

Tar Heels Prepare for Season Of Change With Enthusiasm

Ronald Curry is not taking part in football drills yet but plans to be ready to run the offense in September.

MIKE OGLE
Sports Editor

In an offseason full of questions, North Carolina's football team has one definite answer: The 2000 squad will have little in common with last year's edition.

The changes start at the top with the coaching staff, part of which brought a new offense with it. The on-field personnel has changed as well.

Quarterback Ronald Curry said Tuesday at a football media day at Kenan Stadium that he expects to be ready to play when UNC hosts Tulsa on Sept. 2 despite not participating in spring practice.

"I'm playing basketball at night," he said. "I'm not doing anything football-wise except lifting and some speed work with the conditioning coach. I feel pretty good, some days better than others, but I feel like the progress is tremendous."

"There was never really any doubt in my mind that I'd be back."

Curry said he feels 90 percent recovered from his ruptured Achilles, which he suffered at Georgia Tech on Oct. 9. Coach Carl Torbush is convinced Curry will be ready for action soon as well.

"I feel like if we had a ball game in two weeks, I would like to think that Ronald would be ready to play," Torbush said. "I don't know that, but I've seen him around enough to feel like he should be able to do that."

Torbush expressed two major concerns regarding Curry. "He's got to convince himself that he can take a lick, which he can because he's a competitor," he said. Torbush also said he needs his junior quarterback to be able to pick up the new offense quickly enough to run it effectively from the season's beginning.

Both Torbush and new offensive coordinator Mike O'Cain admitted that the Tar Heel offense will basically be the same as what O'Cain ran as the head man at N.C. State. "The thing we've got to find out



UNC quarterback Ronald Curry ruptured his Achilles tendon in an overtime loss at Georgia Tech.

about Ronald is how he's going to respond to the option," O'Cain. "He's never really run the option. But he has all the skills to be able to do it."

Running backs Daniel Davis and Domonique Williams are still missing from the offense due to off-the-field troubles. They have been practicing with the team, but Torbush said UNC had been preparing as if it would be without them in the fall.

That could spell trouble for a team that owned the worst offense in the ACC in 1999. However, Torbush maintained that the pair could still earn their way back onto the team by kickoff in September.

One player who is back with the Tar Heels is fifth-year senior Brandon Spoon. The linebacker tore a left biceps tendon at Indiana on Sept. 11, and he is ready to make amends for the 3-8 season that he watched from the sidelines.

"I felt bad last year because I could separate myself from what happened on the field because I wasn't a part of it," said Spoon, who will anchor a defense that returns nine starters.

"I didn't have to go through what they did on Saturday and on campus everyday. The team is a lot stronger than it was last year because of what they went through."

The Sports Editor can be reached at sports@unc.edu.



DTH FILE PHOTO

North Carolina linebacker Brandon Spoon (44) is returning for a fifth season from a bicep injury he suffered in the second game of the 1999 campaign. He is one of nine defensive starters back for the Tar Heels.

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THE Daily Crossword

By Mitch Komro

ACROSS

- 1 "Death in Venice" author
- 5 Greek letter
- 10 Granite block
- 14 Woodwind
- 15 Desert relief
- 16 Garb for Claudius
- 17 Lofly maid?
- 20 Mischievous one
- 21 Aquatic mammal
- 22 Necessities
- 23 McIntoshes, e.g.
- 25 Hole puncher
- 26 Engrave
- 28 Bullfighters
- 32 Short letter
- 33 Lake Volta location
- 35 Step into character
- 36 Judiciary blowout?
- 40 King of Judea
- 41 Serengeti plains
- 42 Small bottle
- 43 Standing room only
- 45 Fair-haired
- 47 Wilder's "Town"
- 48 Vaulted
- 50 Ice-cream port

DOWN

- 3 tion
- 53 and dagger
- 54 Gemini count
- 57 Floating java joint?
- 60 -Romeo (Italian car)
- 61 Fielder's gloves
- 62 Unslightly fruit?
- 63 Pound to a pulp
- 64 Impertinent
- 65 Lower digits
- 6 Terre IN
- 7 Road curves
- 8 Arrange one over another
- 9 Query
- 10 Co-founder of "The Tatler"
- 11 Bounding gait
- 12 Added years
- 13 Stands in the way
- 18 1950s dances
- 19 Absorb completely
- 24 Bridge support
- 25 Top-notch
- 26 Peruvian people
- 27 Hangman's knot
- 28 Sov. news agcy.
- 29 Champing at the bit
- 30 Group of eight
- 31 Fashion
- 33 Fall guy
- 34 "Ben _"
- 37 Theatrical group
- 38 Sixty minutes
- 39 English river
- 44 Natural sponge
- 45 Excessively
- 46 Michigan or Ontario
- 48 Casino cash-dispensers?
- 49 Hangs one's lip
- 50 Rip off
- 51 Soft drink
- 52 Rubs out
- 53 Aromatic annual plant
- 55 Corduroy char-
- 56 Elevator man
- 58 German river
- 59 On the contrary

WORD SEARCH

Across: 1. VENICE, 5. ALPHA, 10. BLOCK, 14. WOODWIND, 15. DESERT, 16. CAUDUS, 17. MAID, 20. MISCHIEVOUS, 21. MAMMAL, 22. NECESSITIES, 23. MCINTOSH, 25. PUNCHER, 26. ENGRAVE, 28. BULLFIGHTER, 32. LETTER, 33. VOLTA, 35. CHARACTER, 36. BLOWOUT, 40. KING, 41. SERENGETI, 42. BOTTLE, 43. ROOM, 45. FAIR, 47. WILDER, 48. VAULTED, 50. PORT.

Down: 3. TION, 53. DAGGER, 54. GEMINI, 57. JAVA, 60. ROMEO, 61. GLOVES, 62. FRUIT, 63. POUND, 64. IMPERTINENT, 65. DIGITS, 6. TERRE, 7. CURVES, 8. ARRANGE, 9. QUERY, 10. CO-FOUNDER, 11. GAIT, 12. YEARS, 13. STANDS, 18. DANCES, 19. COMPLETELY, 24. BRIDGE, 25. TOP-NOTCH, 26. PERUVIAN, 27. KNOT, 28. SOV. NEWS, 29. CHAMPING, 30. GROUP, 31. FASHION, 33. FALL, 34. BEN, 37. THEATRICAL, 38. SIXTY, 39. ENGLISH, 44. NATURAL, 45. EXCESSIVELY, 46. MICHIGAN, 48. CASINO, 49. HANGS, 50. RIP, 51. SOFT, 52. RUBS, 53. AROMATIC, 55. CORDUROY, 56. ELEVATOR, 58. GERMAN, 59. CONTRARY.

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