



BILL CURRIE

Mouth of the South

NC Sportswriters

As close as you may feel to the ball players who perform on the gridiron or the hardwood or the diamond, actually the average fan knows the athlete only by proxy — through the intermediary of the sportswriter or hopefully broadcaster who reports on the doings of the near great.

North Carolina has for the past quarter century been singularly blessed with an excellence in sportswriting seldom equalled in the history of competitive play.

Of course history abounds with illustrious names whose written words have recorded the accomplishments of athletic figures. Grantland Rice, Ring Lardner, Westbrook Pegler, Henry McLemore, Damon Runyan. . . the list is seemingly endless. But I doubt seriously if there has ever been a region so well served by so many skillful and dedicated writers as North Carolina.

Actually we all take these people for granted because they are always there. But when we depend upon and enjoy the work of the sportswriters as much as we do, certainly we ought to understand how it all came about.

And to my way of thinking there are two people more than anyone else who have established the bulwark of superiority now marking North Carolina sports journalism.

Barrier And Herbert Lead

Perhaps they will not object if I lump them together in one column, for while they hold many attributes in common, they are as different as their appearances. Smith Barrier, the executive sports editor of the Greensboro Daily News and Dick Herbert, the sports editor of the Raleigh News and Observer have exercised the greatest influence on not only the reporting, but on the development of sports themselves. And they continue until now, though, heaven knows they are both older than I am, and that's going some!

Smitty came out of Concord where he cut his teeth on the Tribune there. He moved to Greensboro, and as I recall, had a stint on the afternoon Record before moving to the morning side and the top job on the Daily News.

He is an innovator. His conception of features and investigative reporting has influenced the craft widely as many of his staffers have gone on to head their own departments. A couple of his boys now boss huge hunks of the very paper they learned on. Irvin Smallwood is managing editor, and Moses Crutchfield is city editor of the Daily News, and Barrier taught them both.

Wouldn't Hire Currie

Barrier never would hire me because he said every time I sat down at a typewriter I got mad. True, I am better known for frequent invective than he is, but believe me, when you have chewed in a Barrier column, your posterior is in shreds for months.

He has achieved national stature, and is one of the best known sportswriters and administrators in the country today. (I know, of course, that he wouldn't have made it off a weekly if he hadn't had his bright, pretty wife, Sis, but not many folks know she is the brains.)

Dick Herbert is the sports scholar. Ever since he came off the Rocky Mount Telegram (was it fifty years ago?) to the N & O Herbert has been seriously dedicating himself to sternly conservative reporting and to the general upgrading of athletics in the area and nationally.

He, too, has achieved a great deal of national acclaim. He is also personally responsible for the perpetuation of the Atlantic Coast Sportswriters Association, and he has worked long, hard and free to improve the whole image of sports in the area. A good newspaperman never accepts more than a cigar from anybody. I doubt if Herbert ever got a cigarette. He is so honest, he creaks.

Herbert disagrees with schmaltz and jazzy contrivances such as national ratings established by idiots who have never seen the teams they vote for. But if you read anything under his by-line you can go out and bet your house and lot on it — it will be factual and fair.

When you see the depth and wisdom of the sports pages in our area and compare them with the best anywhere else, the conclusion is obvious, and these two guys are, in a great measure, responsible for it.

Bill Peeler Is Coach

Davie To Field Small, Inexperienced Grid Team



Craig Ward

returning quarterback

MOCKSVILLE — "We've got a lot of rebuilding to do."

That's how new Davie County High head football coach Bill Peeler describes his task in his first season at the helm of the Rebels.

Peeler, a long time Davie assistant, took over the coaching reins from Jim Conger, who resigned to take the head coaching job at North Iredell High. North Iredell is reentering the North Piedmont Conference after a two-year absence.

Davie suffered through a 1-8-1 season last year under Conger, but the Rebels had the material to be a much better ball club. Six of the Rebels are trying out with college teams this fall.

The Rebs lost much of their interior line, and Peeler says that his team will be weak from tackle to tackle. Twelve of the 18 seniors lost off last season's team were linemen.

The Rebels will have an experienced backfield returning with two-year starter Craig Ward leading the way at quarterback. Peeler describes his 135-pound senior signal caller as a "good ball-handler and an average passer."

Running backs Bob Koontz, David Poplin, and Ricky Naylor will all return to the Rebs backfield. Mike Dwiggins, Terry Cook and Ricky Phelps will also return, giving the Rebels some depth.

Tony Fleming, Jerry Goodlett and Joe Harris will be back at ends for the Davie squad. James Ijames, who signed a basketball grant-in-aid with Winston-Salem State was the top end loss from last year's team.

Peeler has Rick Crofts, Buck Hall and Doug Jones back at the tackle slots, and John Cartner will return at guard. Edward Godbey will be the top returnee at center.

Center Alan Barger, son of assistant Coach Burton Barger, was the only All-North Piedmont Conference selection for the Rebels last season. He is the top loss in the Davie offensive line along with tackle Donnie Davis and tackle Harold Latham.

Coach Peeler has three good looking prospects up from last year's junior varsity team in guards Ronnie Beacham and Mark Mock along with tackle Ricky Miller.

Peeler hopes that his team can avoid injuries, because he says that he cannot afford to lose any of his offensive linemen.

The new Davie coach is ready to go through a rebuilding year, but he has his eye on the future. "We've got a good number out again, and things are looking better," commented Peeler.

Rural Homeowners Wanted

The Northwest Housing Program is now taking applications for Homeownership in Davie, Forsyth, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin Counties. Families qualifying for Federal Housing Program Assistance are encouraged to apply at the offices of the Northwest Housing Program in Rural Hall:

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