

SPORTS

Heels' defense must fill the "black holes"

By JAMES ALEXANDER
Sports Editor

It's always been prophesized that glimpsing into the past will not do much for your future, but in the case of Carolina football looking back can't do any harm.

It was only a short year ago that the Tarheel grid squad posted an 8-2-1 regular season record on the way to an ACC title and a Liberty Bowl (Memphis) berth.

Three black seniors on last year's squad were very instrumental in Carolina's accomplishments, and all three received significant pro recognition.

Of the three defensive linemen, Dee Hardison was the only one to stick with an NFL club, but the other two (Alan Caldwell and Rod Broadway) despite being released are still candidates to be picked up by some team before the season gets too old.

Hardison was a first-round choice of the Buffalo Bills, and is currently playing with them as a starting defensive linemen.

Broadway had chronic knee problems throughout his Carolina career, and this may have been injurious to his chances as a professional player.

He originally went with the Miami Dolphins, but was eventually released. After being dropped by the Dolphins he later joined the Kansas City Chiefs until being released there.

Caldwell (Winston-Salem) was not picked up in the draft, but was signed as a free agent instead with the Los Angeles Rams.

After the tryout there as a defensive back he was also released and his pro interests (or offers) are uncertain right now.

This season is also destined to produce some pro prospects, and two in particular are noseguard Dave Simmons and defensive lineman Bunn Rhames.

Rhames is slated to fill the void left by Hardison and Simmons returns to play the same position which he has made quite famous.

Other Carolina defensive linemen expected to figure in an stopping opponents this season are soph Donnell Thompson at the tackle spot, and reserve linebackers Lawrence Taylor, Travis Freeman, Harry Stanback, and Paul Davis.

Taylor and Freeman are also sophomores, Stanback is a junior and Davis is a senior.

The defensive backfield returns Ricky Barden, Francis Winters, and Bobby Cale as starters along with Steve Streater and Tyress Bratton as backup help.

Barden (senior) was an all-conference performer last season, and was the main threat in the Tarheel defensive backfield until being knocked out of commission in the final regular season game against Duke.

As a result he missed the Liberty Bowl match with Nebraska, and it was evident that he was sorely missed.

Cale has been a consistent performer the past couple of years, and will definitely be a stalwart in the second this season.

Sophs Bratton and Streater played very sparringly last season, but both showed signs of being very capable defensive backs and seem to have good futures here at Carolina. They are destined to receive quite a bit of playing time this season.

From this corps of performers, there could be a serious list of all-conference candidates, realizing that Carolina sported one of the best defenses in college football last season.

The NFL season is only 3 games old and there have been more surprises on the field than are in every package of Cracker Jacks.

The biggest surprise (or shock) is that Baltimore has made one of the quickest turn-arounds seen in the NFL.

Preseason ratings had them in the top class of the league's contenders, and many experts also believed that this was going to be the Colts' year after several years of playoff frustration. But coach Ted Marchibroda has had to weather the storm without such instrumental players as quarterback Bert Jones, top lineman George Kunz, defensive back Norm Thompson and primarily without Lydell Mitchell, who has been the Colts' backfield workhorse the past few seasons.

All of the aforementioned players (and even a few more) are out due to injury, while Mitchell is no longer with the Colts following a contract dispute which resulted in his being traded to San Diego.

Colt fans may find this a fine time to switch allegiances, but that may not be a wise thing to do.

No team can be truly competitive without seven or eight of its top players out of the lineup.

On top of trading Mitchell, the Colt management also traded away top receiver Raymond Chester, in addition to suffering a few more injuries to its key players.

Nevertheless, the Colts will just have to overlook their management mistakes and the injuries, and try to make what they can of the season, because before too long they're going to make it back . . . to the top.

Miami of Ohio was an opponent on the Tarheel grid schedule for the 1976 season, and it was deemed as an important encounter because of the Redskins' abilities as an upset team at that time.

But this season, when the teams meet in Keenan on Oct. 7, it will be a game of a different kind because new Carolina coach Dick Crum will be facing the school where he built a winning tradition.

It was also two seasons ago in Kenan that the Heels (then under Coach Dooley) pulled a trick play the swinging gate play) out of the bag to turn back the Miami, Ohio Redskins Z (then under coach Dick Crum).

Think there's any chance of a trick play being pulled this time?



Walter Sturdivant: Gets chance to prove his real worth. Sports Information Photo.

Sturdivant gets big wish, a chance to prove his talent

By JAMES ALEXANDER JR
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The passing was of the Bill Dooley era, that spanned 11 years of slow, trudging (but winning) football that included most recently several ACC titles and bowl games.

Dooley was easily identified with the Carolina football program, and his departure and Dick Crum's arrival has sparked new shock waves for this season among all involved in the UNC football program.

That change has not only affected fans and the entire athletic program, but it has had an effect on one player in particular, sophomore Walter Sturdivant, who after a year of frustration and a loss of confidence is now getting the break he has desired and deserved; a chance to prove he could play college football.

The 5'9" 191 pound halfback spent his entire freshmen season on the jayvee squad, not ever playing or travelling with the varsity team.

It was frustrating for him to be a highly-recruited high school back and spend daily practice sessions as a member of the "scout squad" or the "B" team, being utilized for the first team defense to practice strategy on.

Now that new coach Crum has arrived on the scene, along with his veer offense, Sturdivant has become a key figure in the multi-talented Carolina backfield.

Plans this season call for him to man the top reserve spot behind flashy runningback Amos Lawrence, and he is destined to receive a lot of playing time.

If Sturdivant shows any signs of being a capable performer like he did in spring drills, he could be a real challenge for a starting assignment and even more playing time.

Coaches labelled him as the most surprising back in spring practice, and not only do they admire his quickness and his blocking ability, but his attitude and intelligence as well.

Sturdivant played varsity high school football at Richmond County High for three seasons, and during that time rushed for more than 3,000 yards as a tailback. At one time during his senior season, he was the leading rusher in the state.

He also starred in basketball and track in high school, and was a member of the East squad in the East West All-Star football game.

While at Richmond County (4-A), he led them to three conference titles, and one Eastern Division (of the NCHSAA) championship.

"During my senior year we were 13-1, and that's when we were the Eastern division champions," said Sturdivant.

"Kansas and Tennessee were the only other schools that I considered coming to, but I came here (Carolina) because of the winning tradition, the tremendous program and the academic requirements and prestige," he added.

Last season, Sturdivant's best performance came in a jayvee encounter with Fork Union Military Academy in which he rushed for 107 yards.

In addition, he netted 51 yards on 8 carries in the annual spring Blue-White game, which averages to better than 6 yards per carry.

He is somewhat undecided on a major, but is currently interested in English or RTVMP (Radio, Television and Motion Pictures) as a possible choice.

Speaking about the recent coaching change, Sturdivant commented, "Coach Dooley's staff was good, and they did a lot for Carolina football, but changes are sometime necessary just for change's sake."

"Coach Crum makes the game more enjoyable and not just business-like, and he is a fair and compromising person," he added.

Sturdivant also noted that the change was definitely beneficial to his career because it gave him a chance to prove himself from scratch and gain a significant spot on the Carolina roster.

"People just can't imagine what I was going through last season. It really got to me when the team would go out of town and I would still be here, and also in practice, until I finally lost confidence in my ability and began to question whether or not I was capable of playing college football," said Sturdivant.

Sturdivant is a Hamlet native, and enjoys music and poetry in his spare time.