

Rudolph, Wike head talented quartet of linebackers essential to new scheme

By DAVID HALL
Staff Writer

Late in the 1987 preseason, uncertainty dominated any discussion of the North Carolina linebacking corps. The intervening weeks, though, have seen much of that uncertainty disappear, although injury questions still remain.

In the new "50" defensive scheme that has been orchestrated by new defensive coordinator Marc Dove, the four linebackers will play a crucial role in the success of the defense. "We're going to attack and be very aggressive," Dove says.

The corps features three key players plus a host of fresh talent. Each of the veteran three, though, missed spring practice due to injury.

Starting inside linebacker Brett Rudolph, who has been injured each season since he arrived at North Carolina, had shoulder surgery right after the Aloha Bowl last January. Similarly, fellow starter Mitch Wike missed much of spring practice with an ankle problem. When placed in tandem with two new starters at the outside positions, namely junior Antonio Goss (6-4, 224) and sophomore John Reed (6-3, 220), one senses the potential for either great success or dismal failure.

"We had some guys that missed the spring, but they're coming around," says Dove. "Mitch does not seem to have any problems and Brett is as strong as ever."

Outside Linebacker

The two bookends on the defensive front both showed spectacular promise in the spring, despite their collective lack of experience at the position. Goss, a junior from Randleman, has been moved from free safety this year and will be expected to infuse speed and pass-rushing prowess into a team that had little in 1986.

A Parade All-American as a tailback in high school, Goss played extremely well at safety last year until he was stymied by a knee injury against Florida State. Despite his injury, he finished 10th on the team in hits, with 64. He also carries a reputation for being a fearsome blitzing and a big play man, essential characteristics for his position.

Goss will be paired on the outside with Reed, a sophomore from Tampa, Florida. Reed was basically an unknown entity until spring practice, when he won a starting spot early, and held onto it through diligence and ability. According to Coach Dove, "John has a great deal of intensity, and his strength will be

a plus as we go into the season."

Inside Linebacker

The core of the defense will be comprised of the veteran duo of Rudolph and Wike. The injury-prone Rudolph returns from a disappointing 1986 season. After having suffered an ankle injury late in the preseason, Rudolph (6-2, 234), a former high school sprinter and tailback, was not able to recover until the Aloha Bowl. There he had the best game of his career so far, making 16 solo tackles.

Mitch Wike, a 6-2, 225 pound junior from Brevard, was the Tar Heels' second leading tackler last season with 99. Wike suffered a major ankle injury during the spring, but has since recovered to retain the starting spot. Last Saturday against Illinois he showed no signs of his injury, making four tackles.

"I want to be consistent this year," Wike said. "I want to keep the intensity up all year and all game long. We want to swarm on defense and attack the offense, instead of the other way around."



Linebacker Brett Rudolph (54) needs to stay healthy, not an easy task

Welsh's Cavaliers need help in trenches

By CHRIS SPENCER
Staff Writer

Prospects for the University of Virginia's 1987 football season hinge on experience and consistency from both the offensive and defensive lines. The Cavaliers could explode on offense and have some strong leadership in their defense, but problems abound in the trenches.

The offensive backfield must please Cavalier fans, though. Senior quarterback Scott Secules played in nine games last year and completed 51 percent of his passes for 956 yards.

Sophomore fullback Durwin Grieggs (5-11, 215) led the team in rushing last season with 404 yards, including 370 in the last two games. Flashy redshirt junior Kevin Morgan (6-0, 223) returns to taiback after gaining 377 yards in 1986.

"We're going to work hard to have a good running game," Welsh said. "We're not going to be able to beat teams by just dropping back and throwing the football 40 or 50 times a game."

Secules will likely hook up with either fifth-year senior Keith Mattioli (5-11, 175), who caught 44 passes for 717 yards last year, or speed demon

junior John Ford (6-3, 200), who has 1,100 career yards to go along with 12 touchdowns. Backup juniors Tim Finkelston and Quanah Bullock provide ample depth to the Cavalier passing attack.

But without a solid offensive line, Secules could find himself scrambling more often than passing. Even though five starters return to the offensive line, Virginia coach George Welsh will be counting on redshirt freshmen to do the job.

Sophomore Tim Morris (6-3, 249) started every game last year at center, and Roy Brown (6-6, 249), also a sophomore, returns at guard.

Senior John Fetsko (6-4, 246) returns to the other guard spot, while the tackles are fifth-year seniors Chris Minear (6-2, 275) and Paul Sierocinski (6-6, 277).

"Our offensive line is going to have to come through for us," Welsh said, "if we want to be able to move the ball and control it."

Nine starters return to the defense, and one can only hope they gained valuable experience last year while giving up a whopping average of 29 points and 416 yards per game.

Redshirt junior Judd Rupp (6-4,

241) will start at nose guard, while redshirt sophomore Joe Carnuche (6-4, 242) and redshirt freshman Chris Crews (6-4, 223) will start at the tackles.

Senior co-captain Sean Scott (6-3, 207) plays a very tough defensive end. He led the team in tackles last year with 88, including an incredible 40 unassisted. Sophomore Ray Savage (6-1, 226) returns as the other defensive end.

"We have very little experience in the defensive front, but we feel like we have some very good talent," Welsh said. "It's really crucial for our success to have a good defensive line."

Juniors Jeff Lageman (6-6, 234) and David Griggs (6-4, 240) lead the linebackers. Sparking the Cavalier secondary will be senior Eric Clay (6-0, 184), sophomore Kevin Cook (5-11, 175) and redshirt junior Mike Pettine (6-2, 195), who had two interceptions last year against UNC.

The expected starter at place kicker is senior Mark Inderlied. Redshirt junior Joel Dempsey will likely punt.

The Cavaliers have a brutal first three games — at Georgia, at Maryland and Virginia Tech. If they can somehow develop a running game to set up their explosive passing threat, the Wahos could surprise some teams.

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