

Big-play threats

Marriott-led wideouts provide deep threat for UNC

By **ROBERT D'ARRUDA**
Staff Writer

The passing offense for this year's North Carolina football team will feature the spectacular Randy Marriott, reliable John Keller, and a host of newcomers to the position.

Due to graduation, North Carolina lost three of its leading receivers. Gone is game-breaker Eric Lewis, "Allstate" hands man Quint Smith and tight end Daryl Parham.

When the Tar Heels start to fly the friendly skies, you can bet the mortgage that Marriott will be the primary receiver. The senior from Wendell is renowned as one of the Atlantic Coast Conference's premier receivers.

Marriott became a household name after his eye-opening performance in a 30-23 North Carolina victory over Georgia Tech. In the game Marriott caught nine passes for a staggering 247 yards and three touchdowns.

Overall, Marriott snared 36 passes for 634 yards last season. His career average of 17.5 yards per catch is tops

in North Carolina history.

According to head coach Mack Brown, Marriott is a big-play man. "Torin Dorn and Randy Marriott were the two guys in spring practice who showed the ability to make something out of nothing," Brown said. "They're two guys who could make an impact for us in major proportions this year. Marriott's goal for this year is to just go out and do the best he can. "Obviously, you're not going to catch every ball or make every block, but you have to learn from your mistakes and keep going. As long as you keep improving, you have to be satisfied with the results," Marriott said.

Consistency is also what Marriott is striving for. "If I'm more consistent this year as a team player, I feel I can help this team a great deal. It takes 11 guys to win a game and I'm going to try to do my part the best I can every week," Marriott said.

Brown has installed a much more open offensive attack this year, one that will occasionally feature Marri-

ott on an end-around play, as was the case in the South Carolina game when Marriott scored UNC's only touchdown on a 43 yard run.

In the spring scrimmage game, Marriott raced 80 yards on a perfectly executed reverse play. When asked how well he likes to run the reverse, Marriott said, "It gives me a chance to act like O.J. Simpson once in awhile. I used to be a running back in my younger days, and for me to run the ball on reverses makes me a double threat for the defense."

Both on and off the field Marriott is a very modest person. He would rather talk about his teammates than all of his own personal accolades. Marriott loves to win, and would rather his team won every week than make All-ACC.

"On the field I'm all work, I don't try to be flashy. As long as we win, I'm satisfied," Marriott said.

As far as playing under the lights goes, Marriott couldn't be happier. "I like playing under the lights. I played under the lights in high school, and it gives you the sense of a party,

one big party, but when you get right down to it that doesn't really make a difference."

Reggie Clark feels that Marriott has helped his progress a great deal in moving to wide receiver. "Randy has shown me a lot of the techniques that he uses to fake the defense out," Clark said. "He has been really helpful to me."

Receivers coach Jim Cavanaugh has high praise for Marriott. "He has the tremendous ability to run with the ball after he catches it," the coach said. "He is our most explosive receiver."

One thing is certain, if North Carolina is going to have a successful passing attack this year, Marriott will have to match and exceed last year's phenomenal statistics.

The sophomore Clark is one of the newcomers to the wide receiver spot. The Charlotte native was one of three true freshmen to see playing time last year.

However, Clark played tailback last year. Early in spring practice, Brown made his first important

decision as Tar Heel head coach when he converted Clark to wide receiver. The coaches felt that Clark was too good an athlete to be playing as a backup to Torin Dorn.

Clark immediately adapted to the new position and will be battling for the starting slot alongside fleet-footed Marriott. It's amazing how quickly Clark has adjusted to his new role. "It wasn't too hard of a change," Clark said. "The hardest thing to learn was all the different pass patterns."

Clark's greatest asset is his size. The 6-foot-2, 210-pounder will be a big target for Tar Heel quarterbacks. "I'm a bigger target for quarterbacks. Most of the defensive backs I'll play against are a lot smaller than me," he said. "Because of this I think I can help our downfield blocking scheme, as well as catch the ball."

Marriott insists Clark will be a super wide receiver. "Reggie can turn

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and just keep working hard to improve ourselves, we will be all right," he said. "We need to work on our faith."

But Goss shrugs off the suggestion that he can carry a team, sheepishly deflecting the accolades his teammates rain down on him.

"I don't look at this situation as a lot of weight on my shoulders," he said. "I'm just another player out there with responsibilities — they (other defenders) have them, too, and I have trust in them. I know they will do theirs. I've just got to make sure I do mine."

Like Wike and Goss, Reed is also a returning starter. The 6-3, 220-pound Tampa, Fla., native had his best game against Maryland, with three solo tackles, three assists and two sacks. And like the other two returning starters, he is counted on to provide some leadership.

"I guess leadership just comes with age and maturity," he said. "You just take that role."

The "baby" of this unit is Hollier, a 6-3, 219-pound Hampton, Va., native who came from nowhere last spring to all but nail down a starting position. He and Goss were the most consistent players on defense at that time, and Hollier says that was something he planned.

"I looked at it as my big chance," he said of the coaching change and the ensuing spring practices. "I had the same chance as anyone else. I looked at it that way, and I took it."

By playing with the experienced threesome, Hollier feels he can make freshman mistakes and still have someone there to back him up.

"They give you this air of confidence that no matter what happens," he said, "they'll be doing their job, because they've been doing it so long that it's going to be natural for them."

Hollier's Tar Heel debut last Saturday was an impressive one. He picked up six tackles and had several bone-jarring hits in the Gamecock

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