



BRANDON STATON
BOTTOM ROW'S GOLD

UNC has titles on its radar

The past year was a memorable one for Tar Heel faithful and fearful alike.

Last August the football team was about to finish next to last in the Coastal Division of the ACC.

And while they didn't take the country by storm, the Tar Heels were an overtime field goal from posting a winning record against a suicidal schedule.

It was NIT time for the men's basketball team, left with a cast of chumps after hearing its number called four times in the first round of the NBA draft lottery.

But by the time March rolled around, the chumps left the ACC champs feeling blue — on their own floor.

And the clock didn't strike midnight on the Tar Heels until the second round of the NCAA tournament when another Cinderella, George Mason, rolled on to the Final Four in Indianapolis.

And the baseball team surely wouldn't be able to shake loose from South Carolina's stranglehold and make it through the NCAA Super Regional.

Fifty-four wins later they were one run away from capturing their first-ever national title.

As impressive a year as it was for North Carolina, the story line read the same from start to finish — maybe next year.

Well, next year is here. And North Carolina is buzzing about its potential.

With football's new offensive coordinator, Frank Cignetti, at the helm of UNC's offense, the Tar Heels appear to be lurking in the grass waiting — maybe not for a BCS bid but surely for an opportunity to ruin the chance of others.

The women's basketball team that finished its 33-2 campaign with a loss to Maryland (the only team to beat the Tar Heels last season) graduated three seniors.

And with most of the pieces of their Final Four puzzle still in tact, they'll have their sights set on Atlanta, poised to prevent a repeat of last season.

On the men's side there hasn't been this much excitement since, well, 2005.

Publications everywhere are on-board with Roy Williams and the No. 1 recruiting class in America. It's hard to imagine that the Tar Heels' roster won't equate to a trip deep into the NCAA Tournament.

And, after losing two first-round starting pitchers, its power threat in left field and anchor in the bullpen, how could the baseball team possibly get any better?

Simple. Don't lose in the championship series.

While that's easier said than done, keep this in mind:

Right-hander Luke Putkonen, coupled with senior Robert Woodard, equates to a combined record of 29-4 in five seasons — and Daniel Bard isn't a Red Sox yet.

The men's soccer team is No. 1 in the country.

And the women are well below their standard at No. 3 — after soccer deity Anson Dorrance lost 10 of his players to graduation.

Sally Austin, coach of the women's golf team, said her team just needs a little confidence to see how good it can be.

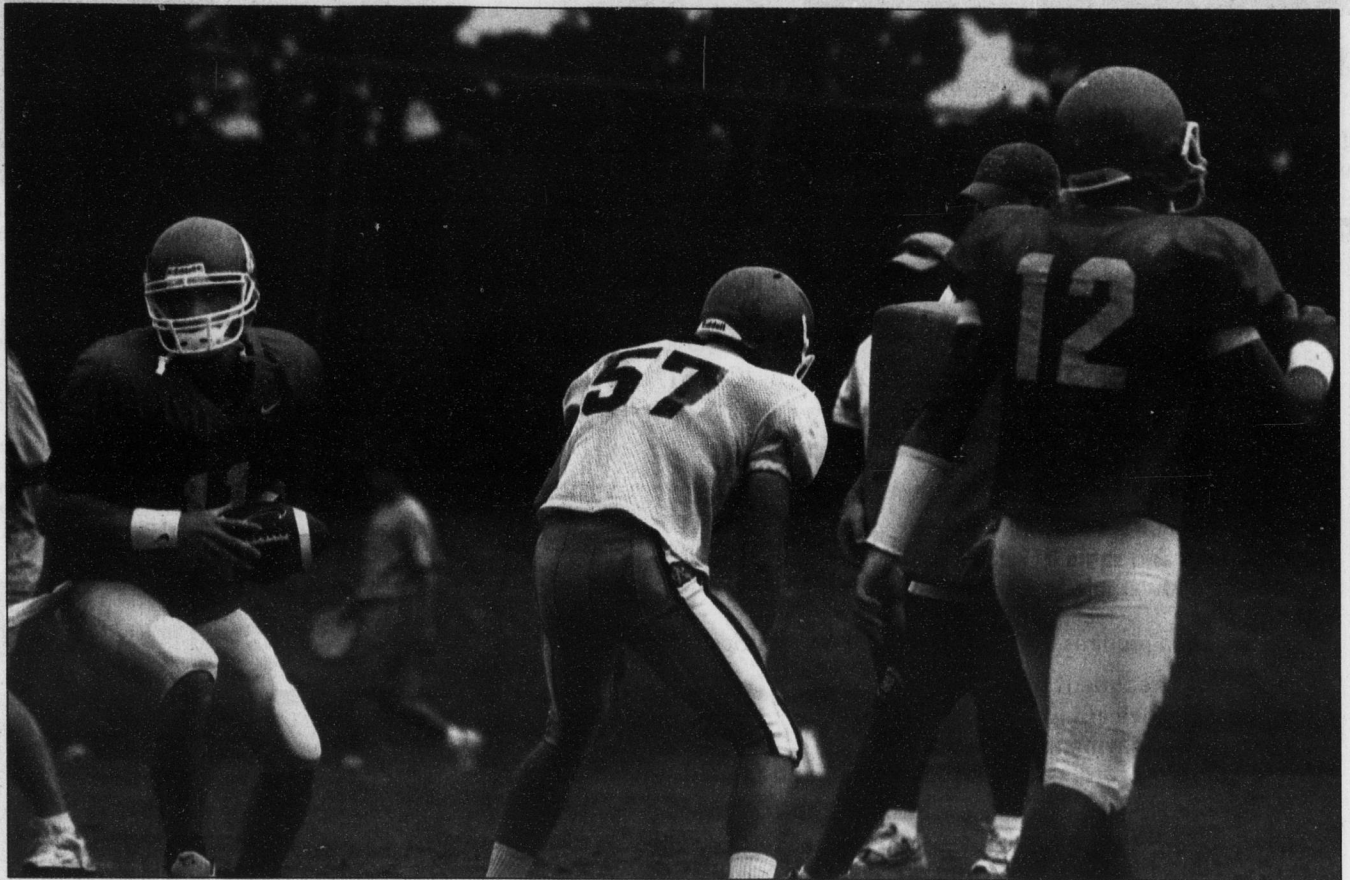
Members of the team have been playing well in tournaments all summer long, and they'll boast an incoming freshman who is heralded as one of the top juniors in Australia.

Last year North Carolina asserted its athletic prowess by defying expectation.

This year it'll probably do the same thing. But instead of defying expectations, they'll have to live up to them.

Contact Brandon Staton at bkstaton@email.unc.edu.

Tar Heels on the offensive



DTH/JULIA BARKER

Quarterback Cam Sexton (left) is in a battle with Joe Dailey (12) for the starting quarterback spot. Both are mobile quarterbacks who also offer a downfield threat.

BY BRANDON STATON
SPORTS EDITOR

In case you've been in a dense jungle enclosed deep within the borders of a third-world country all summer, the North Carolina football team finally has found some offensive pop.

"I think that it's been exciting to watch this offense every single day in practice — very exciting," Coach John Bunting said.

"And to see the quarterbacks compete, the receivers make plays and the runners make plays, it's been really exciting all through camp."

Junior Joe Dailey, who started 11 games for Nebraska in 2004 before transferring to UNC, and redshirt freshman Cam

Sexton have gone punch for punch on the gridiron in an effort to land the starting role come September.

For the first time in a while, the Tar Heels look to be in a win-win situation at the offensive helm.

The duo should be able to focus their sights downfield more so than in seasons past thanks to a revamped offense under new offensive coordinator Frank Cignetti, even though they haven't really had the chance to open it up too much in practice.

"You've gotta really run the ball more when you get those (live) situations," Cignetti said. "There are very few times in practice when it's live."

Still, the team has put its faith in the

coaching staff.

"We think the players have done a great job of buying into what we ask them to do."

Filling the hole

With the loss of defensive standout Trimane Goddard, who broke the fifth metatarsal in his left foot on Aug. 5, the Tar Heels' defensive staff have been looking for a replacement at safety.

And though the loss dealt the D a devastating blow, the coaches like what they see.

"I'm excited about the way Cooter Arnold has played," Bunting said. "D.J. Walker, of course, is an experienced player,

GAMES YOU CAN'T MISS

- Sept. 23 at Clemson
- Oct. 7 at Miami
- Nov. 4 at Notre Dame
- Nov. 11 vs. Georgia Tech
- Nov. 18 vs. N.C. State

we know a lot of things that he can do. It's a matter of surviving the big hit."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Ashe to power UNC soccer

BY DAVID ELY
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

In order for the North Carolina men's soccer team to have a successful season, senior forward Corey Ashe will need to put the ball in the back of the net — and do it often.

If you ask him though, he would not have it any other way.

"It's awesome, especially being a senior; I want to go out in style," Ashe said.

"I want the rest of my team, the rest of my classmates to go out in style and win a championship. The fact that that role has been placed on my shoulders, I love it, and I'm really looking forward to it."

As a junior, Ashe finished the 2005 season third on the team with 16 points — six goals combined with a career high four assists.

A large reason for Ashe's success is his superior speed — something that he is not shy to boast about.

"Growing up I've always been the fastest kid on the field — its definitely one of my weapons," he said.

Head Coach Elmar Bolowich is well aware of Ashe's track-quality speed, but he wants his senior to develop other ways to beat his



DTH/BETH ELY

High expectations will be shouldered by Corey Ashe and his teammates on the top-ranked North Carolina men's soccer team.

defenders.

"He has to come up with other solutions to not only rely on his speed — deceptiveness, cleverness, combinations to spring himself free out of a double-team."

Ashe joined by veteran group

Fortunately for Ashe, UNC returns 10 of 11 starters on a team that reached the NCAA quarterfinals last year, so double-teams should be few and far between.

He will be paired with senior forward Ben Hunter, who led the

GAMES YOU CAN'T MISS

- Sept. 15 at Clemson
- Sept. 22 at Virginia
- Oct. 6 vs. Maryland
- Oct. 20 at Duke

Tar Heels in 2005 with 31 points on 13 goals and five assists, giving UNC one of the most electric backfields in the nation.

"It's just great to have him around," Ashe said. "He pushes me, I push him — we bring the best out of each other."

Any number of goals the duo musters should be enough to win, as the Tar Heels' offense is supported by a defensive group that could prove to be as fearsome as that of the 2000 Baltimore Ravens.

In 2005, opponents only managed to score 17 goals in 24 games against UNC, including 15 outings in which the Tar Heels held them scoreless.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Detroit saves a spot for Miller

Miller headed for MLB in September

BY BRANDON STATON
SPORTS EDITOR

Until May, former North Carolina pitcher Andrew Miller couldn't even buy a beer.

Now, fewer than four months later, the 21-year-old phenom can buy just about whatever he wants.

That's because the Detroit Tigers, who drafted Miller with the No. 6 pick of the 2006 First-Year Player Draft, agreed to pay him \$5.4 million, according to an Aug. 4 article by John Manuel, editor-in-chief of Baseball America.

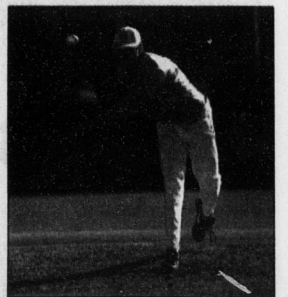
What's more striking than the monetary value of Miller's contract is what the Tigers think the lefty is worth on the field.

Manuel said the deal specifically calls for the Roger Clemens Award winner to begin pitching in the Big Show in September — and the Tigers have the best record in baseball.

There have been few players in the history of Major League Baseball to receive such a guarantee, Manuel said. And some of those occurrences were in the 1970s, when teams were trying to find new ways to attract fans.

North Carolina pitching coach Scott Forbes, who oversaw Miller and the rest of the staff during the Tar Heels' run to the College World Series Championship Series, said that after resting for about a month and a half, Miller is excited to be heading to the big leagues.

"He's not too nervous — I think he knew that he'd become a Tiger eventually," Forbes said. "It could not have worked out better for



DTH FILE/DYTHE MCNAMEE

Former Tar Heel standout pitcher Andrew Miller got a guaranteed September call-up in his contract with the Detroit Tigers.

him." And though Miller won't toe the rubber for the Tar Heels again, that doesn't mean that he's severed his ties.

Forbes said his phone rang not long after Miller signed his deal, and he wasn't surprised to find the coveted lefty on the other end.

"He loved it here and was a big supporter of ours," Forbes said. "He'll come back and get his degree."

"He called us and thanked us for everything, which is kinda neat."

There aren't any guarantees that there will be Miller sightings in Chapel Hill anytime soon, but Forbes did say he wouldn't be surprised if Miller headed back to campus at some point to work on finishing his business degree, which still has about a year remaining.

With an athletic résumé that reads like his, it's no wonder that the Tigers are taking a leap into such a big, and some would say risky, investment.

Miller is North Carolina's all-

NBA Heels set for exhibition

BY KRISTIN PRATT
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Who said you could never go home again?

This October, five former Tar Heel standouts will be hustling over the hardwood in the Dean Smith Center once more in NBA preseason action.

Raymond Felton, Sean May and Marvin Williams, three members of the 2005 men's basketball national championship team, along with the Washington Wizards' Brendan Haywood and Antawn Jamison, return to cam-

pus to take the court in two preseason Charlotte Bobcats games.

Felton, May and the Bobcats will compete Oct. 17 in the Smith Center against the Wizards and Oct. 27 against Williams and the Atlanta Hawks.

How much are tickets?

Students will be able to get reduced ticket prices for the games. Tickets for the Oct. 17 game, some of which will be for lower-level seats, will cost \$15. Students also can purchase \$10 upper-level tick-

ets for the Oct. 27 game.

For the Bobcats-Wizards game, floor-level seats cost \$90, while lower-level seats are \$35 to \$55 and upper-level seats are \$20 to \$25.

The Bobcats-Hawks game tickets on the 27th are more expensive, as floor-level seats cost \$125, lower-level seats cost \$45 to \$55, and upper-level seats cost \$25 to \$45.

Where to sit?

Student seating in the riser area

SEE BOBCATS, PAGE 4B

SEE MILLER, PAGE 4B