

SPORTS

Will UNC go bowling after regular season?

By A.J. BROWN
Staff Writer

Dear Coach Brown:
On behalf of the selection committee for the 1991 Bowl (use your imagination, but don't get carried away), I would like to extend an invitation to the University of North Carolina Tar Heels to play in our little post-Christmas football bash. The dress is pretty casual (uniforms and cleats); food, transportation and lodging are provided. Prizes are awarded to the team that scores the most points. R.S.V.P. by Thanksgiving. We're really hoping you can make the trip.
Hoping to see you and your team.
Sincerely,
R. U. Playing

Maybe. Maybe not. The rejuvenated Tar Heels (5-2-1), riding a wave of success, are downright emphatic with their huddle-breaking chant: "1-1-91." And now, with a vote in the Associated Press weekly Top 25 and a No. 24 ranking in the UPI coaches' poll, there is actually bowl hysteria — well, maybe not "hysteria" — in Chapel Hill.

The UPI ranking marks the first time since 1984 that the Tar Heels have been rated in that poll. Head coach Mack Brown said Monday that the ranking was especially satisfying because it came from other college football coaches.

"That's a great compliment for this team," Brown said. "It shows them (the players) that the coaches who have been watching them progress on film have got tremendous respect for what they've been able to do."

Someone else must think pretty highly of the Tar Heels' winning efforts this season, too, because there's a sign on U.S. Highway 54 between Carboro and Chapel Hill announcing the prospective date — "1-1-91" — of this gridiron fiesta. And with 19 postseason bowls scheduled, the Tar Heels have a legitimate shot at being one of the 38 teams partaking in the festivities.

"I'm not going to say it's in the bag," freshman tailback Natrone Means said after Saturday's 34-10 victory over Maryland. "I think that we have a pretty good chance, but these last three games are going to weigh heavily on the decision (of the selection committees)."

But Means and his teammates won't have it easy, because No. 18 Clemson (Nov. 3) and No. 1 Virginia (Nov. 10) are two of the Tar Heels' three remaining targets. The highly-emotional Nov. 17 Duke game is the last contest of the season, but the outcome won't have much bearing on the Tar Heels' bowl picture since bids will have been sent out by then. That means UNC will have to find a way to show its bowl potential as significant underdogs at Clemson and at home against UVa.

But where did UNC get this crazy idea of making it to a bowl game? According to kicking specialist Clint Gwaltney, it might have been linebacker Bernard Timmons. The subject came up during off-season workouts, when the senior asked his teammates where they wanted to be next season and what they needed to do to get there.

"We thought, 'We need to be in a bowl next year. We have the athletic ability and we have the team pride, so let's just work hard this whole year and get it,'" Gwaltney said. "So we broke down on off-season workouts with 1-1-91. Hopefully, we're going to achieve

AP Top 25

Rank	Team	Record	Pvs
1.	Virginia (44)	7-0-0	1
2.	Notre Dame (6)	6-1-0	3
3.	Nebraska (5)	8-0-0	4
4.	Auburn (2)	6-0-1	2
5.	Illinois	6-1-0	5
6.	Houston (2)	7-0-0	6
7.	Washington (1)	7-1-0	7
8.	Miami, Fla.	5-2-0	8
9.	Colorado	7-1-1	10
10.	Brigham Young	6-1-0	9
11.	Tennessee	4-1-2	11
12.	Florida St.	5-2-0	12
13.	Iowa	6-1-0	15
14.	Texas	5-1-0	13
15.	Florida	6-1-0	14
16.	Georgia Tech	6-0-1	16
17.	Mississippi	7-1-0	17
18.	Clemson	7-2-0	19
19.	Wyoming	9-0-0	18
20.	Michigan	4-3-0	20
21.	Southern Cal	6-2-0	21
22.	Oregon	6-2-0	25
23.	Arizona	6-2-0	23
24.	Penn St.	5-2-0	—
25.	Louisville	7-1-1	—

Others receiving votes: Michigan St. 50, Ohio St. 38, Texas A&M 37, Oklahoma 29, Central Michigan 9, Georgia 6, Indiana 5, Texas Christian 4, North Carolina St. 1, North Carolina 1, South Carolina 1, Syracuse 1, UCLA 1.

that goal."

Timmons hopes so, too. The fifth-year senior from Fort Bragg was a member of the 1986 Tar Heel team that lost to Arizona 30-21 in the Aloha Bowl, and he wants to play in another one before his college career ends.

"It's been a long time since we've been back to a bowl, so I just feel that it would top everything off (for the seniors and the team) to get a bowl ring and nice gifts and everything," he said. "We're still in contention for the ACC championship, and if we could go out and win a (bowl) game, they could have (national) rankings for next year."

But ... just what does it take to get a bowl bid?

Said Citrus Bowl President Butch von Weller, "Any selection committee will probably give you the standard answer, which is that they are looking for two teams that represent an intersectional rivalry that will bring you the biggest television audience."

Von Weller said that in the case of a Southern bowl, the best scenario would be to have "a Southern host team playing against a nationally-ranked team from a part of the country where there are lots of television sets."

He also mentioned that a team like UNC, which has rebounded from two 1-10 seasons, would be an interesting team to have in a bowl because fans and alumni would be more apt to travel to the game to support their team.

For now, though, they will have to be satisfied supporting the team during the regular season as it continues its surprising drive for a 12th game.

"1-1-91 is still alive in all of our minds," UNC quarterback Todd Burnett said. "We just need to go on to next week and take the next step to getting better. I think we have a good chance at a bowl. We do have some tough games with Clemson, Virginia and Duke, so we've got a lot left to go with the season."

"I don't know with who or where, but I think we can be somewhere at the beginning of January."

Burnett, receivers danced over Terps

By NEIL AMATO
Staff Writer

UNC wide receivers Randall Felton, Julius Reese and Bucky Brooks stood in a row Saturday, straddling the 30-yard line and performing an unchoreographed and impromptu victory dance. Of course, they were celebrating North Carolina's 34-10 pummeling of ACC foe Maryland, but this jam for joy was also the Tar Heels' rite of "passage."

The trio were very much in sync, as they and fellow pass-catchers Joey Jauch and Corey Holliday had been all day, thanks to the throwing of quarterback Todd Burnett and a wide-open offense that featured a three-wideout formation for most of the game.

That little show near the student-section end zone wasn't the only time some of the receiving corps had a ball. They had one in their hands often — 18 times in all — and did some fooling around in the meantime.

Todd Burnett completed 23 of 35 passes for 312 yards. All but five of those tosses went to wideouts Brooks, Felton, Holliday, Jauch and Reese.

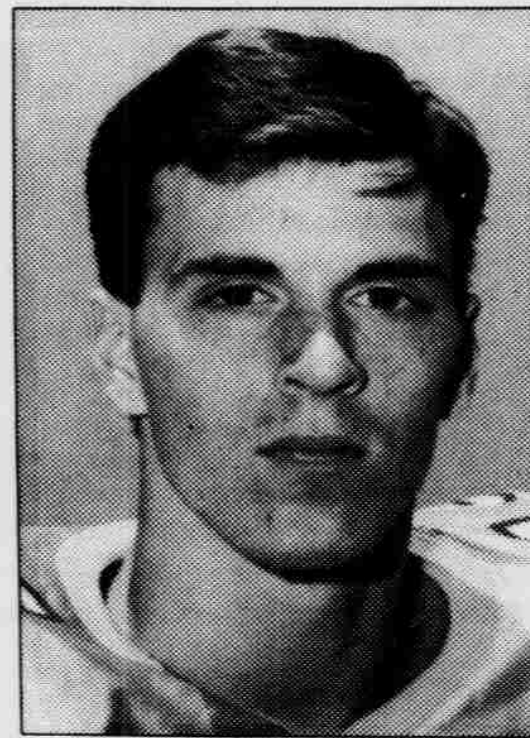
Burnett's yardage was the second-best passing performance in the ACC this season, and it rejuvenated a Tar Heel offense that had only managed 151 total yards and 48 yards through the air against Georgia Tech the previous week. Against the Terps, the Tar Heels racked up 520 yards, the most by a North Carolina team since 1989's 533-yard effort in a 49-0 hammering of VMI.

Freshman tailback Natrone Means, who had four grabs out of the backfield for 62 yards, summed up Burnett's show best.

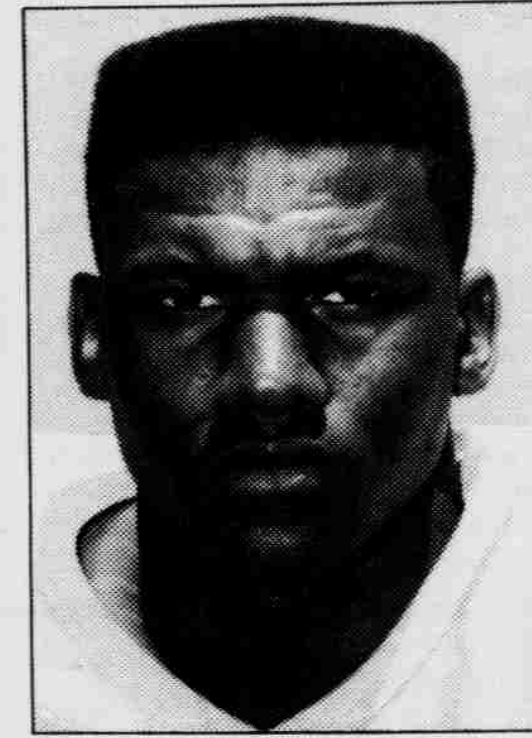
"He was on today," Means said Saturday. "He was hitting the receivers when they were open. Once he got in the flow, he just couldn't be stopped."

But it did take Burnett some time to groove his game. UNC's first possession went the way too many others have this season: 1) Burnett pass to Holliday incomplete, 2) Burnett sacked and 3) Burnett sacked. The result: fourth down and 17 yards to go and a Scott McAlister punt.

After an incompletion on the next



Todd Burnett



Corey Holliday

drive, Burnett began his assault on the Terrapins. Four straight complete passes — a pair to Reese, one to Holliday and a leading snare by Jauch — put UNC on the Maryland 24. But, from there, the drive fizzled. Means ran for a couple and Burnett threw in front of Holliday. Clint Gwaltney's 36-yard field-goal attempt was wide left, leaving the score knotted at nil.

In UNC's opening drive of the second half, with Maryland leading 10-9, Burnett lit up the Kenan turf with a strike over the middle to Holliday, who scampered 57 yards to the Terp 17. Two plays later, on second-and-goal from the 5, Burnett hit Felton on a quick slant over the middle to give the Tar Heels the lead for good.

Burnett, who was 11-of-14 in the second half for 172 yards, gave credit to his receivers, especially Holliday. The redshirt freshman, who caught a career-high seven balls for 134 yards, also made a stellar catch on third-and-6 from the UNC 32, netting 23 yards and leading to a second-quarter Gwaltney field goal to put UNC up 9-7.

"You can't say enough about Corey, as well as all of my receivers," Burnett said. "Shoot, they ran great routes and were aggressive. I think some of our best athletes are receivers."

A Gatorade-drenched UNC head coach Mack Brown expressed his plea-

sure over the much-maligned QB's play.

"I was so proud of Todd Burnett — for him to come out and relax and have the great day he did," he said. "He was so frustrated last week after playing well at Wake Forest that he just told himself, 'Today, I'm going to come in here, and I'm going to play good.' He enabled us to do some things offensively that we need to do in order to have a chance in the next three weeks."

Brown, in fact, may have had a hand in Burnett's success. First, he let the Burke, Va., junior throw 35 times, more than UNC has attempted in any of its games this year. Second, he let everyone know that if Todd wasn't up to snuff, sophomore Chuckie Burnette would replace him.

Burnett played well enough not only to stay in the game, but to put his name in the books next to an ex-Tar Heel great. The 312 yards put Burnett behind Mark Maye for single-game passing. Maye threw for 406 yards in 1987 and 319 and 316 yards in 1986.

UNC's potent receivers benefited from the spread-out offense, which finally gave them a shot at proving their talents.

"It gave us a chance to show our stuff," Felton said. "We'd been excited about the three-wide-receiver set all week. It's something we can do, and I think it's something we need to do

more." Jauch, a sophomore from Vienna, Va., said the passing game added a new wrinkle to the Tar Heels' often-dormant offense.

"If you spread them out, they can't stack as many guys up front," he said. "That helped us in our short passing game, and that opens up the run. Before, all we could do was run. Now that we started throwing the ball, that opened up the run."

Indeed, it did help the run. The Tar Heels amassed 208 yards on the ground with Natrone Means accounting for 111 of those on 25 carries.

Jauch also attributed Burnett's showing to staying loose and just having a good time.

"Against Wake Forest, he was having fun out there," Jauch said. "I think he got a little uptight against State and Georgia Tech, and it threw him off his rhythm. Today, Todd was in the huddle and we were joking around and laughing, and we were throwing the ball up and down the field. It was great for us. Todd being relaxed was one of the keys to our offensive production today."

Burnett agreed, noting that relaxing was a key to putting up good numbers. He said the thought of Burnette replacing him was in the back of his mind, but he wasn't troubled by it.

"I don't want to hurt this team," he said. "We need to do what's best for it. If I'm not doing it, I want to be taken out. I know what my ability is. I don't think a lot of people do. I just have to perform like I know I can."

Burnett also performed flawlessly off the field in the game's final minute, conversing with Brown before the ceremonial Gatorade dumping.

"I was setting him up," he said. "I put up with him all week. I was keeping him busy and talking to him while the fellas came up behind him. I enjoyed it thoroughly. I want to get that on tape."

Speaking of post-game soirees, Reese explained the receivers' on-the-field jig.

"Since we won, we wanted to show how happy we were, so we got out there and danced. Randall Felton got it together. He said, 'Let's get out there in a line and dance.'"

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