

Major League Baseball	Toronto 5	Oakland 7	Kansas City 9	St. Louis 3	Montreal 4	Little League Baseball
Baltimore 2	Milwaukee 3	Cleveland 5	Detroit 4	Los Angeles 0	Houston 0	Philippines 15
Seattle 0	Minnesota 5	Boston 4	Philadelphia 10	Chicago 3	Pittsburgh 6	Long Beach, Calif. 4
	New York (AL) 3	California (10) 2	Atlanta 2	San Francisco 1	San Diego 3	

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Burnette: 'It's time for me to back away and enjoy'

Former UNC quarterback reflects on life, football career

By Warren Hynes
Sports Editor

On Sept. 9, 1989, he stepped onto Kenan Stadium field, an 18-year-old quarterback playing in the first college football game of his career.

It was too early for Chuckie Burnette to be out there.

On Aug. 24, 1992, he stepped off Navy Field, a 21-year-old quarterback about to put an abrupt end to a tumultuous football career.

It was too early for Chuckie Burnette to be out of there.

But after officially quitting the UNC football team Wednesday, Burnette discussed the complex reasons behind his decision to give up football.

"It was just frustrations that built up over time," he said. "I just got to a point where I said, 'I need to reevaluate my life. I haven't been myself for three years, so maybe I need to back away from football and start concentrating on my future.'"

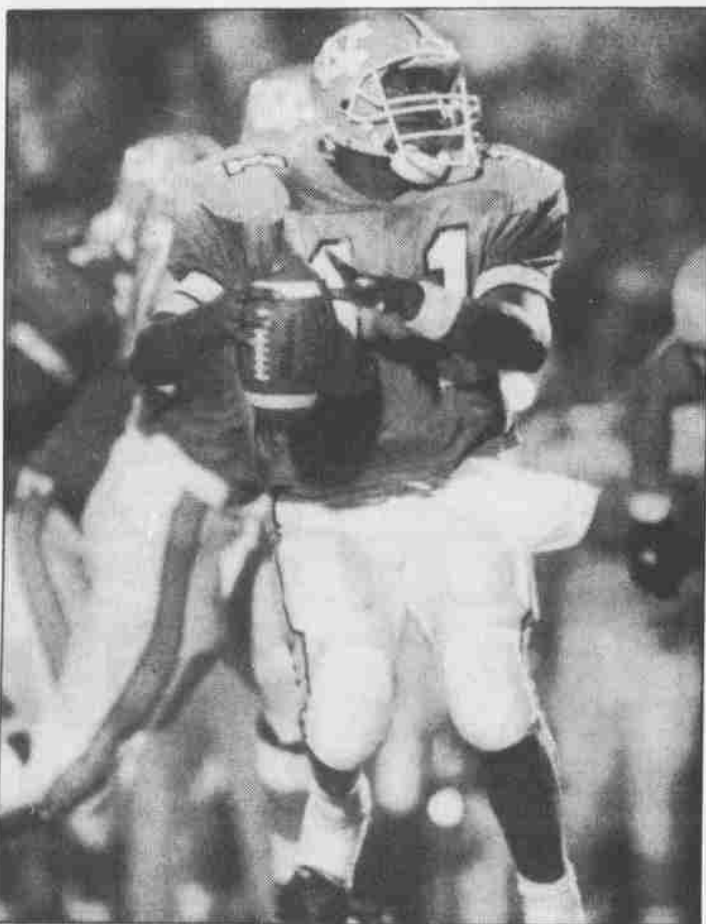
The fact that Chuckie Burnette is looking toward the future tells something about the man. The last four years of his life have been a test of endurance. The tag 'high-school-golden-boy-turned-college-flop' can do a lot to a person's outlook on life.

But this is a man who prides himself on his perseverance. After his parents split when he was 4 years old, Burnette and his brother Robbie grew up with their mother Betty in the Maple Brook housing projects in Burlington. It was not the kind of living conditions one would wish to grow up in.

"You had a guy selling liquor across the street and you've got the big drug dealer standing next to you or across the street, and people pulling up to you on the street asking you, 'Do you have any dope, man?'"

Chuckie and Robbie turned away from the troubles of their neighborhood, looking to athletics for shelter.

"My brother and I, our only outlet to a college education was through athletics," Chuckie said. "It was sports all year round — football, baseball, bas-



Chuckie Burnette's 1,694 passing yards at UNC were not enough to silence his critics

ketball — we never knew which one we would excel in."

By the time he got to high school, Chuckie was well aware of the sport he would excel in. He led Cummings High to the North Carolina 3-A championship in 1988 by throwing for 3,240 yards and 24 touchdowns. He set 10 state passing records. The Associated Press named him state player of the year. USA Today, The Sporting News and virtually every other newspaper with a functional printing press named

Chuckie Burnette to their all-state teams. He was invincible.

Little did they know.

"I always told them in high school, 'It's not just me. If I didn't have this line, if I didn't have these four receivers, who I played with while growing up.'"

So in he came, the man of the future for a North Carolina team that had plummeted to a 1-10 record the year before. UNC was thin at quarterback, and coach Mack Brown decided in the season's

fourth game — a Homecoming matchup with Navy — to start Burnette.

Navy defeated North Carolina 12-7 that day, as Burnette completed an unspectacular 8 of 29 passes with one interception. He would go on to start three more games that year and would finish 44 of 133 with two touchdowns and 14 interceptions.

Things were not golden anymore, and Burnette was not enjoying it at all. "When I came in as a freshman, I just felt so lost," he said. "I was like, 'I have no business being in here. I don't even know the offense. I don't know why they're trying to push me in here. It's not like I'm a superman that I can rearrange this team.'"

"Looking back, I wish I had been redshirted, because I think that that one year of learning and experience and getting to know what college football was going to be like — that can do wonders for a kid as far as his confidence level."

And for a freshman trying to tackle college classes, it did not help Burnette to have a playbook to memorize.

"I never had a chance my freshman year to balance athletics and academics," he said. "I spent most of my time trying to learn my plays."

"It sort of frustrated me while I was in the classroom, because I could be sitting there doing some classwork and then I'd be like, 'Oh shit, what do I do on 70? Who's my primary receiver?' I'd be like, 'Damn.' And I'd get off track, and then I'd have to get back to my work."

Burnette's sophomore and junior seasons brought some highs. He started eight more games and completed 97 of 162 passes for 1,174 yards, four touchdowns and six interceptions. As a sophomore, he led the team to victories against Wake Forest and Duke. As a junior, he helped the squad jump out to a 4-3 start.

But in the final four games of the 1991 season, a freshman named Jason Stanicek wowed opponents and onlookers with his field command and scrambling skills as the Tar Heels won three of their final four games.

This summer, Stanicek and redshirt freshman Mike Thomas were named co-starting quarterbacks. Burnette was

"I always told them in high school, 'It's not just me.'"

demoted to third-string. He was no longer the future of UNC football.

But, as with every bump that he has experienced at UNC, Burnette took his third-string role with class. He reached out to the young quarterbacks.

"I have all the respect in the world for them. I told Mike, 'With your tools and your skills, all you have to do is work on your mental game. If you work on your mental game, you can be one of the best quarterbacks in the nation.'"

"I told Jason, 'Your field awareness and your instincts were so great when you came in as a freshman, I knew that you would do good.'"

But the frustrations were building up: his struggles on the field, some personal problems, and a troubling quote in the Chapel Hill Herald.

Burnette is a member of the Black Awareness Council, a group formed this summer with various goals in mind, one of which is to push for a free-standing black cultural center on campus. In a student rally this summer, Burnette was quoted by the Herald as saying that white people were "lying, immature, manipulative bastards."

He says he was misquoted. "That kind of added to the problems. I was like, 'I don't need it. I don't need the frustration. I don't need nobody trying to tarnish my reputation.'"

So, with the kettle boiling inside him last Monday morning, Burnette walked off Navy Field and out of football.

"At some point in life, everybody's going to have to let go of football, and they're going to have to prepare themselves for the challenges that lie ahead. I figure now."

"I've been frustrated for so long. It's time for me to back away and enjoy being me again."

He intends to graduate with a political science degree in May, and he is hoping to go to law school. If law school does not work out, Burnette is already planning other options. As a good quar-

terback should.

"There are a lot of uncertainties because law school is never a sure thing," he said. "Right now, I'm just looking at different options, whether it be trying to get some job in an administrative position, or with rehabilitation counseling with athletes who are faced with drug problems. For some reason, I had some appeal on certain people who I knew."

Burnette wants to give back to his community and make his Burlington neighborhood better than it was when he was younger.

"Growing up, my main thing was always that I would come back and help my community if I ever made some money," he said.

"My mom would always say, 'You'll never have any money because you'll always be too busy giving it back to people.' I don't think that anyone should live in those conditions in this society."

Part of Burnette's work will be through the BAC. "People get misconstrued and they think that BAC is just this real, real militant organization without knowing what the BAC is. It's a lot deeper than everybody thinks it is."

They often say that the difficult times help put things in perspective. For Chuckie Burnette, the last four years of his life have done just that.

"I had some ups, I had some downs, my football career has been like a roller coaster. For me it was like a test, like, 'You had a storied high school career, and then you come to college and you have things not go your way.'"

"My mother always used to say, 'You know, God can do strange things. He can put you on the top of the world and He can knock you off that high horse at any time. I was just looking at it like all things happen for a reason.'"

"He put me on a pedestal — I was at the top of the world at one moment — and at the bottom of the world the next moment. He let me know how it felt to be at both ends of the spectrum."

And now He is letting Burnette go on — toward the future.

"I'm looking forward to the future. I always said that football didn't define me. Now I can try my best to prove to everybody that football doesn't define me and that I go deeper than that."

Expos, Brewers may surprise in stretch run

Nothing like a good pennant race to make a baseball fan happy.

So, even though my beloved Boston Red Sox are mired behind Cleveland, yes Cleveland in the cellar of the American League East, there are some good pennant races out there to keep me interested.

Conveniently, the 1992 season has produced four three-team races, just begging to be analyzed.

So here it comes.

The American League East sports the most intriguing race in the majors. Toronto, which has led the division for much of the season, hopes that newly acquired David Cone can bolster a pitching staff hampered by an injury to Juan Guzman and ineffectiveness by the rest of the staff, with the exception of 16-game winner Jack Morris.

Toronto has the best talent in the division, and the acquisition of Cone shows that they will do what it takes to win it all.

But Baltimore and Milwaukee are both still in this race. One team needs a

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rotation with Danny Jackson, has weakened the offense.

But Felipe Alou has charmed all Quebec with the play of his Expos, led by Delino DeShields, Larry Walker, Marquis Grissom and Ken Hill, all younger than 26 years old.

Acquiring Hill from the Cardinals for Andres Galarraga has made the Expos' season. That they are contending without hard-hitting Ivan Calderon is a testament to the enthusiasm Alou has instilled in this ballclub.

The Cubs have strong pitching from free-agent-to-be Greg Maddux and Mike Morgan, but not much after that. The offense hasn't changed in five years: Ryne Sandberg, Mark Grace and Andre Dawson, and not much else.

Look for Montreal to take the division. Pittsburgh can not keep winning with guys like Cecil Espy, Lloyd McClendon and Roger Mason playing key roles.

The Expos' youth will be served. Walker, Grissom and Felipe's son Moises have come together as one of the leagues' finest outfielders.

DeShields has emerged as an MVP candidate, competing with Atlanta's Terry Pendleton, San Diego's Gary Sheffield, and the two Pirate outfielders.

The NL West race is over. Fans of the Cincinnati Reds can blame injuries for keeping their team from challenging the Atlanta Braves the rest of 1992, and Padres fans can blame the San Diego front office for a third-place Padre finish.

The Braves are struggling now, but pitching ends slumps, and Atlanta has the best pitching in baseball. The Reds and Padres hit better than Atlanta, but need at least one more starter to catch the Braves.

Atlanta is looking for relief help, and may acquire a reliever before Tuesday (Reardon?).

Atlanta has had difficulty with the Expos in '92. Tom Glavine has four losses all year, with three coming at Montreal's hands. Atlanta has the playing off experience of a year ago, however, and should repeat as NL champs.

So we are left with the losers of loser of the last five Fall Classics. Oakland, with several prospective free agents trying to go out in style, will face Atlanta, last year's bridesmaids.

Glavine bests the A's in Game 1. John Smoltz outduels Ron Darling in Game 2. Atlanta smells victory.

Braves in six. See you on Peachtree Street.

Brown, UNC football coaches give clinic for different crowd

UNC head football coach Mack Brown and members of his staff held their second annual Ladies' Football Clinic in the Kenan Center Thursday night.

Brown and his staff strove to erase any doubts, raised after last year's clinic, that this was a sexist forum.

Brown set the tone for the evening by telling the stories of two current players who came from deprived beginnings to become successful in the North Carolina system.

Nearly avoiding the subject of football altogether, Brown concentrated on his job and the difficulties it causes for his family. He declared himself "the father of all these young people on the field."

Brown, in his fifth year as UNC's head coach, kept his comments short, relinquishing the podium to ACC football official Tommy Hunt, who also avoided discussion of the basic rudiments of football.

Hunt instead discussed the cosmetics of the football itself and inserted a few friendly jabs at Brown.

The only major subject Hunt presented was the technicality of the offsidings and holding calls, two topics about which most casual fans have no clue.

While Brown and Hunt emphasized the personal aspects of their jobs, UNC defensive coordinator Carl Torbush got right down to the charts.

Torbush presented UNC's defenses as though he were teaching them to incoming freshman.

For those in the audience who were not a coach's wife or a member of the football staff, this directness was appreciated.

"I've learned a lot about the defenses in terms of the gapping and plays," said Vicki Pinales of Chapel Hill. Gapping is a common tactic in which defensive linemen do not line up directly opposite the offensive lineman.

After a short break for refreshments and door prizes, North Carolina equipment manager Dominic Morelli brought out UNC wide receiver Corey Holliday and center Randall Parsons to explain the padding the players require.

Obviously, equipment needs differ



UNC head coach Mack Brown makes a point at the Ladies' Football Clinic Thursday

Diana Koval
Staff Writer

One of the evening's most unexpected moments came when Holliday innocently dropped his warmups to show the ladies the AstroTurf scars on his legs.

The evening as a whole was an explanation of football as "a vicious, hard-nosed man's game," as Hunt said.

Although the talks this year were not sexist, those women needing just the basic football background didn't find much more knowledge than they already had.