



Ted Brown

N.C. State

Wolfpack hopes rest on performance of new QB Scott Smith

By PETE MITCHELL
Assistant Sports Editor

The season hasn't even begun, but Scott Smith already is tired of trying Johnny Evans' shoes for everyone.

During spring practice, the N.C. State Wolfpack needed to find a quarterback to replace the graduated Evans and Smith, a 6-foot-1, 185-pounder from College Park, Ga., emerged as coach Bo Rein's man.

"I don't just mean he's got the inside track for the quarterback job, I mean Scott is going to be our quarterback when we start the season," Rein said, adding "he doesn't like

publicity and he doesn't like being compared to Johnny Evans."

Evans quarterbacked the Wolfpack to an 8-4 year including a Peach Bowl victory over Iowa State while Smith, now a junior, sat on the bench. He threw two passes all year and carried the ball 10 times for 29 yards.

"They're big shoes to fill, I'll grant you that," Smith said. "But I'm not gearing myself to throw long passes and make long runs like he did. We have other people to make big plays."

Like senior running back Ted Brown for starters, Brown is being promoted by State backers for the Heisman Trophy as college football's best player. Even so, the big news is

not Brown, but whether Smith can approach Evans' skills.

Smith insists that "in any new situation with a new quarterback coming in, he's always going to be compared to the guy who's just left. There's pressure, but it comes with the position."

"People ask me if I'm confident, if players are confident with me, but we won't really know until the first game. I'm anxious to get going," he said. "All this preliminary stuff is getting old."

Rein has assembled a talented and experienced supporting cast for his quarterback and said he is counting on seniors who were close to stardom last year like Ticky Adams and Bubba Green.

The Wolfpack team came back to school with its defensive players lighter for quickness and its offensive linemen bigger for strength up front.

On defense, State is led on the line by right tackle Simon Guppton, at linebacker by Kyle Wescoe and Bill Cowher and in the secondary by Woodrow Wilson. Green missed last season with a knee injury but is healthy now at 6-foot-4, 259 pounds.

Familiar names on offense include split end Buster Tay, running backs Billy Ray Vickers and Rickey Adams and flanker Randy Hall. And of course there's Brown.

"He can do absolutely anything. He's the only back I've ever coached who I admit is better than I was," said Rein, who played at Ohio State.

Brown holds all kinds of Wolfpack, ACC and NCAA records and has been named to the All-ACC first team all three years. Last season he gained 1,251 yards. In addition, Brown led State in pass receiving the past two years.

Rein feels Smith, who's been noted for his running ability, can get the ball to Brown and the other Wolfpack receivers to take pressure off the ground game.

"Smith's passing improved over the summer and he's a better technician than we've had here in a long time in terms of running the option," Rein said. "I think we'll be explosive."

It's the absence of Evans' punting that has the third-year coach more concerned. Several are competing for the job.

That cold day in hell gets closer

Clemson, S.C.
ATLANTIC COAST — They don't play football in this conference, only basketball.
—Southern Football magazine

The statement actually appears on page 36 of this year's edition of the college football preview magazine. No misprint. No mistake. It's there in black and white.

Oh sure, there have been a few people around here who have been known to get excited over that indoor game. And for those, basketball ticket distribution begins in November. Bring your sleeping bag.

But they didn't build stadiums just so guys like Kenan, Carter, Wade and Groves would have something named after them. They built them for football.

And the football played in stadiums in the Atlantic Coast Conference this fall likely will be the best ever found northeast of Tuscaloosa, Ala., and southeast of Columbus, Ohio.

Not that an ACC team will win the national championship. That may be stretching it.

But that cold day in hell — the proposed completion date for the ACC's rise to football prominence — looks a little closer every season.

"You're going to have your teams like Alabama that will be strong every year," Clemson coach Charley Pell told a group of touring football writers Saturday. "But aside of those teams, I see no difference in teams in the ACC and other places."

Last year four ACC teams — Carolina, Clemson, N.C. State and Maryland — went to bowl games. Granted, a couple of the bowls are at the bottom of the constantly expanding list of post-season attractions. And that doesn't mean either, that the ACC is the strongest conference.

But at least it shows ACC football no longer is found on little lists in Don Rickles' jacket pocket.

Coaches at the four bowl schools are sincere in telling you that this year's teams can be as good or better than last year's. The coaches at Virginia and Wake Forest, schools with two of the

Lee Pace

nations very worst football programs, say they can improve situations at their schools. And now that Mike McGee has a new three-year contract at Duke and is not at the moment a candidate for the unemployment line, he thinks the Blue Devils can win.

The championship will be decided by the toughest of last year's bowl teams. Right now, Clemson has a slight edge.

The Tigers lost little from last year's Gator Bowl entry and will probably start 15 seniors, among them quarterback Steve Fuller, receiver Jerry Butler and offensive guard Joe Bostic. They also play Carolina at home.

Carolina has plenty of talent. But the Tar Heels are still adjusting to a new offense and new coaches. That could be the difference.

Maryland wants to win big as much — probably more — as any other team in the league. The Terrapins were decent last fall; most schools won't complain with an 8-4 record. But after three straight ACC championships and one 11-0 regular season with a Cotton Bowl berth, the Terps want back on top. Their problem is injuries. Too many players have been hurt already this year.

State could be the best in the league, if it can find a quarterback to replace Johnny Evans. Ted Brown is one of the league's best — if not the best — runners and the Wolfpack defense will again be strong.

Virginia has switched to the Veer while the new Wake Forest and coach John Mackovic plans to throw the ball a lot. Duke will have a chance to win as long as quarterback Mike Dunn is around.

All of the coaches now are talking winning seasons. That's only natural.

But several of them won't make it, despite how high hopes may be in August. That's what makes this game interesting.

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