

Sports



Football: MC Reviews Its Second Season

by Greg Stevens

In their second season of football, the Methodist Monarchs were unable to find the winning formula that often plagues a college in developing a new sports program. However, their 0-10 finish this year has not dampened the Monarch's hopes for the future.

There are many precedents to look at when considering the Monarch's plight. The Tampa Bay Buccaneers' first years were marked by a season in which they became the first team in N.F.L. history to go through a sixteen-game schedule without a victory. They subsequently bounced back to become the youngest team in history to make it to an NFC championship game. In college football, the Louisville Cardinals program has been a perennial loser. However, they easily defeated Alabama in the 1990 Fiesta Bowl and finished the year at 10-1-1. If the administration continues to provide adequate support for this program through its growing pains, it should eventually begin to churn out victories.

Sophomore defensive tackle Rick Foutz has said that the Monarchs remain very united despite their inability to come up with the school's first football

victory. He said, "There is definitely a lot of unity because we have a lot of people returning. We had three close games that were heartbreaking losses and we will be coming out with a vengeance next year to get that first win."

Indeed, the Monarchs fell just short of their first victory in a 10-0 loss against Washington Lee, a team which, Foutz said, "will be looked upon next year as an intense rival." According to Foutz, a major problem for the Monarchs this year was that "both sides of the ball never seemed to click at the same time." Against Washington Lee, the defense surrendered only 10 points, but the offense was shut out. In a very heated contest against Guilford, the offense put up 21 points, but, the defense collapsed and gave up 42. Next year the Monarchs certainly will be looking for some consistent play on both sides of the ball.

School support was very inspiring to the team throughout the year. Foutz said, "Even toward the end of the season, the students and faculty supported us. For a young team, the support of the crowd could win a game for us."

As for the Monarch's schedule, Foutz noted, "I would not want to see it change, I'd rather see the team get better as a unit.

A Chat With Coach Wiggs

by Angie Conrad

Coach of the women's basketball team, Assistant Athletic Director, and a teacher--these are some of the hats which Coach Rita Wiggs has chosen to wear during her five years here at Methodist College.

Coach Wiggs is a Fayetteville native who was a stand-out basketball player at Cape Fear High School. She received her bachelor's degree at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and her masters at North Carolina State University.

I sat down with Coach Wiggs the other day, and we talked about her past five years with the Methodist program. These are the results of the interview:

Small Talk: How did you become interested in Methodist College?

Wiggs: "Being a Fayetteville native, of course, I always knew of Methodist College. After my junior or senior year in college I worked at a summer camp here. When Mason Sykes was the women's basketball coach I was familiar with the program, and the "Tin Can" at that time. After I left N.C. State, I took a job at Rowen State Community College in Tennessee. I had a very successful program there, but I really missed North Carolina. I missed my family, and I wanted to get back to the area. In late July of that year, while working at the N.C. State Basketball Camp, a coaching friend of mine, Coach Finch, said that she had heard of a coaching position opening up at Methodist. I called Coach Austin immediately and got an interview

The biggest thrill for me was for the guys who were here last year. We knew we had the talent to win a game this year, unlike last year when the team basically gave up at mid-season. We were hurt badly at Bridgewater when we lost two key defensive players, linebackers Russel Seaton and Bobby Ellis, to disciplinary measures. That was really hard for the defense to take." If everyone remains healthy, the Monarchs appear ready to make amends for their first two years.

There are some problems which may need to be addressed in the future. The road games have tended to drain a lot of energy out of the players. This year there were games in Kentucky and Tennessee. The Monarchs might be better off if they could reschedule their games closer to home in the future. The weight room also needs to be expanded, as Foutz said, "There is not enough room for the team to work out as a unit." Such an expansion would greatly help the team to develop the strength and unity that any winning team needs.

The Monarch's third season is still about six months off, but the team is very excited about its future. The Monarchs were fairly competitive last year, and have set their sights on a winning target in 1991.

with him for that very same evening that camp ended. They offered me the job that night, and I took it that night. It all developed very quickly."

Small Talk: Did you have any offers to be head coach other than from Methodist?

Wiggs: "Yes. I had offers from three major Division I programs, yet I lost out in the selection process."

Small Talk: What was the quality of Methodist that made you choose it over the others?

Wiggs: "I liked the small college aspect. I wanted to keep my priorities straight, and to be with my family was the main one."

Small Talk: What were your thoughts on the women's program when you first arrived?

Wiggs: "I knew that I had my work cut out for me. The state of the program was worse than I thought. The lure of the new gym helped, but that wasn't to happen for a few more years. I liked the challenge, though. The key things that really needed work were scheduling, equipment, attitudes, and academics."

Small Talk: What goals did you set out to achieve when you began coaching here at Methodist?

Wiggs: "There were three main goals. First, a program that would make the players proud, adding such things as Monarch Madness, Parent Appreciation Day, and media guides. Second, a winning program with rankings, Conference Championships, and post-season play. And third, a quality and productive program."

Small Talk: You have been here for five years. Has the basketball program grown?

Wiggs: "Yes. I believe we've grown academically, by bringing quality people into the program, and on the court. Academically we've added a few things for incoming freshmen, such as checking with the professors, study hall four days-a-week, and a study skills class. The quality of people brought into this program are the people whom I would like as daughters. I consider my team as my daughters. On the court we set goals. Every year, each player develops into a stronger player and person."

Small Talk: It's obvious from this growth that you have been involved in more than just coaching. What are some of the other areas to which you've dedicated your time?

Wiggs: "I am Assistant Athletic Director. I was Sports Information Director for the past three years and I teach study skills and basketball tactics courses. I've learned a great deal. Although these jobs are very time consuming, they are very rewarding and encouraging."

The Lady Monarchs have an overall record of 6-6, a conference record of 0-4, and are ranked #10 in the region. Whatever the challenge, as in all things, Coach Rita Wiggs will undoubtedly give 110%.