

Sports

James Thompson: UNC's unsung hero

by CHARLES MILLS
Sports Editor

Say the names "Hulk," "J.T.," or "He-Man" around a Tarheel football fan and they are all synonymous with one guy, James Thompson. Thompson, a junior from Lumberton, has been Carolina's starting fullback for the past two seasons. He said the reason he chose UNC is because it is close to home.

"I've always been a homeboy, a sort of a mother's boy, and North Carolina is the best school in the state", said Thompson.

At 5'11, 230 lbs., Thompson has an extremely powerfully built and awe-inspiring physique. Thompson said, "When I was small, my grandmother used to always tell me that if I eat my vegetables, I would grow up to be big and strong." With some weight training and his grandmother's advice, Thompson has sure grown up to be big and strong.

Thompson said his most memorable moment as a football player was his first collegiate game last season, stepping out in front of the fans at Kenan Stadium against the Citadel. But the game Tarheel fans remember most is the NC State game



Ralph Phifer #52, James Thompson #40. (Photo by Scott Jones)

on October 17th. In that game, Thompson blasted his way to a career high 94 yards rushing, insuring Carolina's 17-14 victory. Ironically, Thompson was prepared to play tailback in that game because the Heels were suffering with a rash of injuries at tailback. He said he would give the tailback position a try because he could carry the ball more, have people blocking for him, and just get a different viewpoint of the game. Thompson said of playing tailback, "It's the glamour position."

But, for every glamour boy on a

team, there are 5 or 6 other players on the field making him look good. The fullback is one of these players. Thompson said playing fullback means one has to be able to block guys who are oftentimes bigger and sometimes faster than you are. And sometimes, playing fullback means winding up on your behind while trying to block some big lineman. But surely Derrick Fenner, Torin Dorn, Eric Starr, and the rest of the UNC tailbacks will attest to the fact that if were not for the incredible holes created by Thompson's devastating blocks, they would not be quite as glamorous as they seem.

Magic Michael

by DESMOND M. WALLACE

In what was billed as the reunion of some of North Carolina's finest roundball talent, Dean's Dome played host to the NBA's Chicago Bulls and Dallas Mavericks October 24 in what largely amounted (with a few exceptions) to an intersquad scrimmage before a public audience. The over 13,000 paid onlookers witnesses poor passing, shoddy shooting, and generally sluggish play as the two combatants worked out the kinks from an assuredly restful off-season — and the fans loved every minute of it.

However, the two and a half hour event was not without its moments of brilliance and sheer entertainment. Seemingly, every time the 6'6" tongue-wagging phenomenon hailing from Wilmington, NC laid hands on the basketball, hordes of Jordanesque ten year old boys would rise to their Nike-laden feet anticipating some monumentous dunk from Magic Michael. Sure enough, number 23 did not disappoint as he poured in 36. In particular, with 49 ticks of the clock remaining in the final stanza, the renowned Prince of Midair showed why he is the NBA's reigning dunk master, as he broke away from the pack and disproved Newton's Law of Universal Gravitation. After the game, when asked what his most memorable part of the just concluded contest was, Jordan replied succinctly, "Forty-eight minutes is my favorite part."

An injured Sam Perkins stumbled through most of the game. His play throughout the 124-111 loss was indicative of the type of game his Mavericks played for much of the evening. The Maverick center recorded a mere four points in 25 total minutes of hoop action. Indeed, there was a vicious rumor going around that the former All-American was even in the building that night. To his credit, though, had the game not been

played in the friendly confines of Chapel Hill, Perkins might not have played at all.

His team mate Al Wood, a product of UNC's Class of 1981, was out for the duration of the game. It had been reported earlier that Wood had injured his shoulder but a Dallas press release related his noticeable absence to an eye injury sustained against these same Bulls in a previous game.

In the game itself, defense dictated the tempo as might have been predicted in any pre-season matchup. At first both squads appeared a tad slow off the mark. The opening period was highlighted by the Maverick's Steve Alford who hit a three point bomb with nothing but goose eggs remaining to give his team the trey advantage.

Chicago changed game plans by intermission. The Bulls' highly touted inside game was mostly ineffective with the exception of nine year veteran Dave Corzine who had flashes of brilliance inside the light blue paint. Chicago seemed frustrated in trying to work to the big boys and thus altered the contest's agenda by the outside "J" to supplement.

By the end of the third the regrouped Chicago franchise executed well and proved that they were the better team on the floor that night. With guards Jordan and John Paxson combining for 28 third period points, the "W" seemed imminent. Dallas fell eight points back and never regained consciousness.

The reunion game, though not of the textbook quality for which the NBA is famous, satisfied many a ticket holder as they were afforded the opportunity to see their favorite Tarheel alums showcase their talent. After all, that probably is the reason for scheduling of such a game in such a location. Said Jordan, "It's always great to come back and play at North Carolina."

Who would disagree?

More Prognostications

by CHARLES MILLS
Sports Editor

Seems like we've met here before. Believe it or not, I like predicting the outcome of athletics months in advance. When we last left off, I had just given you my ACC picks. Now, I want to pick a little pro ball. In the Atlantic division, the Boston Celtics will do it again. Although they are aging, and Kevin McHale is out for a few more weeks, and Bill Walton is out for the season, the rebuilt Larry Bird will have possibly the best season of his career enroute to winning his 4th MVP title and leading the Celts to victory. The Celtics will have to depend more on their bench this season, which includes 3 rookies. The Washington Bullets, featuring 5'3 Mugsy Bougues, will finish in second, Philadelphia will finish third, then the New York Knicks and the New Jersey Nets.

In the central division, the Atlanta Hawks are ready to fly amongst the NBA's elite. The Hawks are young, strong, talented, and best of all, hungry. Watch Dominique Wilkins take the slam dunk crown back, too. The ever present Milwaukee Bucks will finish second, the Detroit Pistons will finish third, and Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls will give

it a good run this year. Look for the Bulls to be more balanced and Jordan not to score as many points as last year. The Cleveland Cavilers will finish fifth, and the Indiana Pacers, last.

In the Midwest, The Houston Rockets will finally live up to their potential. Ralph Sampson is happy with his new contract and Akeem Olajawon is just the best center in the NBA. Dallas will finish second, Utah third, Denver fourth, Sacramento fifth, though Kenny Smith will be a strong candidate for rookie of the year. Last, but not least, San Antonio.

In the west, the Los Angeles Lakers will run away with this division. Magic Johnson, James Worthy, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and the rest of that crew are just too powerful for the west. The NBA's Cinderella from last season, the Seattle Superonics are still a year or two away from wresting this division from the Lakers' vicelike grip. The Portland Trailblazers will finish third, the Golden State Warriors fourth, the Phoenix Suns fifth, and Joe Wolf will see more losses this year than he has seen in the last 10, as the Los Angeles Clippers will finish last. Look for any playoff predictions at a later date.