

Student volunteers provide first aid treatment for spectators at all Carolina home football games in a program begun by the UNC School of Pharmacy.

Volunteers offer fans first aid

by Susan Shackelford
Sports Editor

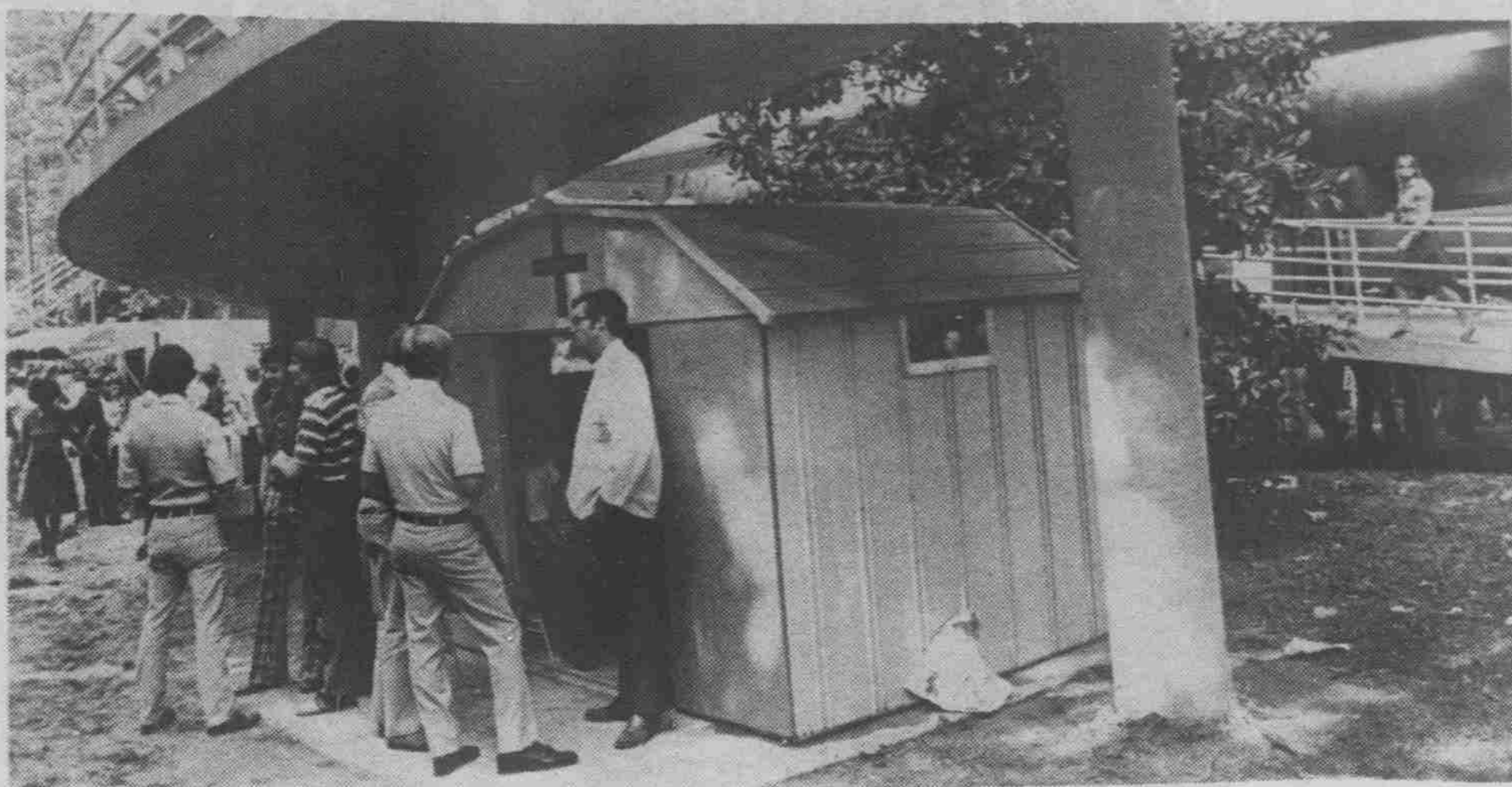
This tackle box contains no barbed metal hooks, neon-bright lures or sinkers for fishing. Its contents include sticky white adhesive tape, hydrogen peroxide, and aspirin. Each Saturday of a home Carolina football game, a man totes it to Kenan Stadium.

He enters a small white building that looks like a metal storage shed. It is located behind the two student seating sections, under the concrete spiral walkway that leads to the stadium's upper deck. The shed has blue doors and there is a red cross above the entrance.

This will be his headquarters for at least a quarter of the game. He is prepared to render first aid to spectators. He is a UNC student volunteer, and most likely a pharmacy student in either the fraternity Kappa Psi or Phi Delta Chi.

About a dozen football fans have used this service during each game so far this season. The hut is a quick aid station for mild injuries or a true "first" aid stop before getting medical help from the physicians or the South Orange Rescue Units, also at the game.

In recent years the first aid volunteers have encountered no heart attacks or broken bones, said Assistant Pharmacy Professor



Stephen M. Caiola. He has headed the program for four years.

"Two seasons ago, it was raining and somebody put an umbrella through a person's foot," he said.

"It went through a leather boot. It was a UNC student, and we got him to the emergency room (at nearby Memorial Hospital). He was able to walk on his heel. He had felt the pain initially, but then he was stunned."

Most situations aren't so dramatic, he said. The "tackle box treatment" makes up the normal routine. At the last home game, "we had everything. There were two drunks, one case of indigestion, one who had a muscle spasm in the arm and one who felt faint—all in the hut at the same time," said Ben Tillet, a senior in pharmacy.

The student's responsibilities generally involve giving aspirin for headaches, bandages for cuts, salt tablets for dehydration and Maalox (an antacid) for upset stomachs. Persons with more serious problems are referred to the physicians or rescue unit personnel.

The physicians are provided by the UNC Student Health Service. They sit in the stands, but the students go get them whenever needed. There is a hut and doctor on both the north and south sides of the stadium.

"Nobody thinks of bringing antacid or a

bag of bandages to a game," said Gary Dunham, who coordinates Kappa Psi's participation. "The first aid service is a primary care-type thing. Naturally, we can't dispense any prescription drugs, and we stress never trying to go over your head to do something."

Caiola said that to qualify as a volunteer each student has to pass the "American Red Cross Standard and Advanced Course in First Aid," which is part of a third year pharmacy student's curriculum.

"Working at the first aid station," Caiola continued, "is practicing the direct patient care service that we're now teaching. It's a new attitude. Our students are trained to provide a lot more than advice on medicine and over the counter things."

"We want to be a patient supporter. He's not a customer, but a patient. The over-the-counter thing you can get when you're buying a pack of cigarettes."

The first aid program has been a joint effort between the School of Pharmacy and Athletic Department since the 1950's. Pharmacy personnel take care of the student volunteers and supplies for the first aid kits, one of which really is a tackle box. The athletic officials furnish and maintain the huts, which contain a hospital bed and linens, a table, chair, water tank and waste paper basket.

But because the sheds are in the shade and

have no electricity, Dunham noted, they are inadequate in cold weather. "You have a blanket, but it's been sitting in there all week and is really cold. We need a centralized place with electricity. Now, the people are warmer if we treat them outside (the hut)."

During the warm weather of the first two games, heat exhaustion had been a minor concern. The heat also combined with the sweet drinks to attract bees, leading to several stings. So far, most of those who seek the first aid service have been female non-students.

Drinking is the most serious problem, Dunham said. "I think alcohol consumption ought to be eliminated from the game. It's a social thing, where people try to tough it out until the end of the game." People drink, sweat and dehydrate, he explained.

"With the glass and getting drunk, there is a lot of potential for injuries. It might hurt the spirit of the game if taken away, but what's more important, the spirit of the game or health?" he said.

After offering health services to over 40,000 people on an average afternoon in Kenan Stadium, the student volunteer packs up his medical kit. He doesn't leave with the spectators. Just as he arrived a half hour early at the white metal building, he waits a half hour after the game is over.

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