

# Young Heels must mature fast

By JAMES SUROWIECKI  
Sports Editor

The old guard changeth. These days, the story in Chapel Hill is youth. UNC has but one senior on the team, and the centerpiece of its offense is a 6-foot-9, 250-pound sophomore named J.R. Reid, who is among the best big men Dean Smith has ever coached. The squad's spiritual leader is junior guard Jeff Lebo, who in his first two years played a rather unassuming role. Two freshmen will be battling for playing time, and two other players who were redshirted last season will be back this year. Welcome to the occupation of the young.

Smith, of course, is aware of his team's youth, and seems anxious to stress that the Tar Heels should not be burdened with unrealistic expectations. He knows that his team will be highly ranked. It would be strange if he didn't complain.

"We're a young team," he said. "In Reid and Lebo, we have two returning starters. Any team that young and inexperienced, you worry about defense especially. I'm sure we'll be picked higher than we should be."

Smith also has voiced his traditional worries about overconfidence, although with Smith's players public demonstrations of cockiness are as unusual as gardening at night would be for anyone else.

"I'm concerned that our team, the guys are going around very confident," he said on Picture Day. "I hate to tell them, but I'm starting practice tomorrow. Not a lot of them have done a lot at this level of play. They do think they'll be good, and maybe that's healthy. I'd like them to be a little more realistic."

Much of the attention focused on UNC and much of the rationale behind the Tar Heels' high preseason ranking depends upon Reid's allure. The flat-topped, husky forward, who is a dominant force in the paint, has adorned a remarkable number of preseason magazine covers, and was an automatic selection for All-ACC, as well as for most All-American teams.

Smith is as yet unconcerned about the publicity changing Reid's attitude or work ethic.

"J.R.'s no problem," he said. "I don't think it'll go to his head and it shouldn't. He is rather charismatic. Maybe it's the name or the personality, but not to make the Pan Am team and then get on those covers ahead of some of those guys. He's realistic. He knows he has a lot to work on."

Reid echoed his coach's sentiments, while emphasizing the team concept.

"I don't think I'm a veteran. I'm still doing a lot of learning," said Reid, who averaged 14.7 points and 7.4 rebounds a game last year. "Individual honors are nice, but I'd give them all up for an NCAA championship."

Reid's teammates seem enormously respectful of his talent, and clearly the success of the UNC offense will depend in large part on whether he continues to progress instead of just sitting still. But there is also a recognition that the powerful sophomore cannot do it alone.

"J.R.'s a great player, a really unselfish player," sophomore Kevin Madden said. "But we can't get the attitude that we're always going to go to him, because he's going to have his off nights and someone else is going to have to pick up the load."

That someone may very well be

## North Carolina Roster

Forwards						
No.	Name	Hgt.	Wgt.	Age	Class	Hometown
20	STEVE BUCKNALL	6-6	210	20	Jr.	London, England
32	PETE CHILCUTT	6-8	225	19	Fr.	Eutaw, Ala.
44	Rick Fox	6-7	220	18	Fr.	Nassau, Bahamas
22	KEVIN MADDEN	6-5	215	20	So.	Staunton, Va.
Centers						
34	J.R. REID	6-9	250	19	So.	Virginia Beach, Va.
42	SCOTT WILLIAMS	6-9	225	19	So.	Hacienda Heights, Calif.
Guards						
3	JEFF DENNY	6-4	185	19	So.	Rural Hall, N.C.
11	RODNEY HYATT	5-8	138	19	So.	Wadesboro, N.C.
14	JEFF LEBE	6-2	180	20	Jr.	Carlisle, Pa.
21	King Rice	6-0	185	18	Fr.	Binghamton, N.Y.
33	RANZINO SMITH	6-1	189	21	Sr.	Chapel Hill, N.C.

CAPS Denote Lettermen

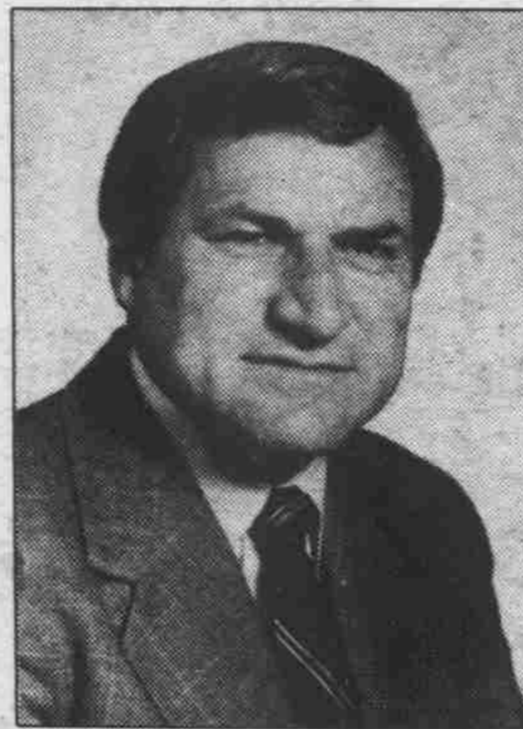
Madden, who sat out last season because of academic problems from which he seems to have made a remarkable recovery. As a freshman, Madden saw his share of playing time, but his role shrunk as the team progressed in the NCAAs. When confronted with the prospect of sitting out a year, he considered transferring. But he decided to stay, and the transfer application became a letter never sent. Judging from his performance in the intrasquad scrimmages and from the comments of his teammates, Madden's choice may reap great rewards for the Tar Heels.

"Kevin can play a variety of positions because he's so strong," Lebo said. "He can overpower people or jump over people. No hotdogging goes on in our practices, by anyone. But Kevin is so talented that sometimes it seems like he's hotdogging when he's really not."

According to Smith, Madden and Lebo are the two players who will move with most ease between positions, Madden between big guard and small forward, Lebo between the point and off guard. Lebo, though, will start at the point, while freshman King Rice learns the ropes.

Lebo's role this season will be a curious one, a difficult one after two years of playing next to a brilliant point guard. But Lebo, who averaged 13.5 points a game last year while shooting 45 percent from 3-point range, will be the team's floor general.

In some respects, this is a rebuilding year for UNC. Not in the sense that the Tar Heels are lacking in talent, but simply in the sense that much of that talent is untried, or is wearing a new hat this season. The loss of Kenny Smith, Joe Wolf and Dave Popson obviously has to hurt, and the impact of graduation will be



Dean Smith

felt most strongly in the frontcourt, where UNC is shallow where once it was deep. Rick Fox, the other freshman, may have an impact, but his role remains uncertain.

There will probably be less second guessing of Smith this year. Five seasons have passed since UNC went to the Final Four, and time after time in recent years the Tar Heels have come up short despite being blessed with enormous talent. This year's squad is young, and may stumble early. But in the youth there is potential, and there also may be a hunger which seemed absent from recent Tar Heel teams. The freshmen must contribute, and Reid and Lebo must establish themselves as guaranteed offensive stars for UNC to have a shot at the inner circle. If they don't, well, you can't get there from here. But if they do, it may be time for a pilgrimage from Chapel Hill to Kemper Arena and the Final Four.

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