

Lewis, receiving corps looking forward to busy year

By **STEPHEN GILES**
Staff Writer

With quarterback Mark Maye at full strength at last, expectations of a wide open Tar Heel passing attack in 1987 have been running high among team supporters. An experienced, deep, and gifted corps of receivers should do nothing to tarnish those hopes.

At the wide receiver spot, 5-9, 175-pound senior Eric Lewis, a pre-season All-ACC candidate, heads up the list of heralded Tar Heel pass catchers.

Lewis, a solid professional prospect, showed flashes of brilliance all season long in 1986, boasting team highs of 18.9 yards per catch and four touchdown receptions, although he finished the season with just 13 catches for 246 yards.

"My main goals are to play in a major college bowl game, make All-ACC, and just do my job well so everyone else can do their jobs well," Lewis said.

On the other side at flanker, 6-2, 192-pound senior Quint Smith and 6-0, 175-pound junior Randy Marriott will share the action.

"It takes a certain amount of mental preparation," Smith said about the constant rotation of the receivers. "But we're used to it, and we're all mentally ready to play."

Both have great speed, but will have large shoes to fill thanks to the

graduation of the fleet Eric Streater, who led all Tar Heel receivers in 1986 with 37 receptions for 601 yards and four touchdowns.

The sure-handed Smith had a career day against archrival N.C. State last fall with nine catches for 126 yards and a touchdown. Smith, the closest the Tar Heels have to Steve Largent, is the team's leading returning receiver with 17 catches for 266 yards in 1986.

"I'm looking for us to air out the ball more, to open it up a little," Smith said. "The one thing I dream of is catching a long bomb from Mark. Last year I ran a lot of short patterns, and I'd like to go deep this year."

Marriott, a gifted athlete with breakaway speed, should see action at wide receiver as well. He grabbed 13 passes for 223 yards and three touchdowns in 1986. Always a big-play possibility, Marriott caught an 82-yard TD pass against Duke and averaged an impressive 17.2 yards per catch for the season.

Providing depth at the wide-out spots will be 6-2, 188-pound redshirt freshman Stan Daniel and 6-2, 180-pound frosh Freddie Renken, a Street and Smith's high school All-American from Charleston, S.C.

At tight end 6-4 225-pound junior John Keller replaces the departed Dave Truitt.

Keller, a converted quarterback, played often last season and proved to be a tough blocker as well as a steady receiver for the Tar Heels. UNC coach Dick Crum has become enamored of Keller, and has consistently praised him since the spring.

"I don't mind," Keller said of Crum's plaudits. "If they want to say nice things about me, let them."

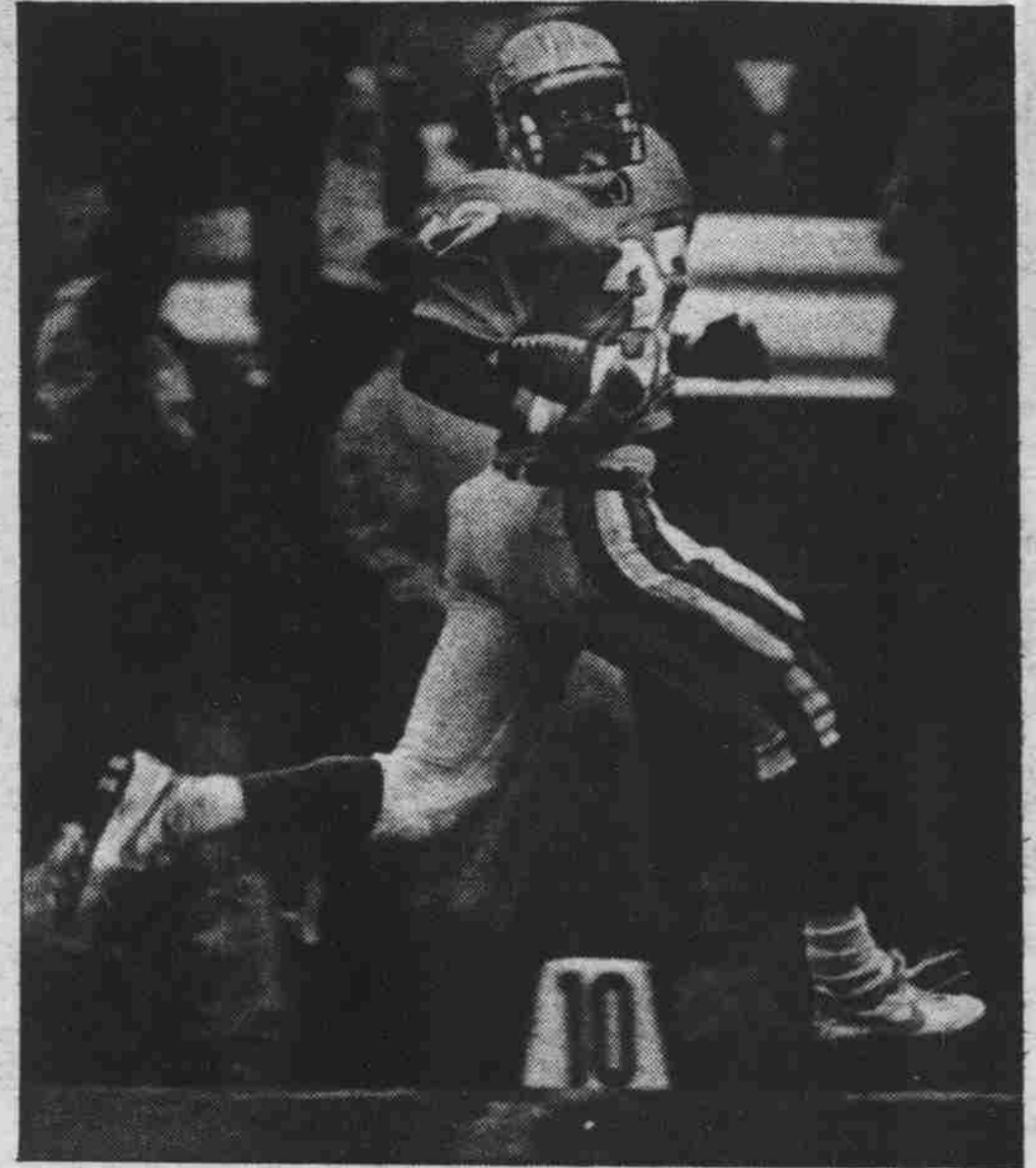
Possessing exceptional hands for a big man, Keller should provide an excellent target for Maye. In 1986 he totaled 16 catches for 113 yards.

Providing depth at the tight end spot will be mammoth 6-7, 264-pound senior Daryl Parham. An intimidating blocker, Parham will probably be used most often on running plays and in short yardage situations.

With an abundance of talent, the Tar Heel pass catchers are proven and have excellent depth. But the necessity of maintaining a balanced attack seems to be the main concern.

"If we let Mark throw 60 times a game, people will just line up and tee off on him," Crum said. "It's important to find a balance between the pass and the run."

Lewis echoed his coach. "I think we'll be pretty balanced offensively," he said. "You can't just go out and fling the ball. But where the big play is needed, we'll be able to provide it."



Wide receiver Eric Lewis will be the key UNC pass-catcher in 1987

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