

Senior Charlie McNairy worked his way on to the varsity squad two years ago. Despite limited playing time, McNairy is a leader both on and off the court.

## Senior walk-on takes leading role

BY AARON BEARD  
ASSISTANT SPORTS SATURDAY EDITOR

With all of his alternative identities, Charlie McNairy could work alongside Ethan Hunt of "Mission: Impossible."

His identity can change daily, depending on what his teammates call him. He's been "Air McNairy" and "McNasty." Once, he even took the name "Opie Taylor."

"In high school, they started chanting it at one gym," McNairy said. "It's because my hair used to be jet-red."

Despite his aliases, however, UNC fans can spot him whenever he steps on the court. He's the skinny forward wearing the wide smile on his face. The meaning of the smile — it's game-time.

"It was a childhood dream to play here," he said. "... I love every minute of it. Maybe that shows."

It does. His childlike wonder and sheer joy at entering any contest earns him raves from the Smith Center crowd.

It started innocently, with McNairy moving up from the junior varsity ranks to the varsity during the 1995 season.

During that year, he appeared in 12 games, including a memorable eight-point, two-rebound, one-dunk performance against VMI.

It was that dunk that gave him the "Air McNairy" title, one that came from Rasheed Wallace and Jerry Stackhouse.

His role now differs from two years ago. On a squad with only three seniors, the former walk-on is an elder statesman.

"I feel really comfortable with my role," McNairy said. "I feel comfortable with the plays. I feel like I know what (UNC) Coach (Dean) Smith expects."

What Smith expects is senior leadership, something walk-on Webb Tyndall said McNairy provides by example.

"In practice, he hustles," Tyndall said. "He's all-out and intense. He pushes the guys that are out here playing. He's a worker. That's what his leadership is."

McNairy's efforts haven't gone unnoticed. He received the Rick Sharp Award as the player who contributed the most behind the scenes during the 1995 season.

Not bad for a guy who started off as a walk-on. But the seeds were planted with Smith's recruiting visits to Kinston High,



Charlie McNairy

SENIOR, NO. 34

GAMES: 15

POINTS: 1.7

REBOUNDS: 0.5

ASSISTS: 0.3

where McNairy played with Stackhouse.

"I was blessed because (Smith) would come watch Jerry play, and he'd see the red-headed white kid out there," McNairy said. "(Smith) said, 'We can't promise you anything. But ... play a year of JV, and maybe ... you'll have a chance.'"

In only three years, McNairy has seized that chance. In fact, about the only thing McNairy hasn't achieved at UNC is winning the senior class presidential election last year.

Regardless, McNairy — a.k.a. Opie Taylor, Air McNairy and McNasty — is living out his dream.

## Tyndall content to show support

BY PAUL STRELOW  
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Even though North Carolina men's basketball coach Dean Smith mentions

Webb Tyndall's name in the battle for the point guard position, few heed Smith's words.

That's fine to Tyndall, who sees his role extending whether he plays or not.

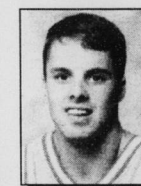
"I just got on here last year and was thankful to be here," Tyndall said. "Now I'm a senior, and Coach is big on senior leadership. The best thing I can do is to encourage the younger guys, be there and show support and do the little things behind the scenes."

Tyndall is one of the men behind the scenes for the UNC squad. The 5-foot-10 guard demonstrates enthusiasm and a strong work ethic, qualities that led to his promotion to the varsity before the team's eighth game a year ago.

But his moment in the spotlight came during a game against N.C. State, when he stepped to the free throw line seeking his first career point. Swish.

Tyndall entered the scoring column, but he then missed his second attempt. While some would have been happy just scoring, he couldn't forget the miss.

"I was so upset," he said. "A lot of times, I was nervous when I came out there."



Webb Tyndall

SENIOR, NO. 22

GAMES: 8

POINTS: 0.1

REBOUNDS: 0.0

ASSISTS: 0.4

"This year, whatever happens, I'm just thankful to be out there. I want to go out and run the offense and get my teammates scoring."

No one recruited Tyndall out of high school, even though his resumé included excellent on-the-job experience. He manned the point at Kinston High School for three years, dishing the ball to former Tar Heel Jerry Stackhouse and current teammate Charlie McNairy.

While he's played with talented teammates before, he says he still gets nervous if and when he enters a game. But no one can say he didn't work for the chance.

"I've worked hard with ballhandling drills since I was little, so if I get the chance, I've got to capitalize on it," Tyndall said.

## Sullivan looks for more playing time

BY AARON BEARD  
ASSISTANT SPORTS SATURDAY EDITOR

Ryan Sullivan is not unlike Charlie McNairy and Webb Tyndall.

He relishes PT — playing time.

Last year, he appeared in 11 games, usually when the contest was well in hand. And in the Smith Center, his appearance incites a chorus of cheers.

It's the kind of thing that every reserve loves to hear.

"It's really exciting," Sullivan said. "(The crowd) knows that we work hard. They really appreciate what we do. It makes us feel really good."

The sophomore guard from Bogota, N.J. is familiar to Tar Heel fans for another reason — he's the younger brother of the graduated Pat Sullivan.



Ryan Sullivan

SOPHOMORE, NO. 14

GAMES: 11

POINTS: 1.0

REBOUNDS: 0.4

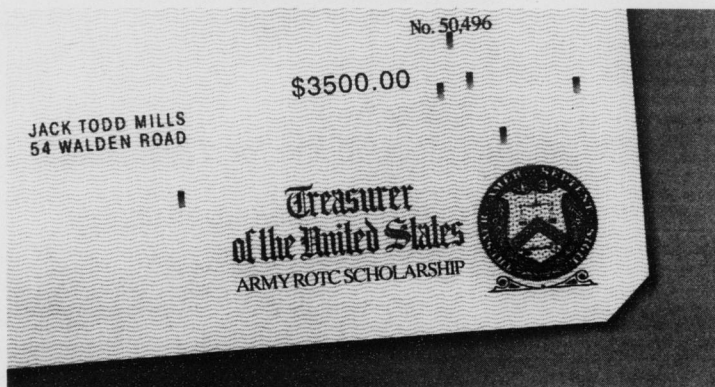
ASSISTS: 0.2

Sullivan said he hopes to find more minutes during the 1997 campaign.

"Hopefully, I can be the guy to come off the bench and hit the open shots," Sullivan said. "Hopefully I can be in there to hit some shots and ... pose a threat offensively."

In the meantime, life for the young Sullivan follows a simple routine.

"Work hard in practice," Sullivan said. "Play defense ... and hopefully Coach Smith will look your way."



## CASH IN ON GOOD GRADES.

If you're a freshman or sophomore with good grades, apply now for a three-year or two-year scholarship from Army ROTC. Army ROTC scholarships pay

tuition, most books and fees, plus \$150 per school month. They also pay off with leadership experience and officer credentials impressive to future employers.



**ARMY ROTC**

**THE SMARTEST COLLEGE COURSE YOU CAN TAKE**

For details, visit Room 111, Naval Armory or call  
962-5546 or (800) 305-6687