

# Panthers need Foster to pound the ball

Continued from page 1C

first player to break the 100-yard rushing mark for Carolina this season.

It earned Foster the starting job for the first time in his career, but he didn't exactly race out of the gates. He failed to crack 100 yards in his next three starts despite Fox giving him every opportunity to pound the ball.



Sometimes it didn't make sense, like in a critical loss to Dallas in which Foster couldn't crack the Cowboys' defense for more than a 9-yard run. But Fox kept calling Foster's number - even though Steve Smith, who ended the year on top of the

NFL in catches, yards and receiving touchdowns - could have taken over the bulk of the ball-handling duties.

Fox's faith in Foster finally paid off against the Falcons, a game Carolina had to win to lock up a playoff berth.

"DeShaun has been waiting in the wings for a while now, and he's answered the bell quite a few times for us," Fox said. "He came up big for us."

Not everything went well for Foster, though. He struggled in the red zone and was stopped for no gain on three consecutive runs from the Atlanta 1.

He especially erred on one of the runs, a sweep to the right side when he was forced out of bounds before getting the ball across the goal line. As Carolina lined up for a field goal attempt, Foster was

met on the sidelines by a street-clothed Davis - his mentor - who scolded him for not putting his shoulder down and bulldozing his way into the end zone.

The two have a unique relationship, with neither jealous of the other's success. Davis assures that even from the sidelines, he'll continue to tutor Foster.

"I think they've cheered each other on since they've both been at the position," Fox said earlier this season. "I don't know that it's unusual, but it doesn't always happen like that. Sometimes people are little more selfish than selfless."

"But I think it's unique and I think it's important in winning. They don't walk around like they're it."

## Playoffs put Carolina in a New York frame of mind

Continued from page 1C

Giants in what Fox calls a "very hostile environment." But the Panthers will be heading up north with a lot of moxy and momentum.

"We have a lot of high character guys in the locker room. We won in a place that's been very tough on against us," Fox said. "We need to carry this on in the playoffs."

Against Atlanta, Carolina rushed for 229 yards and threw for 174 yards without an interception. The Panthers didn't turn the ball over, something they'll need to continue against the Giants, who had 17 interceptions during the regular season.

And what about the run? Giants running back Tiki Barber racked up 1,860 yards during the regular season and averaged 5.2 yards per carry.

Panthers' defensive lineman Brentson Buckner said the Panthers can play with anybody.

"We match up with anybody," he said. "Everything we want is still ahead of us. We didn't win the division, but we're in. The ulti-

mate goal was to make the playoffs. You want to win your division and get a chance to play in front of your home fans. But we're in and we have a chance to play."

Linebacker Chris Draft, a former Falcon, said Sunday's win was a great springboard into the playoffs.

"Hopefully we'll come out with the same type of vibe in New York next week," he said.

This season, the Panthers were 6-2 away from Bank of America Stadium.

Buckner said when the players get on the field, it's not just about the Xs and the Os, "it's about the Jimmy and the Joes," he said. "That's what the players say. I like our chances (against the Giants). We match up well with anybody. When you're in this dance, I don't care who we dance with."

He added that, "You don't want to limp in (to the playoffs) you want to walk in with your head up."

The Giants and the Panthers have met twice in the regular season, with Carolina winning both games.

## Golden Bulls take on No. 1 Va. Union at Brayboy Gym

Continued from page 1C

in check."

The Bulls will have to do it with less depth. Backup guards Travoris Howerton and Karl and Edmund Rainey left the team during the holiday break, but the starting rotation is unchanged.

"We're down to 10 players, but it's just another hurdle you have to get over this season," Joyner said. "We'll probably play nine

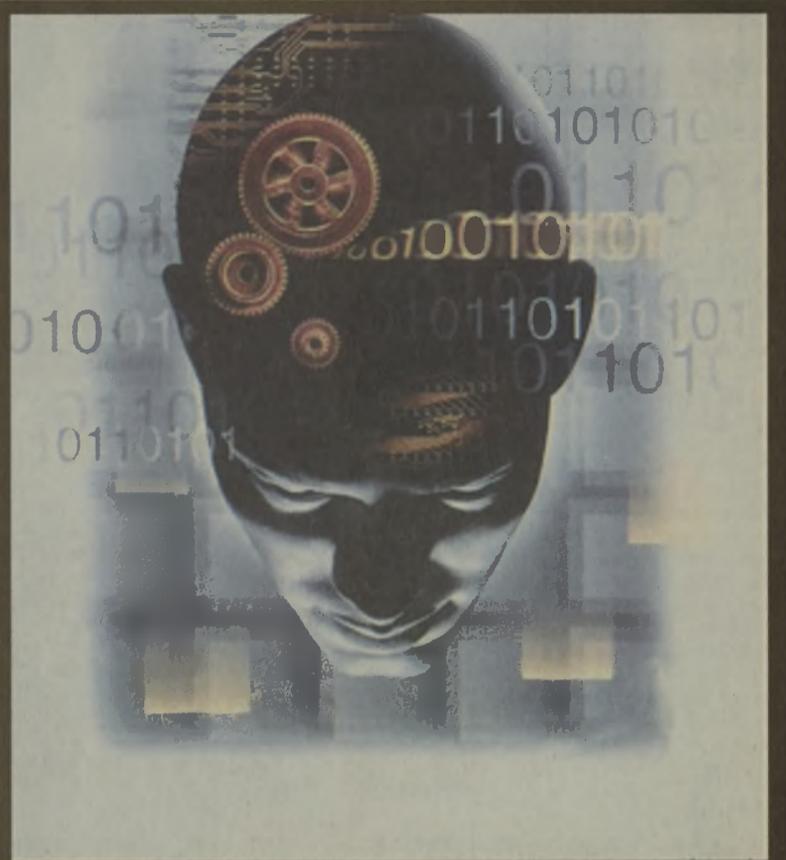
players for major minutes, but certainly the starters will get most of them."

Despite the Union loss, Los Angeles proved to be a productive trip for Smith. The Bulls beat Wiley and Wilberforce to finish third behind VUU and Bowie State.

"We had a lot of time to gel as a team," Joyner said. "We had a good time to gel against good competition on a neutral court."

The Panthers, last year's national and CIAA champion, is stout defensively and a dominant rebounding team. To spring an upset, Smith will have to execute on offense and limit Union's inside game.

"Union is a confident, strong, defensive-minded team," Joyner said. "Union is probably stronger defensively this year than they were last year and they might be a little bigger."



Information that is  
always on line,  
24 hours a day

[www.thecharlottepost.com](http://www.thecharlottepost.com)

**The Charlotte Post**

## Why read The Post? It's essential

"I couldn't imagine being a resident of Charlotte and not subscribing to The Charlotte Post. It covers a wide range of news and serves a vital function for the African American community and for the entire Charlotte community. The Post does a great job in covering the local issues; not just news, but sports and leisure as well."

*Chris Weiller, executive vice president for marketing and communications,  
Charlotte Bobcats*

Call (704) 376-0496 to link  
with news that's important to you.

**The Charlotte Post**

