

# Panthers can finally savor division championship

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date to sit out against the Lions. Linebacker D a n Morgan, who is recovering from a concussion, is another candidate, Davis



Davis

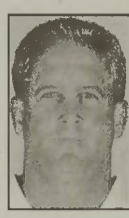
although there could be many other

Panthers who will watch from the sideline on Sunday.

"There'll probably be a few players on our team that we'll evaluate and look at, in terms of what's going to be in the best interest of them and us as we approach these last two games," Panthers coach John Fox said.

The issue is, now that the Panthers have clinched a division title and a playoff spot, do they focus on win-

ning more games? Or do they simply focus on getting healthy?



Fox

them to have some momen-

tum going into the playoffs, as well as give us the best opportunity (to win).

"It will be kind of a mix and match. There will be some guys that we will rest, particularly in practice and very likely in the game. Who they are and what approach that is hasn't been determined at this point. We probably won't share too much of that, from a competitive standpoint, anyway."

One thing is for certain at Ericsson Stadium: No matter how the regular season ends, people associated with

the Panthers will be happy when the playoffs come.

Before last week's streak-buster against Arizona, Fox said his team was struggling with confidence. Not anymore. The Panthers' offense, which hadn't exactly sizzled during the losing streak, was poised enough to put together scoring drives of 67 and 93 yards Sunday. And, in the final 1 minute, 9 seconds, the Panthers drove 49 yards for the winning score.

Adding extra meaning to the late score was that kicker John Kasay provided the

final margin with a 49-yard field goal. Just two weeks earlier, Kasay had missed three field goals and an extra point in a nine-point loss to Philadelphia.

"There's no question that winning breeds confidence," Fox said. "Winning in this league is hard. Having to win the game is extra hard. I think (last week's victory) was a huge relief for our football team, as far as that pressure off their back. I think that does affect you, in particular a young football team."

## Heisman Trophy hyped, but empty of real significance

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considered legitimate?

The Heisman's track record is horrific.

In 1994, the year Rashaan Salaam won the Heisman and Ki-jana Carter finished second? That was a farce, too. Alcorn State quarterback Steve McNair, who finished third, deserved it. But he wasn't considered a strong enough candidate because he played I-AA ball at what also happened to be an historically black college.

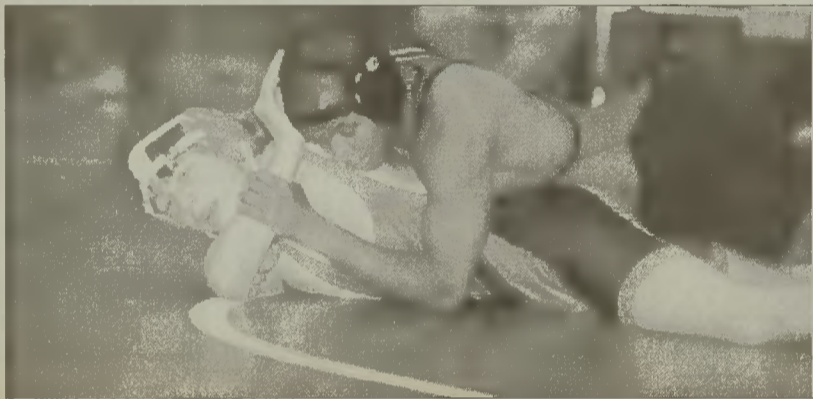
Then, of course, there was 1956, when Jim Brown finished fifth - fifth! - in the voting.

That was the biggest Heisman travesty of all. Yet almost 50 years later, and we're still dealing with the same kind of foolishness from Heisman voters.

They need to start giving the trophy to the most outstanding player in the United States every year, or they should just go ahead and openly admit that the Heisman is awarded for an altogether different reason.

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### GRAPPLING ISSUES



PHOTO/WADE NASH

The Mecklenburg County Wrestling Tournament brought together competitors from 11 high schools last week.



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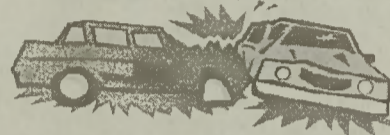
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