

# Rasby grows into Carolina offense

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Starting me off with base plays where there's not much thinking to it. You start from there and work your way up."

Rasby's role has expanded because of his strength as a blocker and the departure of fullbacks Howard Griffith and Bob Christian via free agency. Carolina will use Rasby in short-yardage situations that call for two tight ends as well as a 6-foot-8-inch, 260-pound fullback.

Either way, he's made progress. "Walter is a big part of our offensive plan," Carolina coach Dom Capers said. "When you look at all the different ways we're using him, he's made tremendous strides since he first came in."

When Rasby came to the Panthers last year, he was one-dimensional. His pass-catching was suspect, and a so-so preseason didn't help. Rasby, who'll never be mistaken for Walls as a

receiver, lacked confidence.

"I caught a lot of balls in practice, but I dropped a pass in pre-season and that kind of got my confidence down," Rasby said. "Catching a ball to me is 75 percent mental. If you can catch it, you can catch it. If you can't you can't."

To become a better receiver, Rasby worked harder during the off-season, refining his technique in hopes of becoming more than a blocker.

"I caught on the (passing) machine a lot this year, I worked with Wesley a lot this year," he said. "Basically, it was one of those things to get my confidence back."

Rasby's willingness to improve impressed Carolina's coaching staff. During minicamp, he showed more confidence catching passes while refining his blocking. As a player, Rasby has made tremendous strides over his first season.

"His role was very limited at that point in time, and we've expanded that role," Capers said. "I think he's matured a lot as a player. He understands a lot more of what it takes to be a pro football player than we he first came in and I'm excited about Walter's progress."

Rasby has much to learn during the preseason. In addition to lining up at tight end, he has to learn where to go as a lead blocker. Helping determine Carolina's success running the ball is a challenge he's looking forward to.

"There's going to be plays where I'm going to be at the point of attack," Rasby said, "and if I screw up, the play is dead. I don't mind that being on my shoulders because that's what I'm paid to do. Hopefully, I can keep rising to the challenge."

Rasby hasn't forgotten about being a receiver, either. Although Walls will be the primary target on inside routes, Rasby feels

quarterback Kerry Collins will start looking for him, too.

"I can get in on some of those catches, especially when they put me in at fullback," he said. "I think we have the opportunity to run more two tight end stuff this year and with me being a threat to block, teams might key on me and say 'they're running' and they we pass on them, that's a great weapon in our favor."

That's the potential of "Raz Regular." Rasby understands he may not be the total solution at fullback, but he's willing to try.

"Right now, I'm not having visions of grandeur," he said. "I'm still trying to figure out what I'm doing. The thing about fullback is that nothing is ever set. Before you get to your assigned person or spot, 10 million things cross in front of your face, so it's a world different from tight end."



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Walter Rasby knows playing fullback won't be easy. "Right now, I'm not having visions of grandeur," he says. "I'm still trying to figure out what I'm doing."

## Jamison happy to be in college

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thrilled to be a part of that chase. "You feel a part of history," he said. "The guy's the winningest coach of all-time so you definitely feel great about that and he's a great guy and I'm glad I did make the decision to go to North Carolina. I have no regrets whatsoever."

For now, Jamison is enjoying the last few weeks of summer vacation. It's already been a very busy one.

"I'm in summer school... trying

to stay ahead

on the class work and I've been lifting weights and trying to put on a couple of pounds," he said. "It's going to be another hectic year for me, another successful year hopefully."

It's a year he would like to see



Jamison

begin with a Pro-Am league title this weekend.

"Last year I was on (former UNC teammate Jerry) Stackhouse's team and we had to pull out at the end but this year we got a great team and we got Demarco (UNCC senior forward Demarco Johnson), who can really play inside and we got some guys that can stroke it from the outside, so we've got a pretty well balanced team."

He's hoping the same for his college team.

## Karate an outlet for Olympian



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Arlysa Ferguson took up karate to defend her family in case of attack. This week, she'll try to win a medal at the AAU Junior Olympics. "Very few children can excel at the highest level," says her coach, Ken Horn. "It takes a lot of commitment but yes, Arlysa can get there. She has to have perseverance."

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grandfather, died last September, but it was his wish to see his granddaughter compete in the Junior Olympics. Now Arlysa is dedicating herself to go on, even on days when she's exhausted from workouts. Arlysa practices six hours a week under coach Ken Horn at the Okinawan Karate Club. At Horn's school, students are promoted when it's earned, which makes Arlysa's accomplishments more impressive.

"Very few children can excel at the highest level," Horn said. "It takes a lot of commitment but yes Arlysa can get there. She has to have perseverance. With that anybody can get there."

"The great thing about martial arts, is even if you've been at it for 15 years you can still get better. If you put the time in, anybody can improve. You don't need just talent."

Horn has two other young students, Joel Estroado and Michael Troong, joining Ferguson in this week's competition. Ferguson will be supported with a cheering section that includes two brothers and sister, cousins, aunts and uncles. She won't be nervous, though.

"I'm not that kind of person," she said. "I just love it. I'll feel great and I'll be very excited."

Arlysa will compete with two types of weapons plus "all kinds of sparring." She would like to finish first, but if not "I'll take a second or third place."

Arlysa doesn't think about injuries, though she once suffered a knee sprain. She also doesn't

think about injuring other competitors.

"I'm trying to get people to understand that karate is not a violent sport," Eloise Ferguson said. "It's not Mike Tyson trying to bite an ear off. It builds character, responsibility and self-esteem. Every kid should take karate, as long as it's taught the correct way."

"It teaches you to respect people, to respect each other, when you bow and shake hands."

Arlysa shows as much respect for schoolwork as karate. She's a straight-A student since at Albermarle Road Elementary School and hopes to be a veterinarian one day. She claims "hundreds of pets, including a dog, two hamsters, a hermit crab and a rabbit."

If they all show up this week, a little more room may be needed at UNC Charlotte when the competition kicks into full gear.

## Sheff's slump is no delight for Florida Marlins outfielder

By Steven Wine  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIAMI — Gary Sheffield limps through the clubhouse, a huge ice pack on his left hamstring. He looks as though he can barely walk, much less carry a team through a pennant race.

The Florida Marlins, however, are eager for Sheffield to give them a lift. They've been waiting all season.

Sheffield hit the jackpot in April, signing a six-year, \$61 million contract, but he hasn't hit much since. "So far he is not having a Gary Sheffield year," general manager Dave Dombrowski said. "He's still one of the most dangerous hitters around, and he has the capability to break loose at any time. He's still capable of hitting 30 home runs this year."

In spring training, there was talk that this would be Sheffield's best season yet. After hitting .314 in 1996 with 42 homers and 120 RBIs, the muscular right fielder seemed on the brink of greatness at age 28.

Instead, he may be destined for his worst season since 1991, the year before he won the National League batting title and emerged as a star.

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## WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ?



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vs. Phoenix Mercury

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vs. Houston Comets

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"The difference can begin with you."

Greg Alan Williams  
Actor/Author



American Red Cross