

# Kevin Anthony — Phi Beta Kappa, baby face, quarterback

By SCOTT FOWLER  
Assistant Sports Editor

If you were a parent, Kevin Anthony is the type of guy you wouldn't mind taking your daughter to the prom.

If you were a professor, Kevin Anthony is the type of student who would reaffirm your dwindling faith in the mental capability of athletes.

If you were a defensive back, you would worry very much about Kevin Anthony. He is the North Carolina quarterback that teammate Dave Truitt says can be the "best in the country" and UNC offensive coordinator Randy Walker says is the best at that position that "we've ever had."

Meet this year's local version of perfection. Kevin Anthony, a fourth-year Phi Beta Kappa junior from Decatur, Ga., stands poised on the verge of breaking most of the Tar Heel seasonal passing records this year through a combination of a fortuitous turn of events in the offensive scheme, a glut of talented wide receivers and a personal truckload of determination.

How good is this babyfaced 6-2, 188-pounder, a young man who has dated the same girl, Nancy Norman, since 10th grade and wants to be an athletic director after he gets an M.B.A.? In the final three games of last season, Anthony set the all-time high for passing yards in a single game against Virginia with 281 yards, threw an average of 34 times a game for 232 yards, fired four touchdown passes and caught another.

He picked up where he left off Saturday night against Navy, completing six of his first seven passes, with the only incompleteness a dropped ball in the end zone by Earl Winfield. Anthony was 16-for-29 for 250 yards on the night, throwing for one touchdown and two interceptions.

Last year's final three games were an upbeat ending to a controversial, confusing season for Anthony, who battled his way through a media-hyped quarterback duel with Mark Maye and his frustration with a lack of input into the offense. "About all I was doing for awhile is handing the ball off 60 times a game," Anthony said. The low point came in the Wake Forest debacle, when Anthony went 9-for-26 for only 83 yards and two interceptions.

However, to even be in a position to have awful performances, Anthony had to win his job. Despite being the second-string quarterback and heir apparent to Scott Stankavage in 1983, Anthony found himself the underdog and villain in UNC's version of dueling quarterbacks, which ran for most of last year.

"In a sense the competition hurt me because I became so conscious of trying to avoid the errors," Anthony said. "Both Mark and I were concerned about every mistake we made."

To add to the pressure, Anthony was an out-of-stater and had not been nearly as heavily recruited as Maye, a Charlottean whose high school career bordered on the miraculous. Maye was a recruiting coup for UNC, and the coaching staff wanted to put him to use. Quickly.

"We didn't recruit Mark to run the option," UNC coach Dick Crum said. "When we recruited him we fully intended to go to the

passing game."

Anthony, on the other hand, was recruited as an option quarterback. It didn't take a 3.97 grade-point average (which Anthony has) to figure out who UNC planned to start at quarterback for the 1984 season. "Everybody on our coaching staff thought Mark was going to be our starter," Crum said.

But he wasn't, primarily because Anthony held onto his slight experience advantage with all the tenacity of a bulldog until Maye made the point moot by injuring his shoulder. "To be honest, Kevin beat him out when he was healthy," Walker says.

This season Anthony had the job by default as Maye will sit out the entire year. And with the added responsibility of being the undisputed No. 1 quarterback comes, ironically enough, a reduction in pressure.

"I feel a lot more at ease this year," Anthony says. "I've got more input into the offensive scheme because I get along so well with Coach Walker and I feel like I'm showing more leadership."

"He's a great leader," offensive tackle Harris Barton agrees. "That helps because the quarterback situation was so jumbled around last year. It's not a guessing game anymore."

Unless you're trying to guess how many times Anthony really will throw this season. He figures it will be about 35, a far cry from some of last year's statistics, when UNC attempted only nine passes in the N.C. State game and 14 against Memphis State (the Tar Heels won both games).

Rus and Lorelei Anthony became parents for the third time 20 years ago. Kevin was born in a Waco, Texas hospital, the first boy in the family. The elder Anthony, who is 6-foot-5, was in the Air Force, and the family moved around a lot before settling in Decatur when Kevin was 7.

One afternoon Kevin got a flier in the mail advertising youth league football. "I think my dad wanted me to play, but he didn't say anything," Anthony remembers with a smile. "But when I said I'd decided to give it a shot, he looked pretty happy."

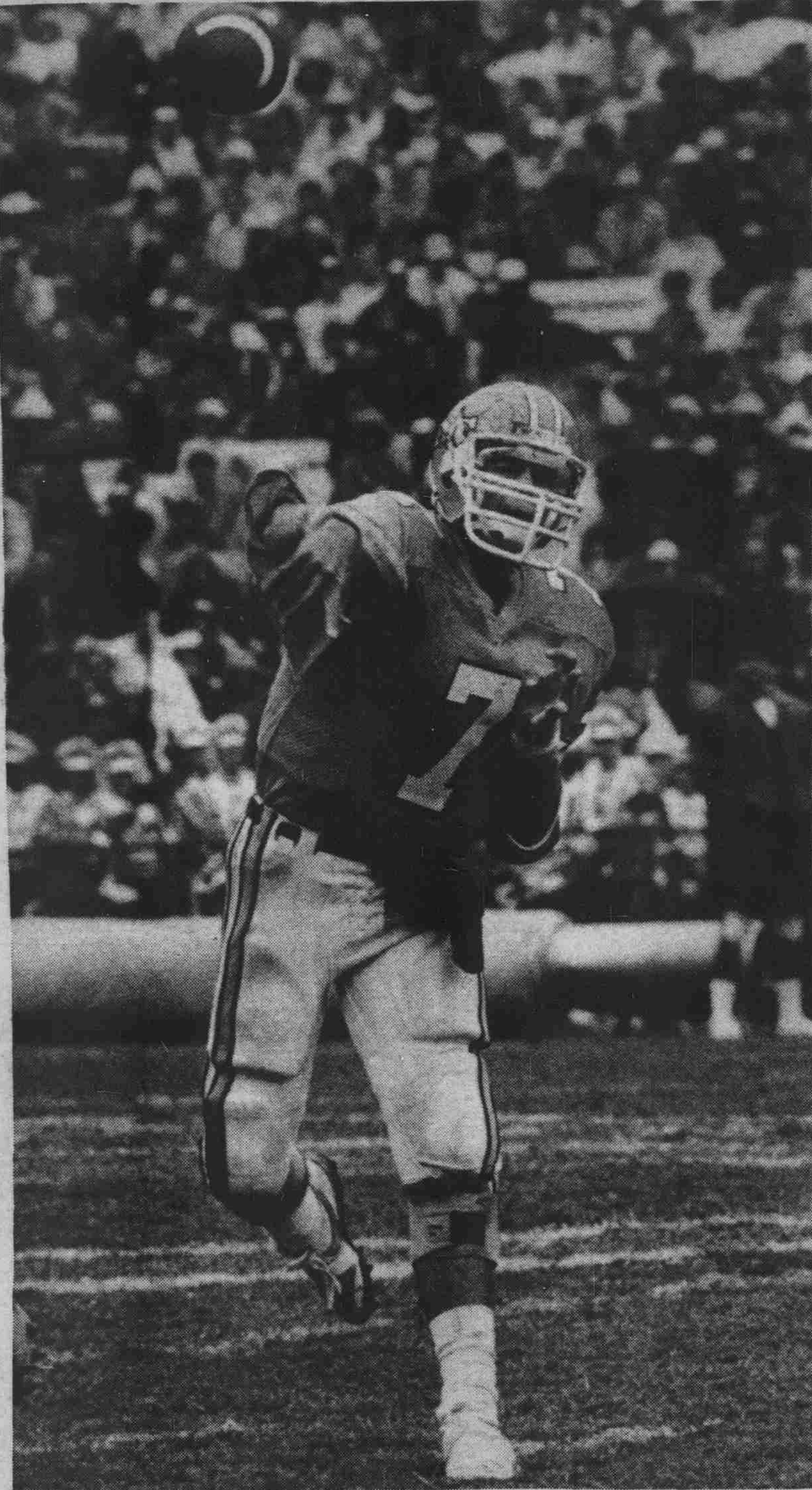
Anthony began his career as an imposing 8-year-old offensive and defensive end, but was switched to tailback and linebacker three games into the season. He stayed at those positions for five years.

"But I always had a knack for throwing the ball," Anthony says. "Just about every team I played on as a tailback, whenever we wanted to throw the ball we'd run a tailback pass and they'd always pitch it to me."

In eighth grade, he made the switch to quarterback. "I'm glad I changed," Anthony says. "I'd have never made it as a tailback."

As a senior at Lakeside High School in Atlanta, Anthony was named the state 4A Player of the Year, despite the fact that he often played only half the games because Lakeside would be so far ahead at halftime. That year he also was one of the few high school quarterbacks in the nation trusted enough to call his own plays.

In one high school game in which he played only the first half, Anthony completed nine of 10 passes for 249 yards and three touchdowns. However, he was primarily an option quarterback and was recruited as such by most



Kevin Anthony won't struggle for the quarterback job in 1985 since Mark Maye is out of the picture.

of the major Southeastern schools, besides receiving appointments from the Air Force and Navy.

However, the two-year National Honor Society member wanted a strong academic school, and chose UNC. When he first came to the UNC football camp, Walker, then the quarterback coach, filmed him doing some drills. "I looked at them again just the other day and the improvement was remarkable," Walker says, shaking his head. "First of all he looked like he was about 12 with that babyface, and he was so skinny. But he border-

lines on being a workaholic, and it's hard to believe you're looking at the same quarterback now."

Indeed, Anthony has stayed in Chapel Hill each of the last three summers, taking one class each summer school session and working in the weight room and with whatever receivers were around. The large amount of time he has spent learning his receivers has paid off in a collective, emphatic vote of confidence.

"He's real smart and has great perspective," Eric Streater says. "Last year he had some trouble

with recognition of the defense, but he's played enough now that he knows the right calls for the right situations."

"He'll play like a senior," says Earl Winfield.

For Anthony's part, he still feels he has ample room to get better. "A huge part is the mental aspect," Anthony says. "You can't ever see enough film or spend enough time in the playbook."

With dedication like that, it's easy to see Anthony popping up in opposing coaches' nightmares this season.