniel, surely to be known as the other defensive end because of the presence of Ken Sheets, has held down his spot solidly all year. He must have a record for fumble recoveries at Carolina, so like they sometimes say—he has a nose for the football, especially when the pigskin has lost its means of transportation. I just wonder will he ever explain what his initials stand for.

Anytime you have a middle guard who does a 4.5 time in the 40-yard dash, you gotta have mobility in your defensive line. Dave Simmons fits this description and this cat has mobility. A former receiver and running back from a graduating class of 64 students in high school, Mr. Simmons is everywhere on the field chasing ball carriers down from behind which is quite a feat. They say he's a drag racer in his

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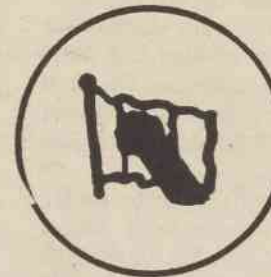
play with everything he's got. Although Gay is a smallish linebacker, (only 5-11) he more than makes up for his size when he pops the man with the brown leather oblong object.

This year, they say there are no more

head start anyway (ACC and A.C.). Caldwell says George Atkinson is his idol in pro football, needless to say. I don't know who hits the hardest, but I do know that Caldwell has a better dance in the end zone with the goal post.

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