

Linebacker Interceptions Key Resurgent UNC Defense

BY JUSTIN SCHEEP
STAFF WRITER

ATLANTA — When a linebacker sees the ball hurtling toward him unmolested, his eyes get as big as bowling balls. He's going to grab it and run it as far as he can.

Rarely do linebackers get a chance to do this, only in their wildest dreams. Most will never pick off a single pass in their career, let alone rumble downfield with it.

UNC inside linebackers Mike Morton and Rick Steinbacher lived out a dream Saturday against Georgia Tech. Both intercepted Yellow Jacket quarterback Graham Stroman, Morton's coming in the first quarter and Steinbacher's capping the rout

in the fourth. Morton and Steinbacher platoon at the inside linebacker position.

The interceptions were sweet rewards to a defense that had been picked apart in recent weeks by the likes of UTEP and Wake Forest, not exactly offensive powerhouses.

Morton's grab was the second consecutive UNC interception in the red zone in the first stanza. Safety Sean Boyd's interception stymied the Jackets' first drive and led to UNC's first touchdown.

Tech once again drove down the field, but Morton, a junior from Kannapolis, was in the right slot at the right time. Derrick Steagall was running a shallow crossing pattern at the North Carolina 17-

yard line.

Stroman made a perfect pass into his hands. But Steagall ran into UNC's newest friend, known to most fans as the umpire. Steagall rammed into Rosario Amato and lost sight of the ball. It bounced off Steagall's foot and somehow floated into Morton's hands.

"I was breaking downhill, and he tripped over the referee and the ball popped up," Morton said. "I said, 'I'll take that,' and kept on running."

"I thought it was a little bit of justice because I always have to dodge that guy (the referee)."

It was Morton's second career interception — the first one came last year against

Virginia. But this year, he got to take it for a 34-yard ride.

The interception led to UNC's second touchdown, the second consecutive one off a misfired Tech pass. The Jackets were down 14 points despite moving the ball well.

By the fourth quarter, the Tar Heels had all but secured their seventh victory, leading by 31 points. But the plan this week was to play four intense quarters on defense to prevent a repeat of Wake Forest's 22-point fourth quarter barrage last week.

Steinbacher, with the aid from UNC defensive tackle Marcus Jones, intercepted Stroman at the Georgia Tech 30-yard line. As Jones pressured Stroman, the pass hit

Jones on the helmet, deflecting the ball high and eventually into the patient hands of Steinbacher.

"It was up there for about 30 seconds," Steinbacher said. "I didn't think it was ever going to come down, but I caught it."

Steinbacher, a senior, immediately was mugged on the ground by senior free safety Tracey Walker. The interception, which led to a field goal, was Steinbacher's first in football at any level.

"That was just one of the greatest feelings in my life," Steinbacher said. "Just because Bracy and I are two guys who came in together and been through a lot together. It was just a great emotional moment."

SPORTS BRIEFS

Women's Cross Country Sprints to State Title

CULHOREE — Tar Heel freshmen Susanna Matsen and Karen Godlock finished second and fifth, respectively, to wrap up a team title for the No. 12 UNC women's cross country team Saturday at the 1993 North Carolina Intercollegiate Cross Country Championships.

The women's squad breezed past sixth-ranked N.C. State for the first time ever, by a 38-53 margin. North Carolina's five fastest runners all placed in the top dozen. Matsen came across next in 17:53, and Godlock finished in 18:01.

UNC's Andrea Bailey finished ninth in 18:13, Kelly Donahoe placed 10th in 18:18, and Jenny Musselwhite came across 12th in 18:22.

The men's cross country team finished fourth, while State took the overall title with 27 points.

Jerod Neas was the Tar Heels' top finisher, coming in third in 25:27. UNC's Phil Hemery placed 14th in 26:18, and Brandon Coonse came in 32nd in 26:57.

Women's Soccer Team Takes Two in Texas

HOUSTON — The UNC women's soccer team continued its winning ways, sweeping a two-game weekend road trip in the Challenge Soccer Classic to extend its NCAA record win streak to 70 games.

The Tar Heels stumped No. 6 Stanford 3-1 Sunday and downed Notre Dame 3-0 Friday behind the mutually beneficial play of Mia Hamm and Rita Tower. UNC improved its record to 12-0.

Against Stanford, Hamm, UNC's All-America senior forward, scored two goals early in the game on assists from Tower. Hamm's first score came at 1:31 in the first half from assists by Tower and Dawn Crow.

North Carolina stretched the margin to two when Hamm connected on another pass from Tower at 11:08, with a second assist from junior Angela Kelly.

Although the Cardinal battled back on a Carmel Murphy goal at the 6:47 mark in the second half, Stanford would come no closer. Hamm thanked Tower for her early assists with a scoring feed of her own. Tower knocked in the final goal of the game at 75:50 to subdue the Cardinal. UNC outshot Stanford 12-4.

Men's Soccer Rebounds From Upset Loss to Brown

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — The UNC men's soccer team rebounded from a 2-1 loss to Brown Saturday, defeating Cornell 3-1 Sunday afternoon at the Lanzer/Sheraton Classic.

The No. 7 Tar Heels (10-4-1) scored first Sunday on a Greg Caiola put back off a Temoc Suarez miss. Senior Eddie Pope continued the UNC scoring attack, finding the mark with a header at the 50:27 mark.

Senior David Moore scored North Carolina's final goal at 63:08 off assists from Derek Kepner and Victor Suarez.

On Saturday, UNC's Todd Haskins scored a goal within the first minute of action, but it would be the Tar Heels last. Brown ended a four-game winning streak for the Tar Heels behind the leadership of sophomore midfielder Shaun Harkin.

Harkin scored at the 49:11 mark and then hit the game-winner minutes later.

AP Top 25

Team	Record	Points	Previous
1. Florida State (82)	7-0-0	1,550	1
2. Notre Dame	7-0-0	1,485	3
3. Ohio State	6-0-0	1,366	6
4. Alabama	5-0-1	1,307	2
5. Nebraska	6-0-0	1,292	6
6. Miami	4-1-0	1,269	8
7. Arizona	6-0-0	1,117	11
8. Tennessee	5-1-1	1,088	10
9. Florida	6-1-0	998	4
10. Auburn	7-0-0	994	19
11. Texas A&M	6-1-0	841	13
12. North Carolina	7-1-0	837	14
13. Michigan	4-2-0	790	18
14. Penn State	5-1-0	752	7
15. Wisconsin	6-0-0	748	16
16. Colorado	4-2-0	666	20
17. Oklahoma	5-1-0	539	9
18. West Virginia	5-0-0	531	17
19. UCLA	4-2-0	520	22
20. Louisville	6-1-0	323	23
21. Virginia	6-1-0	315	15
22. Washington	4-2-0	256	12
23. Syracuse	4-1-1	207	24
24. Michigan State	3-2-0	117	25
25. Washington State	5-2-0	68	—

Other receiving votes: Indiana 56, Boston College 31, California 24, Kansas State 20, Kentucky 15, Mississippi 10, Brigham Young 6, Virginia Tech 6, N.C. State 3, Southern Cal 3, Fresno State 2, Georgia 2, Oregon 2, Wyoming 2, Navy 1.

UNC vs. Georgia Tech Score Box

	UNC	7	17	7	10	41
GT	0	3	0	0	3	

Scoring Summary

First Quarter
UNC — L. Johnson 15 pass from Stanicek (Pignetti kick), 6:47

Second Quarter
UNC — C. Johnson 3 run (Pignetti kick), 13:34
GT — Jarrett 37 field goal, 9:18
UNC — Brooks 34 pass from Stanicek (Pignetti kick), 6:18
UNC — Pignetti 29 field goal, 0:05

Third Quarter
UNC — Stanicek 1 run (Pignetti kick), 0:03

Fourth Quarter
UNC — Pignetti 31 field goal, 10:49
UNC — McGregor 1 run (Pignetti kick), 3:09

Attendance — 39,216

Individual Statistics
Rushing: GT — Bell 11-55, Levens 6-35, Steagall 1-33, Lincoln 3-22, D. David 2-8, Haney 1-4, Zachery 1-9, Gonzalez 1-8, Stroman 6-11, UNC — L. Johnson 20-77, C. Johnson 13-65, Stanicek 10-42, Marshall 7-33, Henderson 4-18, Williams 2-11, Thomas 4-8, McGregor 2-5, Wall 1-6.
Passing: GT — Stroman 8-17-2-94, Davis 0-4-1-0, Gonzalez 0-0-0-0, UNC — Stanicek 12-18-0-156, Thomas 2-3-0-18, Boaz 1-1-0-8.
Receiving: GT — Steagall 2-33, Levens 2-28, Walker 2-12, Simmons 1-16, Wright 1-6, UNC — Brooks 4-75, Holiday 4-47, L. Johnson 3-26, Wall 2-13, F. Jones 1-11, Watson 1-8.

TECH

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in eight plays, with Stanicek throwing 15 yards to Leon Johnson (20 carries, 77 yards) at 5:47 for the game's first score.

Morton stopped Tech's next drive with an ugly interception. Back-up QB Graham Stroman (8 of 17 for 94 yards) threw an apparent completion to receiver Derrick Steagall.

But Steagall ran his crossing pattern right into the umpire as he was about to catch the ball and fell to the ground. The ball bounced off his leg and into Morton's hands, who rumbled 34 yards to the Georgia Tech 44, setting up the second scoring drive.

"You would hope they would get out of the way, but it was the third time (the referees) interfered with our shallow crossing route," Lewis said. "That's something we've tried to address with the officials, and they have to do a better job."

And in the second half, linebacker Rick Steinbacher intercepted a deflected pass that was more like fair catching a punt. Stroman's pass deflected off UNC tackle Marcus Jones' helmet and into the air, where Steinbacher flagged it down at the Tech 41.

But the odd interceptions weren't the only accomplishments for the defense. The Tar Heels haven't played as consistent on defense since a 31-9 win against Southern Cal in the Disneyland Pigskin Classic in August.

"We had a meeting last Sunday where basically, we knew we weren't playing well, but we didn't know why," Steinbacher said. "You definitely could see a difference today, both in the attitude we played with and also in the execution."

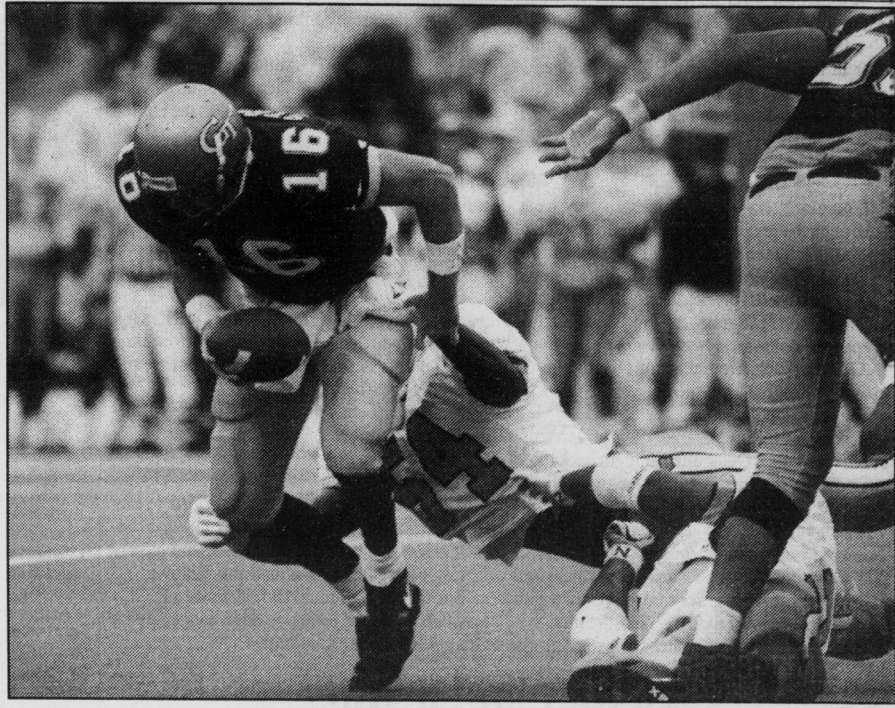
The defense allowed just 232 total yards in the game, but it can thank the offense for much of that dominance. The Tar Heels, who usually scored quickly and often, held the ball for a 17-play, 96-yard drive that consumed more than half of the third quarter.

"After a while," said Yellow Jacket linebacker Jamal Cox, "you're just kind of worn out."

Hocker said, "We contribute more to the win when we're on the field longer. They can't score points when they're not on the field."

That drive was capped with a Stanicek 1-yard plunge. A Tripp Pignetti field goal — his second of the day and his ninth out of 10 attempts this season — and a Maurice McGregor 1-yard run with 3:09 left finished the scoring.

The win is the largest margin of victory for the Tar Heels in an ACC game since Oct. 2, 1982, when the UNC blanked — guess who — Georgia Tech 41-0. North Carolina now is ranked 12th in the Associated Press poll heading into the game with No. 20 Virginia (5-1, 3-1). UVA. lost to undefeated Florida State 40-14 Saturday in Tallahassee.



Outside linebacker James Hamilton (54) tries to tackle Tech quarterback Graham Stroman (16) Saturday. Stroman, who replaced the injured Donnie Davis after the first series, finished with 94 yards passing.

DRIVES

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Saturday. In fact, neither Curtis nor Leon hit the 100-yard mark.

No problem.

Key on a Johnson, the Tar Heels run a fullback trap. Malcolm Marshall and William Henderson combined for 49 yards.

"They've got some real good athletes on defense," UNC right tackle Ethan Albright said. "Against teams that have speed you're not going to have the breakaway runs. They do a lot of slanting and a lot of movement on the defensive line so we'd just latch up with them and keep running right where they were before."

Clog the middle, and UNC hits a short crossing pattern or dumps a screen to the

right side. Leon Johnson scored the Tar Heels' initial TD untouched off a 15-yard screen play. Stanicek found Corey Holliday and Marcus Wall on quick routes six times.

Force a fourth down in your territory, and you still get burned. Holder Jay Boaz flipped a shovel pass to Chris Watson in a field goal formation for a first down in the second quarter.

Blitz and you pay — even if you put a solid lick on the signal caller. Witness UNC's third touchdown, where Jamal Cox nailed Stanicek, who promptly threw deep to a wide-open Bucky Brooks for a 34-yard TD strike and a 20-3 lead.

"We got them in a blitz, and Bucky is a blitz outlet," Stanicek said. "I knew they were getting to me so I just threw it up in the air and let Bucky run under it."

Stanicek also scrambled for 42 yards, including a 13-yard jaunt that set up a UNC field goal to close the half.

But perhaps the biggest key to North Carolina's clock maintenance was its success on third down.

"I think they converted every third-down conversion in the first half," Lewis said. "It's a game of third downs, and they made them all."

Not quite, but the Tar Heels were a solid 11 for 15 on third downs.

"When we're in a third down position, we feel we have them right where we want them," Hickson said. "When they get how many yards they need, that's an emotional letdown."

"Then we're back on the field for another series."

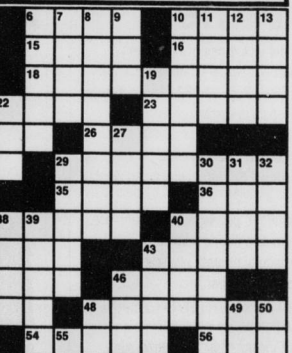
Calvin and Hobbes



THE Daily Crossword by Gerald R. Ferguson

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- ACROSS
 - 1 Nozzle
 - 6 Walk-on or cameo
 - 10 Capital of Calvados
 - 14 — and effect
 - 15 Certain truant
 - 16 In a talented way
 - 17 Essential oil from petals
 - 18 "The — Man"
 - 20 Life's written wrap-up
 - 21 Pastor's abode
 - 23 Pay for
 - 24 Kindhearted ones, often
 - 26 Jumping —
 - 28 Toppers
 - 29 Smugly positive
 - 33 Beethoven's "Fur —"
 - 35 Political event
 - 36 And not
 - 37 Derricks
 - 38 Winged
 - 40 News
 - 41 Somewhat suff.
 - 42 Brag
 - 43 Rime
 - 44 It covers everything
 - 46 Othello was one
 - 47 Money wad
 - 48 Eases a binding
 - 51 Fur trader
 - 54 Clumsy
 - 56 Convented
 - 57 Area hard to see
 - 59 Peace goddess
 - 61 Teepee shape
 - 62 Paper pullout
 - 63 Relative
 - 64 Coteries
 - 65 Certain tourney
 - 66 No hope for him
 - DOWN
 - 1 Wound covers
 - 2 Lanai
 - 3 Hidden
 - 4 Country letters
 - 5 Wood eater
 - 6 Claude of films
 - 7 Holds the title
 - 8 TV's romance liner
 - 9 Yale grad
 - 10 Rock piles
 - 11 Fr. cleric
 - 12 Cinders of comics
 - 13 Russian veto
 - 19 Race prize
 - 22 DDE opponent
 - 25 Fling
 - 27 — homo!
 - 29 Swimmer's stroke
 - 30 Surprising
 - 31 Decays
 - 32 Formerly, once
 - 33 Clapton
 - 34 Mona —
 - 38 Inland sea
 - 39 Sucker
 - 40 Cupid
 - 42 Tone
 - 43 Stable ground condition
 - 45 Witches
 - 46 Swab
 - 48 Disclose
 - 49 John — Garner
 - 50 Pilot
 - 51 Basics
 - 52 Blackthorn
 - 53 Color
 - 55 Indicate
 - 58 Show sign
 - 60 — Grande

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ALIE CADRE NIPA
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