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Redshirt freshman Willie Parker (15) goes over the top to score one of his two touchdowns. Parker finished with 17 yards on 10 carries.

# Newcomers Shine In Tar Heel Debut

By WILL KIMMEY  
SportsSaturday Editor

Four players combined to score all 30 of North Carolina's points Saturday. But the scoring didn't come from the list of usual suspects that includes Ronald Curry, Alge Crumpler and Bosley Allen. Instead, the foursome comprised a group of names few of the Kenan Stadium fans had heard before. All were playing in their first collegiate game.

Redshirt freshmen Jamal Jones and Willie Parker each reached the end zone, while place kickers Jeff Reed and Chris Bender chipped in field goals. Jones made the greatest impact. He hauled in three passes for a team-high 85 yards, including a 55-yard touchdown in the third quarter.

"He's got great ability, good speed and he's strong," UNC coach Carl Torbush said. "He's got a chance to be an outstanding player."

While Tulsa's blitzes and eight-man fronts paved the way for Jones to show off his skills, they limited the performances of the Tar Heels' young tailbacks. Parker crossed the goal line twice but never broke a big run. His 10 carries resulted in 17 yards, including TD plunges of 1 and 3 yards in the first and third quarters, respectively. His longest run went for four yards.

Parker did not start because he missed two days of practice with back problems before the game. Brandon Russell got the starting nod in lieu of Parker. He was the first true freshman to start in a UNC season opener since Charlie "Choo-Choo" Justice did it in 1946.

Russell had 10 carries for 25 yards. But he also committed a key error on the Tar Heels' first possession. On second-and-14 from the Tulsa 46, Curry ran the option to the left and pitched back to where Russell was supposed to be. But Russell wasn't there, the ball hit the turf, and Tulsa recovered the fumble.

"With this being my first game, I wanted to come out and be perfect," Russell said. "But I made a mistake. I was mad at myself, but you just kind of have to let things like that go. You've got to come back and help out your team."

Torbush got promising results from both of his new place-kickers, who showed improvement after an inconsistent preseason.

Reed drilled field goals from 30 and 39 yards out and missed one from 47 yards. He also converted all three extra-point attempts. Bender connected on a 28-yard field goal late in the game.

The other half of the kicking game wasn't as solid. Sophomore Josh LaFerty served as the starting punter and averaged 34 yards in his two attempts.

Freshman Blake Ferguson took the final three chances. He boomed his first and third tries for a combined 112 yards but a botched fake punt that traveled just two yards strained his average.

"Blake Ferguson came in and kicked two bombs," Torbush said. "We had a mess-up on a half fake, half whatever you want to call it. He should have kicked it, but he didn't."

Sophomore cornerback Michael Waddell, who was seeing his first game action, also got some on-the-job training.

Tulsa quarterback Josh Blankenship threw Waddell's way three times on the opening drive, which resulted in a field goal. Waddell allowed two completions for 17 yards and was flagged for holding. He improved as the game progressed, breaking up two passes and making three tackles. He didn't give up any long completions and almost picked off a pass.

"I think I could have played better," Waddell said. "I really didn't expect too much out of myself in the first game. I just kind of took it play by play out there and hoped for the best."

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

## DEFENSE

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Tulsa managed 9 yards of total offense on those seven possessions, and it didn't face anything shorter than third-and-seven during that series of UNC stops.

"Defense is about being poised; it's not overreacting under pressure," defensive tackle Ryan Sims said.

Blankenship finished with 214 yards passing. That number would have been dramatically lower had UNC cornerback Errol Hood not fallen on the wet turf while a pass to wideout Corey Brown was in mid-air. Blankenship hit Brown for a 78-yard touchdown pass with 11:32 left.

The Golden Hurricane's next-longest offensive play came when wideout Donald Shoals turned a tipped pass into 20-yard reception on the next possession.

"We knew they were going to try and pressure us, a lot of man, and we just wanted to attack that," Blankenship said. "We stuck to our game plan pretty much — we just didn't make enough big plays."

The Golden Hurricane could have used another big play after Shoals' reception. Tulsa marched 55 yards on 10 plays, with Shoals' catch setting up a first-and-goal at the UNC 8-yard line.

But Blankenship completed only one of his next four passes, with Hood breaking up an attempt at the goal line on fourth down to end the drive.

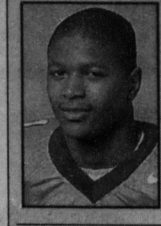
"We knew we had a great defense, and for us to stop them on the goal line like that was a great confidence booster," linebacker Sedrick Hodge said. "Hopefully, we'll have many more to come."

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UNC 30, Tulsa 9	
Score Box	
TU	3 0 0 6 14
UNC	7 3 17 3 30
Scoring Summary	
First Quarter	Tulsa — Earnest 41 field goal, 9:25 UNC — Parker 1 run (Reed kick), 3:03
Second Quarter	UNC — Reed 30 field goal, 4:34
Third Quarter	UNC — Jones 55 pass from Curry (Reed kick), 12:44 UNC — Parker 3 run (Reed kick), 4:25 UNC — Reed 39 field goal, 0:13
Fourth Quarter	Tulsa — Brown 78 pass from Blankenship (pass failed), 11:32 UNC — Bender 28 field goal, 2:58
Individual Statistics	
Rushing: Tulsa — Bohanan 13-42, Hart 7-19, Shoals 1-(-6), Team 1-(-12), Blankenship 5-(-24), UNC — Curry 12-69, Saunders 4-48, Russell 10-25, Parker 10-17, Robinson 3-17, Thorogood 1-6, Williams 2-2, Black 2-(-11).	
Passing: Tulsa — Blankenship 17-38-0 214, UNC — Curry 12-22-0 192, Black 4-8-0.	
Receiving: Tulsa — Shoals 7-77, Brown 5-107, Wimberly 1-11, LeCone 1-11, Carey 1-5, Bohanan 1-2, Hart 1-1, UNC — Bailey 5-49, Jones 3-85, Aiken 3-68, Allen 3-11, Saunders 1-20, Parker 1-9.	
Attendance — 44,000.	

## UNC 30, Tulsa 9

### A LOOK INSIDE THE GAME



**Hero of the Game:**  
Ronald Curry, UNC quarterback  
Curry showed Tar Heel fans what they wanted to see — that he is healthy and still one of the nation's best athletes. Curry completed 12-of-22 passes for 192 yards and a touchdown. He used his four talented wideouts, making sure that each caught at least three passes. Curry also registered a game-high 69 rushing yards.

**Second Fiddle:**  
Jamal Jones, UNC wide receiver  
Jones earned praise throughout the preseason for his ability to make big plays. He showed why against Tulsa, breaking the game open when he and Curry improvised on a 55-yard touchdown toss early in the third quarter. Jones finished with a team-best 85 receiving yards on three catches — not bad for his collegiate debut.



#### Best Call

UNC coach Carl Torbush's decision to play his reserves. Several Tar Heels gained valuable experience. Antwon Black showed he's ready if something should happen to Curry, and four young offensive linemen saw significant action. Also evident is that punt returns, a weakness in 1999, will be better this year with Sam Aiken, Bosley Allen and Kory Bailey alternating.

#### Play of the Day

Curry's touchdown pass to Jones. Ahead 10-3 and facing a second-and-10 from his own 45, Curry dropped back. Almost immediately he had to dodge a blitz from the Tulsa secondary. He got rid of the defender as few others can, rolled out to his right and lofted a perfect pass to Jones, who was streaking down the sideline. Game over.

#### Up Next

at Wake Forest: Saturday, Sept. 9, 6:30 p.m. at Groves Stadium  
UNC will get to play Week 2 with a winning record for the first time since 1997. Wake Forest lost most of last year's Aloha Bowl squad to graduation, and it shows in 2000. The Demon Deacons lost 20-16 to Appalachian State on Thursday. UNC should watch out for John Stone, however. A former ACC track champ in the 100 and 200, Stone is one of the nation's best return men. He returned a kickoff 88 yards for a TD in the opener.

#### Quotable:

"It was a sigh of relief, and it was important to win. It's 1-0. We're still undefeated, and half the teams in America right now are not undefeated. Right now, we're in the top 50 percent, and we've got to keep moving up."  
— UNC coach Carl Torbush

## FOOTBALL

From Page 14

Quarterback Ronald Curry made sure it was never an issue.

Curry missed the final six games of 1999 with a ruptured Achilles tendon, but anyone who didn't know that never would have guessed it. He was as quick as ever, amassing 192 passing yards and 69 rushing yards.

Tulsa stacked the line of scrimmage with its base 4-4 alignment, putting eight men in the box on most downs to pressure Curry and stop the run. Tulsa played soft in the secondary, giving UNC's receivers 8-10 yards of cushion.

A game within the game quickly arose. Curry simply played catch with his wideouts, hitting them on quick slants and outs in front of defenders.

"We feel that we've got talent out there and that we can create some mismatches," said Curry, who was 12-of-22. "As long as teams play us man-up and back off of us, we're going to keep hitting the short routes. If they come up, we can go deep."

That's what the Tar Heels did to break the game open. UNC reached halftime with a 10-3 lead and then Curry reached into his bag of magic.

On second-and-10 from his own 45, he dropped back and found Tulsa in a

safety blitz. Curry eluded the rush, rolled right and threw on the run down the sideline to redshirt freshman wideout Jamal Jones. Jones was alone for a 55-yard TD on his first college catch.

"It demoralizes you," Tulsa coach Keith Burns said. "Nine out of 10 quarterbacks in the country are sacked on that one play that he hit us over the top on."

The Tar Heels added two more scores in the quarter, a 3-yard touchdown run by redshirt freshman Willie Parker and a 39-yard field goal by Jeff Reed.

The duo collaborated in the first half to help UNC overcome a 3-0 deficit. Parker capped an 11-play drive with a 1-yard TD run, and Reed hit a 30-yard field goal to give UNC its 10-3 halftime edge.

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