

Crum's gridders hope for continued improvement

By **MIKE BERARDINO**
Sports Editor

From North Carolina's perspective, the 1986 football season was one of the most exciting and productive in several years. After consecutive non-winning seasons, coach Dick Crum's Tar Heels rode the strong right arm of quarterback Mark Maye to a 7-4-1 record, capped by an Aloha Bowl bid.

With a host of starters returning on both sides of the ball, including pre-season All-America candidate Maye, the '87 Tar Heels are seemingly a good bet to continue their return to prominence.

After going undefeated through five games last season, UNC

faltered, going 3-4 the rest of the year. Duplicating their 1986 start won't be an easy task for this year's team.

After opening the season at home against Big 10 power Illinois on Sept. 5, it's on to Norman, Okla., for a date with Barry Switzer's Boz-less Sooners. Crum probably hasn't forgotten his last meeting with Oklahoma in 1980. North Carolina went into that game 7-0, but got pounded 41-7.

The Tar Heels won their last four games that season to finish 11-1, but Crum & Co. undoubtedly have wondered many times what might have been had Oklahoma not been on the schedule.

The road trip continues for two more weeks with dates at Georgia Tech and Navy. Then the Tar Heels return home for a date with Southeastern Conference foe Auburn.

If UNC has fewer than three losses at that time, it's going to be a good season.

Maye, a 6-4 senior from Charlotte, will be at the helm, with capable backup Jonathan Hall waiting in the wings.

The two wideout spots figure to be rotated among junior Randy Marriott and seniors Eric Lewis and Quint Smith. Lewis, especially, came on strong at the end of the season, catching the winning touchdown pass against Duke. At tight end, the Tar Heels will replace the departed Dave Truitt with 6-5 junior John Keller.

The backfield will be minus record-setting tailback Derrick Fenner, whose problems with the law have been well-documented this summer. But his shoes should be amply filled by sophomore Torin Dorn. The 6-1 Southfield, Mich., native showed flashes of

brilliance while filling in for Fenner in the Aloha loss to Arizona. Brad Lopp and redshirt freshman Kennard Martin are also available at tailback.

At fullback, UNC returns junior bowling ball James "Hulk" Thompson, who packs at least 230 pounds on his 5-11 frame.

Up front, North Carolina will sorely miss NFL first-round pick Harris Barton, who will protect Joe Montana in San Francisco. In his absence, the Tar Heels have a wealth of talent to fill the void, including mountainous bookend tackles Darrell Hamilton (6-7, 282) and Creighton Incorminias (6-4, 294). Junior center Jeff Garnica, an All-America candidate, is back as are guards Pat Crowley, Steve Steinbacher and Ralph Pflifer.

On defense, UNC returns all but two starters — lineman Ron Burton and free safety Danny Burmeister.

The front wall boasts a pair of senior pre-season All-America candidates in noseguard Tim Goad and tackle Reuben Davis.

In addition, ends Kubi Kalombo, Noel McEachern and Joel Freeze are back.

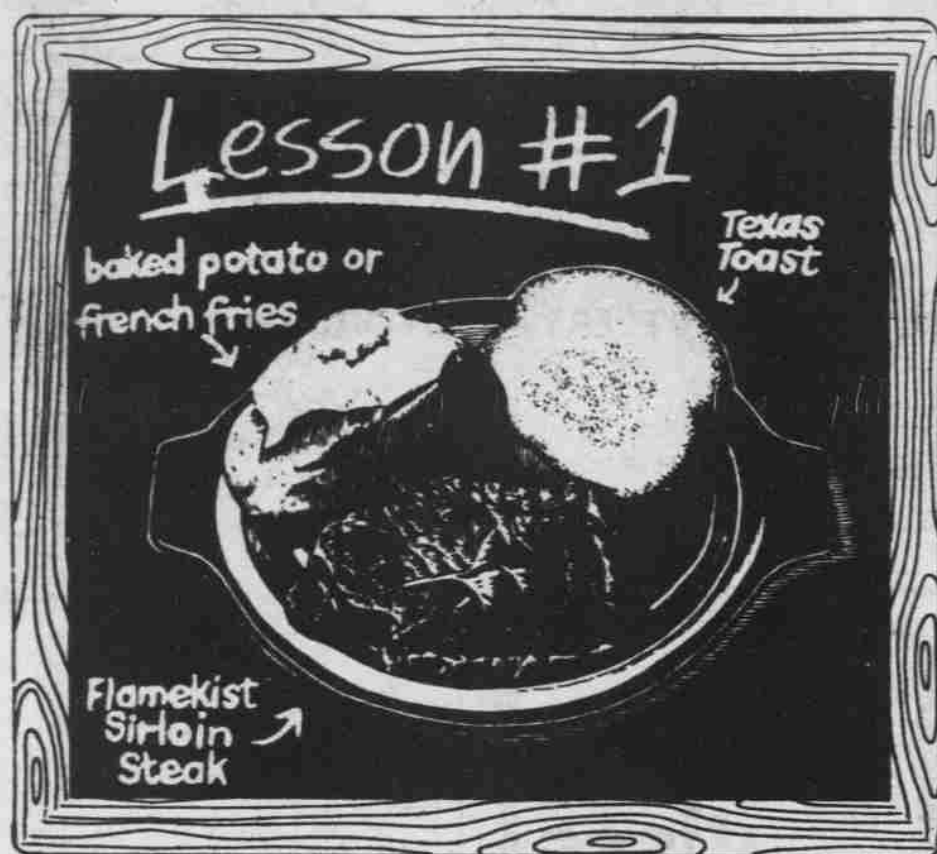
At linebacker, both Brett Rudolph and Mitch Wike return as starters. Wike had some exceptional early-season games but was bothered by injuries the rest of the season. Rudolph, now a senior, is rock solid.

On the corners, Crum must hope Derrick Donald and Skeet Baldwin have healed sufficiently from the repeated burnings they suffered last year. The inability to stop the big pass play was one of UNC's foremost problems last season.

At safety, playing time will be divided among Norris Davis, Antonio Goss, Howard Feggins and Dan Vooletich.

The special teams won't have placekicker Lee Gliarmis (who, incidentally, does a great impression of Crum), but punter Kenny Miller may simply fill both bills. If he can't, sophomore Cannon Watson (what a name for a kicker) could step in.

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