

# Amato Back at State To Revamp Program

Former N.C. State linebacker Chuck Amato returns home and will rely on a defense that returns 10 starters.

By JAMES GIZA  
Assistant Sports/Saturday Editor

How's this for a homecoming gift? A roster with 11 seniors. A true freshman, a sophomore and a junior-college transfer competing to be your starting quarterback. A redshirt freshman, two sophomores and a junior with little experience vying to start for you at cornerback.

Welcome back, Coach. Chuck Amato, a linebacker for N.C. State in the mid-1960s, is entering his first season as the Wolfpack's head coach, replacing Mike O' Cain, who was fired last year after a 6-6 finish.

While O' Cain moved just down the road, latching on as offensive coordinator at North Carolina, Amato made the leap from Florida State, where he had served as an assistant since 1986.

With record-setting quarterback Jamie Barnette gone, freshman Philip Rivers is penciled in as the starter under center.

The 6-foot-5, 221-pound Rivers should benefit from the tutelage of offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Norm Chow, whose proteges at Brigham Young included Ty Detmer, Jim McMahon and Steve Young.

"You hate to have a freshman at quarterback, but Philip is a very mature young man," said Amato, who served on State's coaching staff from 1972-79 in several capacities. "He picked up the

system very quickly mentally, and he made good decisions."

Tackle Jarvis Borum is the lone returning starter on the offensive line, and the departures of All-American Lloyd Harrison and second-team All-ACC performer Tony Scott have left gaping holes at cornerback.

The return of senior Alex Rice, a starter in 1998 who missed all of last season following cervical surgery, should boost the line. Several young players, meanwhile, will be stepping up to work the corners. They include 5-7, 179-pound redshirt freshman J.J. Washington and sophomore Julius Patterson.

"As a coach, it's very scary to have those young players at cornerback," Amato said. "That position will be one of the most critical for us this fall because we're young and untested."

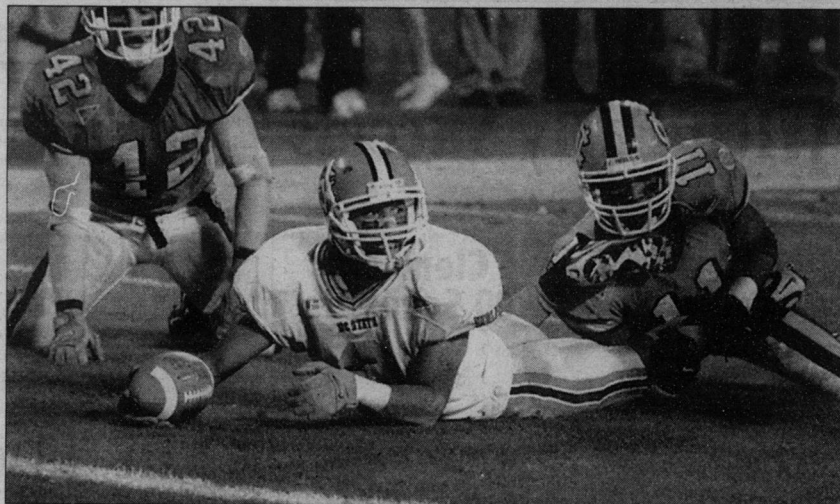
There is hope, however, for a unit that ranked fourth in the ACC in total defense last season. Ten starters return, including linebackers Dantonio Burnette, Clayton White and Levar Fisher.

Returning for the offense is junior tailback Ray Robinson, the 1998 ACC Rookie of the Year. He started only four games last season because of knee and ankle injuries.

Sophomore wideout Koren Robinson, last year's ACC Rookie of the Year after catching 48 passes for 853 yards and two touchdowns, leads a wideout corps that features another sophomore, two freshmen and a senior who split time between wide receiver and tailback last year.

"We've got some good players, but we don't have a lot of experience at the wide receiver position," Amato said.

Welcome back, Coach.



DTH/SEFTON IFOCK

Sophomore Koren Robinson caught 48 passes for 853 yards last season and was named ACC Rookie of the Year. N.C. State's offense will be led by freshman Philip Rivers, who has been named the starting quarterback.

## N.C. State '00 Schedule

Sept. 2	Arkansas State
Sept. 9	at Indiana
Sept. 16	SMU
Sept. 21	Georgia Tech
Oct. 7	at Clemson
Oct. 14	at UNC
Oct. 28	Florida State
Nov. 4	at Maryland
Nov. 11	Duke
Nov. 18	at Virginia
Nov. 25	Wake Forest



## N.C. State

1999 record: 6-6 (3-5 in the ACC)  
Head Coach: Chuck Amato (first year)

Home Field: Carter-Finley Stadium (51,500)

Returning Starters: 5 offense, 8 defense

Key Returnees: LB Dantonio Burnette, LB Levar Fisher,

WR Koren Robinson, RB Ray Robinson, LB Clayton White

Key Losses: QB Jamie Barnette, WR Chris Coleman,

CB Lloyd Harrison, CB Tony Scott, RB Rahshon Spikes

Strengths: Good things can be expected from a defense that

returns eight starters and has Amato in its corner. Koren

Robinson is on his way to making fans forget about Tory Holt.

Weaknesses: Last year's fifth-best passing game in the ACC probably

won't be any better because Barnette is gone. Freshman quarterback

Philip Rivers will have a lot of pressure on his shoulders.

Keys to season: This team must find a way to score. N.C. State's defense must keep

it in games if it is going to grab its share of victories. The early season will be key.

Key Game: Sept 21 vs. Georgia Tech



Chuck Amato

## DUKE

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well last year, and I think this year could be a big year for him as the anchor of our offensive line up there," Franks said. "The center makes a lot of calls for most people in their offenses, and he's got a chance to have a good year."

Wes White, a two-year starter, fills the right tackle spot, while junior John Miller returns as the heaviest member of the line, weighing in at 333 lbs.

The 2000 Duke squad is a youthful one, especially on the defensive side of the ball.

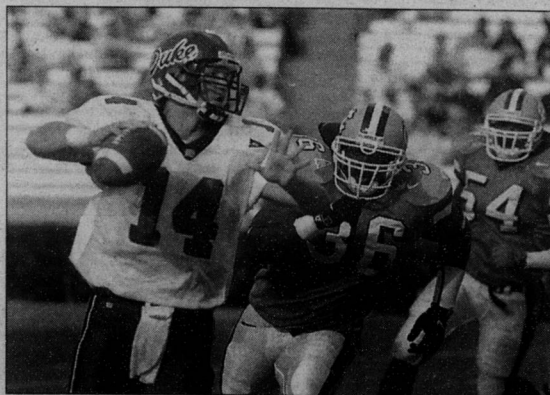
The Blue Devils return only three starters — two linebackers and one cornerback — highlighted by inside linebacker Todd DeLamielleure.

DeLamielleure, the son former Buffalo Bill and NFL All-Pro Joe DeLamielleure, ranked second on the team last season with 103 tackles and 10 tackles for loss.

DeLamielleure, who has started a combined 20 games in the previous two seasons, also broke up four passes last year.

Outside linebacker Kendral Knight also returns to the defense. Knight, who is from Wilson, recorded a team-best four sacks in 1999.

The defensive line, minus 1999



DTH FILE PHOTO

Senior quarterback Spencer Romine returns for a fifth year at Duke. He ranks 10th on the school's career passing list with 2,932 yards.

Outland Trophy candidate Chris Combs, is full of fresh faces, including the towering Nate Krill. Krill, who endured double shoulder surgery this spring, stands 6-foot-8 and has the potential to have an enormous impact at the tackle spot.

The combination of youth and inexperience makes for a Blue Devil team

that must rely not on stars, but instead on hard-fought, team efforts.

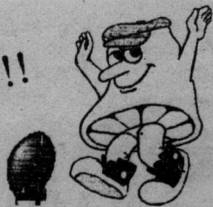
"We have to make sure that we play as a team this year," Franks said. "We have to use a lot of people, we have to build some depth, and these guys have to help each other out."

"We've got to pull each other through it."

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