

SPORTS

Nobody cried when Bill Dooley packed his bags

Three yards and a puff of smoke. Uh Oh, fourth and one at mid-field! Time out. Dooley confers with his quarterback and the crowd is tense. Uh Oh, a throng of boos! Here comes the punter.

Situations like this has put former Tar Heel football coach Bill Dooley in such a position that if a popularity contest were held on this campus between he and former president Richard Nixon, Tricky Dick would probably win by a landslide.

While Nixon clung to his seat a little longer than he should have, Dooley left Carolina after a more successful cam-

paign, for greener pastures. And this is one time the grass may be greener on the other side of the fence. \$25,000 greener.

Yes, you've been reading right. Bill

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Dooley, one half of the coaching Dooley Brothers (the other half, Vince is a more popular fella over at Georgia) left his Blue Wave Defense, "Famous" Amos Lawrence, a future All-American guard, and a man called "Horse" for a lucrative (to say the least) 60,000 head coach and athletic director post at Virginia Tech. (As

Vince Lombardi may have put it, money "isn't everything, it's the only thing."

YET NOBODY SHED A TEAR! Nobody. Unlike most unpopular coaches, Dooley

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was a winner. In fact, he won consistently. In eleven years he only had four losing seasons. But Dooley's I-formation offense did not set too well with the rich football supporters at "Blue Heaven." They wanted excitement such as that created by Lou Holtz (now head coach at Arkansas) while at N.C. State. They wanted a Tom Landry who always comes out with something new. Even when Dooley beat Miami of Ohio with a "swinging gate" play (in an otherwise dull game) last season, his critics refused to hush up.

Then came Amos Lawrence, who guaranteed excitement for every game and a defense that was number one in the nation in scoring defense.

A trip to the Liberty Bowl against highly regarded Nebraska, and on Monday night football too! The Tar Heels almost won but couldn't survive a Nebraska comeback. But nobody expected us to win the game anyway. Still, that loss was credited to poor coaching. "We were out coached," said one upset UNC supporter after the game. "If only we could get rid of that Dooley," another said, reflecting the views of many others.

But after such a successful season it was assumed that we'd be stuck with Bill Dooley for a while. "He'll stick around until Amos and the boys leave," I was told by one fan. But . . .

After proclaiming the 76 squad to be his best team ever, Dooley shocked the average fan by accepting the Virginia Tech offer and carrying with him most of his assistants (probably his only friends). But if it is so, how is it possible that a football coach that fields good teams and

wins games could have so very few friends.

Well, of course his I-formation offense was a little out of date. (Gee, well this is the 20th century), and he was a bit too conservative (the Barry Goldwater of college football) but many people even felt that our gone and almost forgotten coach was a little prejudiced (now that's George Wallace stuff) . . .

Black fans had a lot of questions this year. "Didn't Dooley know that Amos was good? If so, why did he move Billy Johnson to tailback at the start of the season, then practically bench him for rest of the year? Now we all Black and white know that the "Horse" is one of the best pure fullbacks in the country, don't we?"

And there's been talk of other Black players getting raw deals under Dooley.

How about the Charlie Baggett story, an incident in which Dooley tried to move the Black quarterback to another position. Baggett left this southern school to go on to be a star signal caller at Michigan State.

If Billy Johnny hadn't hurt his knee early in the season, Amos Lawrence may be just another red shirt. When it became apparent that Johnson wouldn't have great success at tailback, the fans and media had to wait patiently for Dooley to end his little experiment when he wanted to end it. No class.

Surely, there was no love lost when Bill Dooley packed his bags and called it quits at Carolina. Maybe he'll find new love at Tech. After all Virginia is for lovers. But surely, Bill Dooley must have an old cliché tucked somewhere in the back of his mind as he heads north leaving a small town which he must feel is hard to please. Moreover, he'd better remember it when he reaches his destination.

It's not whether you win or lose. It's how you play the game. And that's the bottom line.



Al Wood: Carolina's share of a prize crop. Staff photo by James Parker.

Tar Heels' Al Wood, one of the ACC's best rookies

By JAMES H. ALEXANDER JR.
Staff Writer

The 1977-78 basketball season has already been tapped as an unveiling season of prize rookies, with Maryland's Albert King and Duke's Gene Banks grabbing the early headlines.

One tough freshman who will be hard not to know when the season is over is UNC's own Al Wood, a 6'6" 188-pound freshman front court man out of the small town of Gray, Ga., near Macon.

Wood has figured in all of Carolina's victories this season, playing behind junior Dudley Bradley in a sixth-man role. His presence in Carolina's game is easily felt as his pin-point shooting and tough board play has spelled relief for the Tar Heels after losing standout frontcourt star Walter Davis to the Phoenix Suns of the NBA.

Already, Wood has been compared to "Sweet D" because of his smooth style of play and seemingly calmness in clutch situations.

Al starred for Coach Robert Curtis' Jones County High School roundball squad for three seasons and averaged 33 points and 17 caroms his senior season.

"We never won any state titles or

anything, but we came out on top in a lot of other tournaments such as holiday classics," said Wood of his high school years.

The transition from high school ball to top-level college basketball has been a tough but short one for Wood, as he now faces tougher competition, a new and more complex system and the usual pressures that plague standout ACC freshmen.

Coach Dean Smith has Wood playing the small forward position as the sixth man for the time being. But Wood's continued strong play may catapult him into a starting role by mid-season, when the ACC season race is at its peak.

Wood sees his greatest on-court assets as making fewer mistakes and turnovers and being able to take advantage of bigger opponents with his quickness. But, he also notes that he needs to work a little more on his defense.

"I love college ball. It's great playing before a large crowd," said Wood of his experience so far this season.

"As far as being at UNC is concerned, Wood commented, "I like Coach Smith because he's a great coach. I also like the academic prestige of Carolina. The

national recognition received here is great. The school has a pretty warm atmosphere and the people here are real nice."

Wood spurned offers from hundreds of other schools, notably Auburn, UCLA, Georgia, Maryland, Clemson, Gardner-Webb and Southern Mississippi to attend UNC.

His older brother Morris is a 6'8" sophomore frontcourt man with Southern Mississippi and played with Al for three years in high school.

"I really didn't know much about the ACC until the summer before last," Wood said, "but it's a great conference that can compete with any other college league in the nation."

Wood is playing on a team that lost three starters to graduation and the pros and finished second in the NCAA final last March.

This season the Tar Heels have the same expectations but caution their fans not to compare them with last season's squad.

"We haven't played up to our capabilities yet, because we are definitely a championship caliber team in the ACC and NCAA. We do have great starters and good depth though, and we are now just

beginning to put it all together as a unit," assessed Wood of Carolina's play so far this season. The Heels are second-ranked and had a 10-1 mark heading into the 1978 ACC campaign.

For Al Wood, it all began in the seventh grade when he played his first organized ball in junior high.

"I never really thought of being able to play college ball until high school," said Wood, "and in the 10th grade I had my first real desire to play in college. My continued development made me realize that I had a real good chance."

The scouts' questions were answered when Wood scored 49 points and collected 23 rebounds in one game last season. Most scouting lists had his name in the top class of prep players.

The real test began with the opening of the six-week ACC season. By the time the ACC and NCAA tournaments are over and final selections for the rookie-of-the-year honor are in, Wood's now-overshadowed name is expected to be in the spotlight. And the Carolina basketball program may be collecting the dividends from another investment.