

# SPORTS WEEK

B SECTION

AUGUST 12, 1999

## Wake has its most experienced football team ever under Caldwell



Wake Forest returns eight stars to its defensive unit.

By SAM DAVIS  
THE CHRONICLE

The start of football season has perhaps never been anticipated as much as the coming one under Coach Jim Caldwell of Wake Forest.

The Deacons, who finished the season with a 3-8 record last year, have their most experienced team ever under Caldwell. Twenty-seven seniors and 49 returning lettermen will be on hand when the Deacons have their first full workout next week. Wake has 14 starters back, six on offense and eight on defense, along with Kelvin Moses, their All-ACC linebacker who missed the entire 1998 season with

a knee injury.

"We look forward to the 1999 season with a great deal of anticipation and excitement," Caldwell said.

Unlike the previous six teams under Caldwell, this squad is battle tested. The Deacons have seven players returning who have logged more than 20 career starts.

Caldwell is expecting a policy that he began five years ago to pay major dividends this season. This year's senior class features 24 players who have been redshirted. Only three members of that class haven't been redshirted. In addition, of the 70 returning players, only four haven't sat out a season. "We do have a veteran team,

one with more seniors than any other we've had at Wake Forest during the past six years," Caldwell said. "These players know our system, they know what we expect, and they know what it takes to be successful in our league."

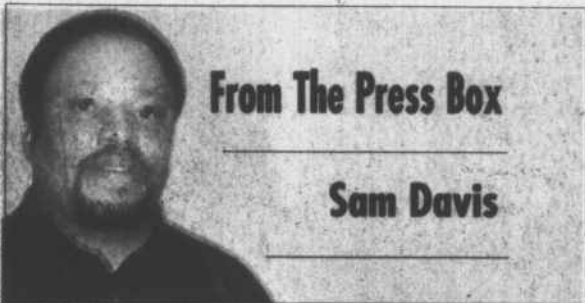
Last season Wake Forest was rated high in several preseason polls. However, the Deacons got out to a rocky start and never completely recovered. This time around, however, Caldwell isn't expecting the team to falter.

"I believe that we have a chance to have a very good football team this season," Caldwell said. "We have been close the past



Chris McCoy, who played at R.J. Reynolds High, is one of 49 returning lettermen.

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From The Press Box

Sam Davis

## Decision by freshman Leak shows wisdom beyond years

With the dawn of the 1999 football season on the horizon, local sports fans can now focus on the programs that they follow and support.

Wake Forest, the only big player in the Triad area when it comes to major college football, has a couple of controversies swirling. The Deacons landed C.J. Leak, perhaps their best-ever football recruit, less than six months ago and within the past month made the news again when Leak's younger brother, Chris, decided to make an oral commitment to join the Deacons' program.

Some folks were alarmed that the younger Leak, a freshman at Charlotte's Independence High, would declare his intentions at such an early age. Some say that a student-athlete who has just reached his early teens shouldn't have that kind of attention directed to him.

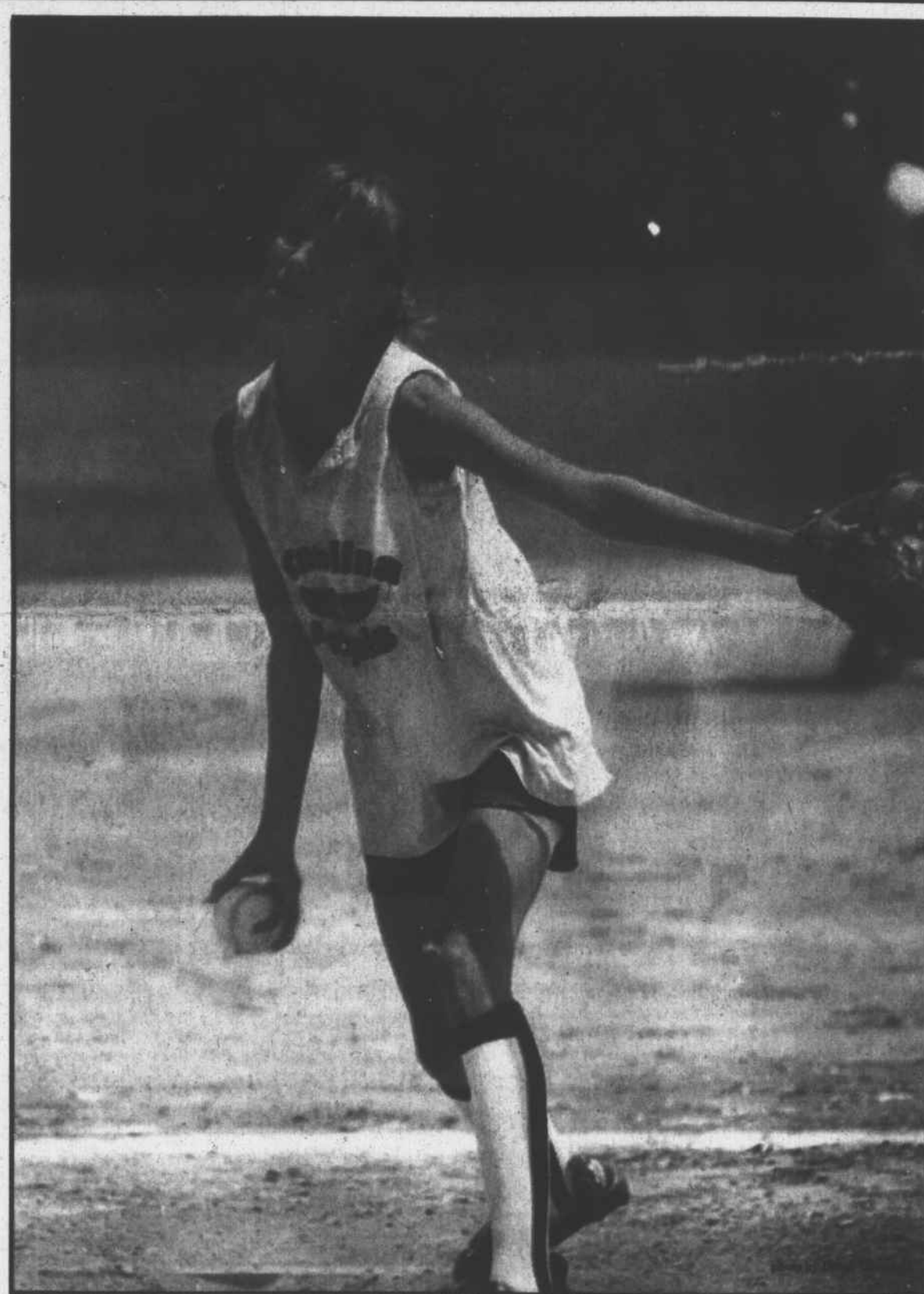
That might be a valid point. But what one must consider is the fact that these situations exist because of the nature of the beast that we call college football.

Today coaches begin looking at players at a much earlier age than they did just a decade ago. In addition, programs like Wake Forest must look for every advantage they can gain in recruiting if they expect to be competitive in the ACC with programs such as Florida State and the University of North Carolina.

Another issue to consider is the overall economic climate of athletic programs. Division I programs spend thousands of dollars each year subscribing to recruiting newsletters and magazines that target the young athletes and rate them according to position on the local, state and national level.

Each year it gets a little more complicated for college programs to be players in the arena. Struggling programs have the most difficulty flexing their muscles in the marketplace. To keep pace with the competition, many programs find themselves allocating more resources each year. When

See Press Box on B3



Jenny Hodges has been the ace on the mound for the Carolina Angels. She and her teammates travel to Salem, Va. for the National ASA Tournament on Saturday.

## Angels gear up for nationals, battle to second-place finish

By SAM DAVIS  
THE CHRONICLE

A second-place finish wasn't the desired result that the Carolina Angels were looking for in the Winston-Salem Fast-Pitch Invitational Aug. 7 at Rupert Bell Park. However, the team accomplished much in bouncing back from a loss in its first game to advance to the championship game.

The Angels came out lethargic in their opener and dropped a double-digit loss to the Yadkinville Diamond Storm. They regrouped to take a 1-0 victory in their second game against the Lady Lightning of Walkertown. With that momentum, the Angels marched into the next round and soundly defeated the Walkertown Wizards 15-5.

That set up a rematch against the Diamond Storm. And this time the Angels came out ready, jumping out to an early 5-0 lead. The Angels were able to forge ahead on the strength of the superior speed and execution.

But they didn't hold up. The Diamond Storm put together a big fourth inning rally and tied the score 5-5. Jenny Hodges, who started on the mound and had held the Storm scoreless for the first three innings, tired in the 90-degree heat and was replaced by Kate

See Angels on B6



Marquita Williams of the Walkertown Lightning hits a grounder in recent action against the Angels.



Local high school football action begins next Friday night. Don't miss The Chronicle's preseason report coming Aug. 19.

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## WSSU coach hopes a large crop will translate into a championship

By SAM DAVIS  
THE CHRONICLE

Coach Kermit Blount of Winston-Salem State hopes that the largest turnout in recent history for his football team will translate into the Rams' first conference championship since he took over the coaching reins.

The Rams reported to preseason camp on Tuesday and this year's group numbered more than 115 players. That is up from a year ago when some 100 players showed up for the first day of drills.

Blount, in his seventh season at the helm, has some 70 players back from a year ago plus the 45-plus first-time players. They include a crop of 18 signees.

"We feel very good about what we have in camp," Blount said. "This is a good number to start with. We've been close to having this type of number before, but we've never had this total."

The Rams have been picked by league coaches to finish second in the conference race this season behind Virginia Union. WSSU was 5-2 in the CIAA last year, tying Livingstone for the title. However, Livingstone was awarded the champi-

onship by virtue of its victory over the Rams in head-to-head competition.

WSSU's overall record last year was 5-5. Blount hopes the Rams can improve upon that this time out. While the returning cast is solid for the Rams, Blount hopes he can find two or three players from the newcomers who can bring something new to the mix.

One promising player is Steven Isadore, a 6-2 1/2, 270-pound defensive tackle from California. The Rams recruited Isadore two years ago, but he chose to attend junior college after he failed to meet entry requirements at WSSU. He has since met the minimum standards and is expected to provide a spark on the Rams' defensive front.

"He's certainly one of the players that we're hoping will add something to this team," Blount said. "We thought he would be a big plus for us when we recruited him two years ago."

Another player who could make a splash in the program is Michael Rucker, who played at Carver, where he was an all-conference pick two consecutive years and rushed for more than 2,000 yards in his career. Rucker signed with the Rams out of high school but passed it up when

See WSSU on B6



Tory Woodbury