

# Matsko knows what UNC is capable of doing

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John Matsko, North Carolina's offensive coordinator, knows what the Tar Heels are capable of doing this year.

He knows he has the experience — no less than seven offensive starters from a year ago will suit up again. He knows he has running backs who have proven themselves under fire. He knows he has a line capable of warding off blitzes and drilling holes through defenses. And he knows he has two quarterbacks who can rifle a football more than halfway down a football field.

## Offense

But until the Tar Heels play their first down of the season Saturday against Navy, knowing isn't proof enough. Success (or lack thereof) is ultimately going to lie in the seeing and in the doing. Not terribly profound, but Matsko is realistic.

"The strength of any team will be when you have all 11 guys executing," Matsko said. "That's what we need to do."

Indeed. Last year's squad will forever be living proof of that theory. Loaded with talent and numerous NFL/USFL draft choices, the 1983 Tar Heels had a knack for critical errors at the most unfortunate times, and floundered from 7-0 to 8-4 almost as quickly as the Titanic hit the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

But Matsko won't talk about last year. He's hardly alone. Head coach Dick Crum clearly gets tired of explaining 1983 to the media, and the players certainly don't look back on it with much fondness. Add to that the fact that this really is a new team being fielded by Crum, with a new quarterback and a new offensive set.

"This is going to be an interesting year," Matsko said. "Our guys have a tremendous attitude and have worked real well together. We're going to be a fun team to watch."

The look of the team should most certainly be different, aside from the general inexperience at some positions. UNC will run its plays out of a split-back pro set, as opposed to the traditional I-formation.

In a split back formation, the

fullback and tailback line up beside each other instead of one in front of the other. Matsko said the switch will provide flexibility and mobility in the offensive scheme.

"Split backs allows our backs to get out into the pattern quicker, rather than getting (the football) to the tailback in the I," he said. "We'll run the same I-plays but in a split formation."

"One thing you want to do as an offense is line up in multiple formations because if, for example, you line up in the I all year long, as the year goes along people will know what you're going to run. You want the defense to have less familiarity with you, and we hope that will cause some confusion."

Crum said the split formation will add a dimension to the aerial attack as well. "It helps in your pass protection, because the backs don't have to go as far out to protect as they would in the I," he said.

Noted for years as a run-oriented team, UNC began to level out its run-pass ratio two years ago. Drop-back passer Scott Stankavage completed a solid

percentage of short- and intermediate-range tosses during his two years at the helm.

However, the offense was basically more conservative than most, and defenses rarely needed to defend deep downfield. This year, a combination of the split back and a quarterback with a stronger arm than Stankavage introduces the threat of the long pass.

Redshirt freshman Mark Maye and sophomore Kevin Anthony, who have been competing for the starting quarterback role since spring practice, are capable of throwing the bomb.

Matsko, who doesn't want to see a repeat of some of last year's frustrations, sees promise at quarterback. "We need to force the defense to defend the length of the field as well as the width of the field," he said. "By doing that, we also open up our running game."

Crum knows what the lack of a deep threat can mean to a team. "Stankavage was a very good quarterback and was very intelligent, but we didn't have a deep passing attack," Crum said. "People got wise to that, and they really sat on the passing game."

"One of the kids we played against late in the season said that their coaches had them sitting down at about 17 yards because we didn't go any deeper than that, and that was a very intelligent move, because we didn't and we couldn't."

Although no decision had been rendered early this week as to who would take the opening snap Saturday, Matsko said he would have no problems with either Maye or Anthony. "Both of them are good leaders, and have strong arms," he said. "They're very intelligent guys and they'll get us in the right play."

"The timing of our passing is improving every day. Our receivers are really catching the ball and running good patterns and the quarterbacks are throwing good strikes and making the good play."

But the true strength of this team may lie where it has traditionally been centered: the backfield. Tailback Ethan Horton and fullback Eddie Colson, both seniors, will be starting together for the second straight year. Horton led the ACC in rushing last year despite sharing time with Tyrone Anthony. Colson, primarily used for his blocking skills, managed 425 yards on a 5.4 per-carry average.

"Both of them are running and blocking very well," Matsko said of the tandem. "It was encouraging the other day to see Eddie have a long run. Ethan is doing a good job running the patterns and Eddie is picking up the blitzes."

Matsko would not guarantee that Colson will be handed the ball much more than last year, but said the threat will always be there in the split-back set. "We can get the ball to the fullback position more, and that will take a little bit of a load off our tailback."

The offensive line is young when stacked up against most teams, but is a corps of experienced veterans when compared to the UNC defense, which returns only four starters.

Sophomore Harris Barton will hold the center slot for a second year. Matsko said that Barton's

## NORTH CAROLINA

1983 Record: 8-4

Coach: Dick Crum

Starters returning: Offense (7)

—LG Greg Naron, C Harris Barton, RT Willy Austin, TE Arnold Franklin, WR Earl Winfield, FB Eddie Colson, TB Ethan Horton.

Defense (4) — LB Micah Moon, RT Brian Johnston, CB Larry James, S Steve Hendrickson.

Forecast: The Tar Heels are banking on a new attitude, new talent and a new offensive set to overcome the inexperience that is prevalent on both sides of the line of scrimmage. Their schedule is tougher than the last two, and a few losses should not go unexpected. With Clemson ineligible for the ACC championship, the field is wide open among the other seven teams, and UNC looks to have as much of an arsenal as anyone else in that group. Prediction: First in the ACC.

enthusiasm is his most positive quality. "Harris loves football," he said. "He really wants to be a good football player."

Manning left guard is senior Greg Naron, who is in his third year of active duty. Matsko said Naron is playing with confidence, and added that his main strength lies in his ability to finish blocks.

There is less experience at the other guard, where sophomore C.A. Brooks takes over the role. Matsko said Brooks has worked hard on his strength, increasing his weight from 210 to 250 pounds since spring practice. "He's a very good athlete," Matsko said. "He can pull and hit a guy on the run, and he has such long arms, it makes him a good pass blocker."

Matsko calls right tackle Bobby Pope an outstanding pass blocker who has improved his flexibility. "He's a strong guy, but some guys who are strong don't play strong. They don't knock people off the ball like he does."

Sophomore Pat Sheehan has the most difficult task on the offensive line: replacing All-American Brian Blados at left tackle. Matsko calls Sheehan a very intense player who shouldn't have much trouble replacing Blados. "(The left tackle) has to be our best pass blocker and have shifty feet," Matsko said, adding that Sheehan fits the mold.

Experience returns at tight ends with Arnold Franklin and Dave Truitt anchoring the lines. Franklin, a junior, caught 25 passes for 271 yards last year while junior Truitt had 18 receptions for 204 yards. Matsko said that Truitt has put on 23 pounds since the beginning of fall practice and now checks in at 233. "In short yardage situations, that will allow us to run to either tight end," he said.

Sophomore Eric Streater, something of a surprise in spring practice, has moved into the starting role at split end, while Earl Winfield looks to be the number one flanker. However, the competition among the receiving corps has been close and Matsko said nothing is really definite in terms of starters.

"All three guys can catch the ball in crowds and run good patterns," he said. "And they're all good blockers."



Earl Winfield will lead a veteran corps of receivers in a UNC offensive scheme that may be more wide open than in the past.