

QB race was a plus for Maye, Anthony

By FRANK KENNEDY
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It seemed very simple.

There he was in spring practice, 1983, and the back-up to starting quarterback Scott Stankavage. Although just a freshman (he had been redshirted that year), Kevin Anthony appeared to be the next in line.

Stankavage would be a senior. Anthony would inherit the job in 1984. It was all set.

Then along came a challenger. But not just any challenger. This guy was shattering one record after the next at Charlotte Independence High School. He was everybody's prep All-America, all-academia, all-everything. And could this guy pass.

Rumor had it that things were going to change in Chapel Hill. UNC wasn't going to be running the ball much anymore — Maye would see to that.

Suddenly, a guy who hadn't even enrolled at the University was getting more attention than the one who was already No. 2.

The furor died down soon enough. This was 1983 and Stankavage was starting and 1984 was too far down the road. In the meantime, Maye walked the sidelines carrying the cords connected to quarterback coach Randy Walker's headphones, and Anthony was the one who got in a little playing time when Stankavage had done the job.

So much for the controversy — at least until the season was over and it came time to find a replacement. And the cycle repeated itself. It usually does where quarterbacks are concerned.

Yet, for Maye and Anthony, the charge for No. 1 has been the best thing that could have happened to them.

"It's helping us and will continue to help us," Anthony said. "We both want the starting job and we realize we're both going to play a lot this year.

"I know it's going to take my best performance just as he knows it's going to take his. I see improvement out there every day, and I think that's good. That's best for the team."

Maye also understands the value of a competitive situation. "This has been a good situation in that when you're competing with a guy, it really helps both people because they're out there trying to do their best all the time," Maye said. "This has been a real positive situation for both Kevin and I."

Anthony said that they tend to coach each other along during practice. "Sometimes I'll run a play and I'll see something he didn't see and vice versa," he said. "The idea of having four eyes is better than having two out there."

At this point, only those who like to speculate could have any idea which one will get the starting nod. As coach Dick Crum has pointed out on more than one occasion, it's possible that the two could share time from game to game if neither one takes a clear lead. Crum successfully worked in such a system one year while coaching Miami (Ohio).

What tends to make this quar-

terback battle so different from the many that dominate the headlines is that there is no bitterness, no tension, no off-the-field shenanigans. As much as each one wants the job, both of them realize what a heated confrontation could mean in the long run.

"We're real good friends," Anthony said. "We don't have any sort of relationship problems. We get along really well.

"But we need our best player out there, whether it's me or whether it's him."

Maye, who knows he has been the slight underdog from the beginning, would not jeopardize his friendship with Anthony. "Kevin and I get along awfully well, and we don't have any problems," he said, adding that there would be no hard feelings should Kevin get most of the playing time. "The coaches will make the evaluation and if that's the way they feel, then they've said who they think can do the job.

"If that situation arose, I'd have to keep working that much harder to get more playing time."

Anthony said the coaches' decision will be based on a number of criteria. "The performance on the practice field will determine who's out there," he said. "Whoever is more consistent, whoever shows he can move the ball better during scrimmage situations, and who will make the least mistakes.

"It's whoever has better chemistry with the players and makes the team go."

Anthony is used to competition. Even though he was the Georgia 4-A player of the year for Lakeside High School in 1981, the road to becoming a starter was anything but easy.

"There was a time in my junior year where this quarterback was coming back from the year before and he had been a starter, and I was coming up from the junior varsity, and we ended up splitting some time, but I was starting," Anthony said. "In my high school we always had a senior team, and I was a junior, and my coach felt he had to give the senior some playing time."

He said that such a system is non-existent at UNC. "Here, it doesn't matter what year I am or what year Mark is, or what anybody is."

Anthony was and remains just as competitive in the classroom. He turned down appointments to the Naval Academy and the Air Force Academy, and chose instead to pursue a career at UNC as an economics major.

Maye, on the other hand, was top billing at Independence High School. He was the headline maker, the captain of the ship, the one and only. No one seriously challenged him because no one could.

Consider: Maye passed for 2,353 yards and 19 touchdowns his senior year, and carried the ball himself 60 times for 333 yards and 12 touchdowns. In a 40-39 win over cross-county rival West Mecklenburg, he passed for 481 yards — the sixth highest total in high school football history. He



The past and the present: Former starter Scott Stankavage and then-reserve Kevin Anthony get instructions from QB coach Randy Walker as redshirt Mark Maye watches from the wings.

was named to five premier All-America teams, and was chosen the national Scholar-Athlete of the Year. He is attending UNC on an academic scholarship — the Morehead Scholarship.

Yet, success at one level leads to expectations at the next, and Maye said he will not pay any mind to the pressure that some fans and the media may place on him to repeat his high school exploits.

"I can't really worry about what the fans think," he said. "That's just going to hurt yourself in the long run. Anybody would like to say after their four years here that they've been successful, and I'm the same way."

The adjustment of going from high school stardom to college obscurity wasn't easy for Maye, but it could have been worse than it was. "Any player coming in has to make some kind of an adjustment," he said. "Just making the transition to college football is hard enough, but I always was made to feel comfortable and I've always felt like I could come to any of the other guys if I had a problem."

Maye was redshirted early on last year, right after the Miami (Ohio) game. As such, he didn't need to suit up on Saturdays, and instead had the responsibility of making sure that coach Walker didn't trip on the cable connecting his headphones to the coaches in the press box. Maye said the experience was good for him.

"It helped me because I was always around him and I could always see what was going on rather than just standing back as the plays were being called."

Anthony, meanwhile, saw limited action, and most of that came in the latter stages of lopsided UNC victories. Yet, it was the kind of experience that can be a young quarterback's best lesson on the game.

"Scott (Stankavage) was a great quarterback, great leader and great teacher," Anthony said. "He was like another coach on the field. Being able to watch him, listen to him, and have him give me pointers was so valuable to me. Once you get in there for one or two plays and you settle down you get adjusted and you're all right."

Anthony never had to worry about a challenge from Maye for that No. 2 slot last year, but Maye

was never a sore spot for Anthony anyway, even when Maye announced his choice of college.

"I wouldn't say it bothered me," Anthony said. "All along I've always felt like in order to have a winning program you try to get the best players you can, and that's the way to win. I'm interested in seeing success for this program, and the team comes before any individual.

"Mark's a great player and he's going to help a lot. Seeing him come in, I knew that he would be a lot of competition, but that's what it's all about. If you're able

to face the competition and earn a starting job, it makes you that much more satisfied. Competition is the greatest thing in sports."

The main strength of Maye and Anthony may lie in the threat they carry that Stankavage did not — the long pass. Their coaches have praise for the strength of their arms, and like any quarterback, both of them love to throw the football.

"If you ask Kevin or I, you know that all quarterbacks like to throw the football," Maye said. "It's like the running back — you hand him

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