

Unsung Hero Bob Cunningham Is Team Man All The Way

By WAYNE THOMPSON
How does it feel to be an unsung hero? "When you're winning, individuality doesn't matter," says Bob Cunningham, unsung hero of the defending national champion Carolina Tar Heels.

The 6-4 Tar Heel co-captain should be an authority on unsung heroes. He's been one for three years and he's perfectly satisfied with the role. "I play only one style of basketball," Cunningham says, "the style that can help my team the most. We're winning and that style for me has

been rebounding, defense and assist work."

Cunningham, a native of New York city, has an unusual philosophy about the game. "My high school coach at All Hallows in New York taught me something I've never forgotten. The other team is helpless when you have the ball. So when we're 15 or 20 points ahead, I like to hold on to the ball. I never shoot under those conditions unless it's a set-up."

Personal Satisfaction
The cool-thinking engineer of the Tar Heel backcourt was con-

spicuously ignored in the pre-season All-America polls and it was, obviously, for one reason—his low point per game average. Yet, there wasn't a more valuable man on the Carolina club last year than Cunningham.

Bob says he gets more personal satisfaction from playing defense than from any other phase of the game. "Some people get their kicks out of scoring, other from fancy plays."

Cunningham gets his biggest personal reward in keeping his opponent from scoring. "I guess

holding South Carolina's great All-American Grady Wallace to 11 points last year was the biggest individual thrill of my career," Cunningham recalled.

Accordingly, Cunningham, though pleased with his team's defensive showing against South Carolina last Saturday, was displeased with his own performance. Ray Pericola scored 19 points against me Saturday and I only scored 14," Bob observed, "I feel as though I let the team down."

Aids the Scorers.
Cunningham forgot to mention

that it was Pericola's second lowest point total of the season and he was averaging well over 20 points per game in three previous starts. He also failed to point out that the Gamecock ace was held to only six points in the first half, helping the Tar Heels to take a commanding 36-23 lead, which was never threatened.

Asked why he didn't shoot more after demonstrating Saturday that he could score, from the outside consistently, Cunningham said, "Last year Lennie Rosenbluth was

our big scorer and a crack shot. This year, when I bring the ball down the court, Pete (Brennan) is on my left and Tommy (Kearns) is on my right. Those guys are great scorers, but somebody's got to feed them. Personally, I like the job."

In four games to date, Cunningham is averaging 7.3 points per game foul circle. He proved Saturday that when the chips are down and his sharp shooting teammates aren't hitting, he can take up the slack. He proved the same

thing last year in the semi-finals of the NCAA tournament when he scored 19 points to liberate the unbeaten Tar Heels against tough Michigan State.

Married Now
Cunningham, who became a bridegroom last fall, is in the best of spirits this year. He says he's not particularly bothered by the pressure of the winning streak. "I play every game as if it were the finals of the NCAA tournament, so how can I be bothered by the winning streak? I play to

win all the way and no psychology in the world can change me," Cunningham stressed.

As for the current winning skein of 36 games, Bob said, "The Kentucky tournament is our big test. I think everyone on the squad realizes it and we should know our potentialities after it's over."

Cunningham has a good point. In fact he has quite a few good points which won't go unrewarded this season. He still could make All-American you know.

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By BOB MYERS
Are Carolina's unbeaten Tar Heels better than last year?

The soothsayers are still gazing in their crystal balls for an answer that time will tell ultimately.

Logically, the answer is no, taking into account the departure of an All-American and the loss of two key men by injuries from a team that didn't lose in 32.

But compare the first four games of last season with the first four this season and, statistically, the Tar Heels are holding their own.

In extending their win skein to 36, Carolina shot less from the floor and free throw line, but hit with a couple percentage point better accuracy against the same 1956 opponents. However, the team scoring average is 8.5 points shy of the 1956 four-game average.

What To Expect?
And an anxious Frank McGuire, who didn't know what to expect from his new Tar Heel edition, has been pleased with the defensive prowess, despite the incapacitation of Joe Quigg and Danny Lotz, 6-9 and 6-7 respectively.

In four games Carolina scored on 123 of 257 field goal attempts, made good on 80 of 111 free throws, grabbed 158 rebounds and scored 326 points. That's 47.8 per cent from the floor and 72 per cent on the line.

The four opponents, Clemson, George Washington, Furman and South Carolina hit on 95 of 247 field

goal tries (38.4 percent), 56 of 87 free tosses (64.3 percent), recovered 124 rebounds, scored 246 points for a 61.5 average.

Against the same teams, the fabulous 1956 McGuire machine scored 136 of 298 field goal attempts (45.8 percent), connected on 88 of 129 free throws (68.2 percent), collected 198 rebounds, racked up 360 points for an average of 90 per game.

Floor Percentage
In the first four games of 1956, Carolina foes hit 91 of 275 field goals (33.1 percent), sank 100 of 142 free throws (70 percent), got 132 rebounds, scored 282 points for a 70.5 average.

Individually, at this time last year Lennie Rosenbluth had counted 118 points on 47 of 96 field goals, 24 of 34 free tosses for an average of 29.5 per game.

To take up some of the scoring slack, each of the three returning Tar Heel starters, Pete Brennan, Bob Cunningham and Tommy Kearns have a higher scoring average to date, and the two sophomore starters, Lee Shaffer and Dick Kempley have surprised even McGuire.

Brennan Leads
Brennan, the lanky senior forward and last year's number two fireman and top rebounder, confiscated the scoring lead from Tommy Kearns by dropping in 17 points in the Tar Heels' 36th victory, 70-58 over South Carolina. Pete has tallied 82 points to average 20.5. Kearns is second with 77 points and a 19.2 mark.

In 1956 after four games, Brennan had 64 points (18.3), Kearns 51 points (12.7) and Cunningham 20 (5.0). Brennan was leading the team in rebounds with 48 and is six shy of that number this season. The now injured Joe Quigg had thrown in 53 points (13.2) and gotten 39 rebounds to indicate the seriousness of his loss to the team this year.

Rosy Was Big Loss
The shoes vacated by Rosenbluth and Quigg were oversized, but Carolina's young sophomores have tried them on effectively. Shaffer, the blonde Pittsburgh giant, is averaging 15.5 per game and Kempley, the tallest man on the team (6-9), has pulled down 39 rebounds and is averaging 6.7 in point production.

Harvey Salz, the frisky playmaking backcourter, came into his own with 11 markers against Furman and a dozen against the Gamecocks to move his average to 7.2 and become the number six man.

Whether the Tar Heels are as good or better, Frank McGuire knows statistics have a way of tell

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LAST TIMES TODAY
VARSETY Theatre

Don Buckley, Jim Long Named '58 Grid Mgrs.
and Jim Long have been named co-managers of the 1958 Carolina football team, it was announced yesterday. Both were assistant managers this season.

Buckley is a personnel major from Lincolnton and a member of Delta Sigma Pi business fraternity. He participated in the East-West football game in his senior year in high school.

Long is a Morehead Scholar from Yanceyville. He is a pre-medical student and a member of Chi Psi social fraternity.

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