

**MASCOT**

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"We had to have a one-minute prepared skit, 30 seconds of an improv dance thing and 30 seconds of reacting to a game situation."

Collins said he thought the mascot was an important part of the athletic program.

"I just think he adds an exciting dimension to the program. It helps involve younger kids. He's a symbol of Carolina for them," Collins said.

But at times Mike said he felt more like a playground than a mascot. Children are constantly around him and many times on top of him.

At this season's Maryland game, Mike and the Maryland Terrapin mascot arranged a mock fight during halftime. Mike fell to the ground, and the Terrapin landed

on top of him. Then the children came.

"All the kids within 30 yards jumped on top of him and began kicking him and beating him up," Mike says.

"He said to me, 'These kids are really mean.' I said, 'Now you know what I go through even when you're not around.' They're ruthless," he said.

But it's not just the kids that make the Ram's job tough. The costume alone weighs 20 pounds and has three layers.

"Sometimes it gets up to 130 degrees inside. It's pretty tough. It's very difficult to run in," Mike said.

But, he said, the best thing about being the mascot and remaining anonymous is his freedom to go crazy on the field.

"You get to act completely silly. You get to do things you wouldn't otherwise be able to do," Mike said. "I get to mess with the cops."



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