

For Players, Coaches, Spectators...

By BILL ROLLINS
Last In A Series

Apart from the stars, Lewis and Miller, the Tar Heels have a solid nucleus of basketball talent returning from last year's varsity.

One hand on whom Tar Heel fortunes will heavily depend is Tom Gauntlett, a spot starter two years ago and a regular all the way last season. "Twenty" shot better than 50 per cent, mostly from long range, and his 9.8 scoring average belied his true offensive ability — which West Virginia discovered, 28 points worth. Tom showed great defense at times also, notably in holding Duke's Bob Verga to six points in the late-season Durham meeting. Tom is 6-4, 195 pounds, and should reclaim his starting berth. He will be a most valuable man.

Mark Mirken comes back for his third varsity season. Big at 6-6, 215 pounds, Mark is a rugged rebounder, who also showed scoring prowess on occasion last time around. He plays both frontcourt positions and is counted upon for solid performances.

Donnie Moe, brother of former UNC All-America Doug Moe, is quick-as-a-rabbit, an excellent ball-handler and passer, and tough on defense. Moe was invaluable last year as a relief man who helped make the four-corners delayed offense work to protect late leads.

Ralph Fletcher, Jim Frye played only sparingly as reserves last season. All are juniors who have ability, and they could surprise.

WHO'S NEW?

North Carolina fielded a freshman team last year which went 15-1, and the Tar Babies' performance prompted veteran basketball writers to call it the best freshman outfit the state had seen in a decade, or possibly more.

Whether or not that is true makes no difference.

What does matter is that from that team rise players who appear able to help plug the varsity gaps which were so painfully evident a year ago — board play and team defense.

It's no secret that Carolina was hurting for rebounders last season, although Miller played strongly and Bennett made his best contribution in that area. The showing off the boards must be greatly strengthened if the Tar Heels are to make a notable improvement.

The answer, of course, will be supplied by soph's Rusty Clark (6-11, 228) and Bill Bunting (6-8, 195), each of whom bought the boards at wholesale prices last season.

Both will be playing under great expectation (commonly

translated as "pressure"), especially since each made a highly promising impression as freshmen.

RUSTY CLARK

Clark, a high school All-America at Fayetteville two years ago, improved greatly as the frosh season waxed, and in the last few games gave glowing performances.

He was just as good as you could want him to be in the tough (80-76) win at Davidson (25 points, 21 rebounds)

and in the club's sole loss (71-61) at Virginia Tech (25 points, 18 rebounds). He learned to make most of the moves desirable in a pivot man.

Rusty led the Tar Babies in scoring with a 20.5 mark which looks even better when you realize that the top four scorers combined for 63 points per game.

His field goal shooting (58.7%) like five of the other top six, was better than 50 per cent. And he scored on a variety of shots, using either

hand from short range. He's also deadly accurate from 10-12 feet with his one-hander, and with his height he'll pick up a lot of rebound and tip-in baskets to which the varsity was estranged last season.

BILL BUNTING

Bunting has as many assets as most successful business firms, and his liabilities are at an absolute minimum.

Among his plus traits are height, speed, quickness, a feathery shooting touch, and the ability to jump — way up high. His defensive play left little to be desired, and his 15.7 scoring average was second-high on the frosh. He scored a lot of points on lay-up passes from team mates, but he's got a sure thing in his one-hander from as far away as the corners.

But an enigma surrounded Bunting's frosh season. He was scoring better than 19 points per game until he slumped to a 9.4 mean in the final five matches. And his shooting percentage fell from 60.6 to 52.2. He was also grabbing more than 12 rebounds per contest until that mysterious slack stretch at the end, and wound up with a 9.3 rebounding mark.

The slump in production may have been caused by tiredness due to Bill's weight

— which, at 185, was slightly deficient. He declares that's not the case, saying last spring that he was just a little "off" in all areas of play.

No matter what the cause, though, Bill was told to gain some weight during the off-season, and his goal was set at a maximum of 15 pounds.

Said Dean Smith, "We don't want Bill to shoot up over 200 pounds, because we feel that his speed and quickness are more valuable than a few extra pounds."

So the New Bern Bear, who had never been out of this state or up in a plane until he started traveling with the team last winter, added 10 pounds to his tonnage.

And if he continues to improve as he did as a freshman, Bill Bunting could be a key factor in taking these Tar Heels a lot of places they've

never been, either.

JOE BROWN

There's another soph up front who hasn't received many press raves, and about whom you've probably heard very little except in the DTH. But that may change any time on or after December 1.

He's Joel Brown (Joe "for short"), and his middle name — Willard — is no misnomer. The 6-5, 195-pound Valdese rookie is strong and bullish around the lane, and with a little added polish and finesse could be one of the best in the Tar Heel fold.

But he needn't bother about changing his shooting game. It's fine just as it was last year.

He fired the ball goalward 128 times, and 76 times the

net took note of it. That's 54.4%, and only Duke's Mike Lewis (59.7%) did better among Big Four players.

One of his team mates said, "If Joe had played the whole game and shot a little more (Continued on Page 5)



Rusty Clark, The Big One. Key To The Team?

DTH Photo By Ernest Robl



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